THE

SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY

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AND

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"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry."

FIRDAUSÍ.

LONDON:
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.
BROADWAY HOUSE: CARTER LANE, E.C.
1925

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ERRATA

Page 7, line 25 and elsewhere, *for* 'Tritá' *and* 'Traitána' *read* 'Trita' *and* 'Traitana.'
Page 9, line 16 and elsewhere, *for* 'Ázarbíján' *read* 'Ázarbáiján.'
Page 10, reference number 2, *after* R *insert* P.
Page 13, bottom, *for* 'NESH' *read* 'NSEH.'
Page 17, *delete lines* 8–10, *and read* 'from the other side, we may add that Peter the Great gained temporary possession of Darband in A.D. 1722, but it was not finally annexed by Russia till A.D. 1813.'
Page 19, reference number 3, *delete* iii.
Page 31, *delete lines* 13–16, *and read* 'that this minister is referred to on both occasions.'
Page 34, five lines from bottom, *delete* 'While I sat looking on' *and read* 'While I o'erlooked from far.'
Page 37, line 22, *for* 'Arúdí' *read* ''Arúdí.'
Page 39, reference number 1, *delete* §§ i. and vii., *and read* 'The too spiritual conception of the Deity in § i. and the references to 'Alí in § vii.'
Page 43, note 2, *for* 'fakka' *read* 'fakká'.'
Page 62, after reference number 7 *insert* DZA, i. 209.
Page 68, line 9, end, *add* 'or identical with,' *and add to reference number* 1, NIN, 15.
Page 69, bottom, *for* '108' *read* '107.'
Page 71, line 19, *after* 'Oxus' *insert* 'Caspian.'
,, ,, reference number 6, end, *add* 'notes.'
Page 88, lines 12 and 26, *for* 'Farvardín' *read* 'Farwardín.'
Page 89, line 4, *for* 'Dín' *read* 'Daï.'
Page 90, *for* '3 generations' *read* '1 generation.'
Page 92, *read thus:* 'A female descendant or relative = KAI KÁÚS (12).'
Siyáwush
Page 106, line 11, beginning, for '*The*' read '*In.*'
Page 113, line 18, *add* full stop at end.
Page 118, line 4, *for* 'mountain of the holy' *read* 'Mountain of the Holy.'
Page 120, delete line 1 and read, '*How Siyámak was slain by the Div.*'
Page 126, line 16, *for* 'gold' *read* 'good.'
Page 130, line 11, *after* 'gallery' *put* . . .

ERRATA

Page 130, line 23, *for* 'have' *read* 'find,' *and add to reference* 4, WPT. i. 142.
Page 131, line 15, *for* 'They' *read* 'they.'
Page 132, line 11, *add* full stop at end.
Page 138, line 29, *delete* 'thou my' *and read* 'any.'
Page 142, 5 lines from bottom, *for* 'downstricken' *read* 'down-stricken.'
,, ,, 4 lines from bottom, *for* 'Áspikán' *read* 'Áspíkán.'
Page 143, line 7, *for* '1' *read* '2.'
,, ,, line 15, *for* '2' *read* '3.'
,, ,, line 31, *for* '3' *read* '4.'
,, ,, line 33, *for* '4' *read* '5.'
Page 175, line 13, *for* 'He' *read* 'Be.'
Page 227, line 21, delete '*Slain by the Hand of*' and read '*slain by.*'
Page 239, line 21, *for* 'made' *read* 'make.'
Page 293, *add to end of note*, 309, 346.
Page 307, line 7 from bottom, *after* 'lasso' *add* '[1].'
Page 325, line 11, *for* 'Sám' *read* 'Zál.'
Page 342, line 3 from bottom, *for* 'Knowhow' *read* 'Know how.'
Page 351, side reference, *read* '259.'
Page 354, line 21, *for* 'Guzhdaham' *read* 'Gazhdaham.'
Page 355, line 4 from bottom, *delete* comma at end.
Page 366, line 12, *delete* 'not.'
Page 381, line 4 from bottom, *for* 'plants' *read* 'plans.'

ERRATA

Page 61, line 9, *for* ' bears ' *read* ' bear.'
Page 69, line 20, *add* semicolon at end.
Page 157, line 7, *for* ' spoken ' *read* ' unspoken.'
Page 221, line 13, *for* ' unled ' *read* ' unsoiled.'
Page 257, line 2 from bottom, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma at end.
Page 265, line 18, *delete* comma at end.
Page 281, line 22, *for* ' Irán ' *read* ' Túrán.'
Page 306, line 14, *add* comma at end.
Page 384, line 7 from bottom, *delete* comma *and insert* full stop at end.
Page 390, bottom, *delete* " *and insert* ' ".

ERRATA

Page 14, line 30 end, *add* reference number 5.
Page 36, line 8, *for* 'Tis' *read* ''Tis.'
Page 45, line 23, *for* 'that' *read* 'thou.'
Page 68, line 18, *for* 'stoneand' *read* 'stone and.'
Page 134, line 6 end, *add* !
,, ,, line 15 end, *add* "
Page 148, note, *for* 'Pehlevan' *read* 'Pehlewan.'
Page 151, line 4 from bottom, *add* full stop at end.
Page 172, note, *for* 'Car' *read* 'car.'
Page 194, line 8, *for* 'Khan' *read* 'Khán.'
Page 213, line 22, *for* 'Oleader' *read* 'O leader.'
Page 234, note, *for* 'Et' *read* 'et,' *and* for '*comblan*' read '*comblant.*'
Page 237, line 6, *prefix* "
Page 241, line 22, *delete* 'far.'
Page 251, note, *for* 'Sur' *read* 'sur.'
Page 275, line 10 end, *delete* !
Page 285, line 8 from bottom, *for* 'fraicheur' *read* 'fraîcheur.'
,, ,, last line, *add* reference number 2.
Page 287, side reference, *for* 'V. 1063' *read* 'V. 1065,' *and subsequent side references consecutively, i.e.* 'V. 1066,' 'V. 1067,' *etc., up to page* 305.
Page 298, note, *for* 'La' *read* 'la.'
Page 304, line 11, *delete* semicolon *and insert* comma.
Page 305, line 25, *add* side reference 'V. 1086,' *and read subsequent side references consecutively, i.e.* 'V. 1087,' 'V. 1088,' *etc., up to page* 356.
Page 318, note, *for* 'Il' read 'il.'
Page 348, line 15, *add* comma at end.
Page 376, col. 2, line 15, *for* 'Púláwand' *read* 'Púládwand.'

THE CALENDAR

THE old Persian year was solar and began at the vernal equinox. It consisted of 365 days divided into 12 months of 30 days each, the five extra days being added after the completion of the twelfth month to fill up the time till the sun should re-enter Aries, and spring and the new year begin on the 21st of March. Each day of the month had its special genius presiding over it, after whom it was named, thus:—

Day 1. Urmuzd.	Day 16. Mihr.
„ 2. Bahman.	„ 17. Surúsh.
„ 3. Ardibihisht.	„ 18. Rashn.
„ 4. Sharívar.	„ 19. Farvardín.
„ 5. Sapandármad.	„ 20. Bahrám.
„ 6. Khurdád.	„ 21. Rám.
„ 7. Murdád.	„ 22. Bád.
„ 8. Dai pa Ádar.	„ 23. Dai pa Dín.
„ 9. Ádar.	„ 24. Dín.
„ 10. Ábán.	„ 25. Ard.
„ 11. Khurshíd.	„ 26. Áshtád.
„ 12. Máh.	„ 27. Ásmán.
„ 13. Tír.	„ 28. Zamíyád.
„ 14. Gúsh.	„ 29. Máhraspand.
„ 15. Dai pa Mihr.	„ 30. Anairán.

Of these thirty genii twelve were chosen to give their names to the months as well, thus:—

SPRING	Farvardín	March 21	to	April 19.
	Ardibihisht	April 20	„	May 19.
	Khurdád	May 20	„	June 18.
SUMMER	Tír	June 19	„	July 18.
	Murdád	July 19	„	August 17.
	Sharívar	August 18	„	September 16.

Autumn	Mihr	September 17	to October 16.
	Ábán	October 17	„ November 15.
	Ádar	November 16	„ December 15.
Winter	Dín	December 16	„ January 14.
	Bahman	January 15	„ February 13.
	Sapandármad	February 14	„ March 15.

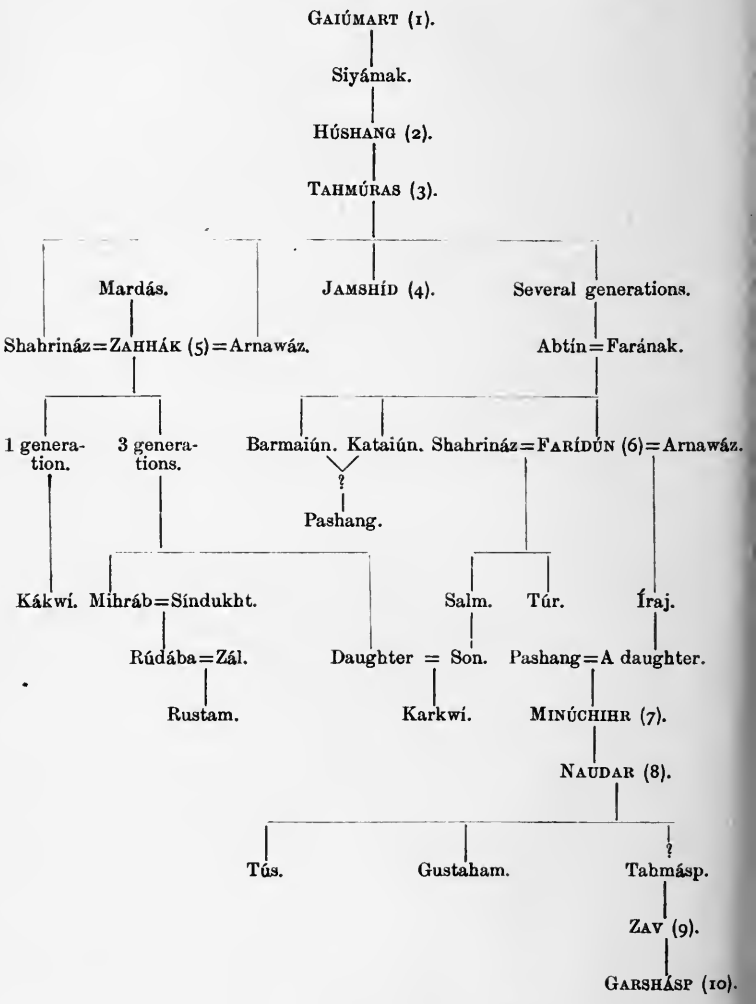
Thus the day Sapandármad of the month Khurdád would be equivalent to May 24th, and the day Khurdád of the month Sapandármad to February 19th.

Time was reckoned by days and nights, not by nights and days as among the Jews and Muhammadans.

The twenty-four hours of the day and night were divided into eight watches of three hours each.

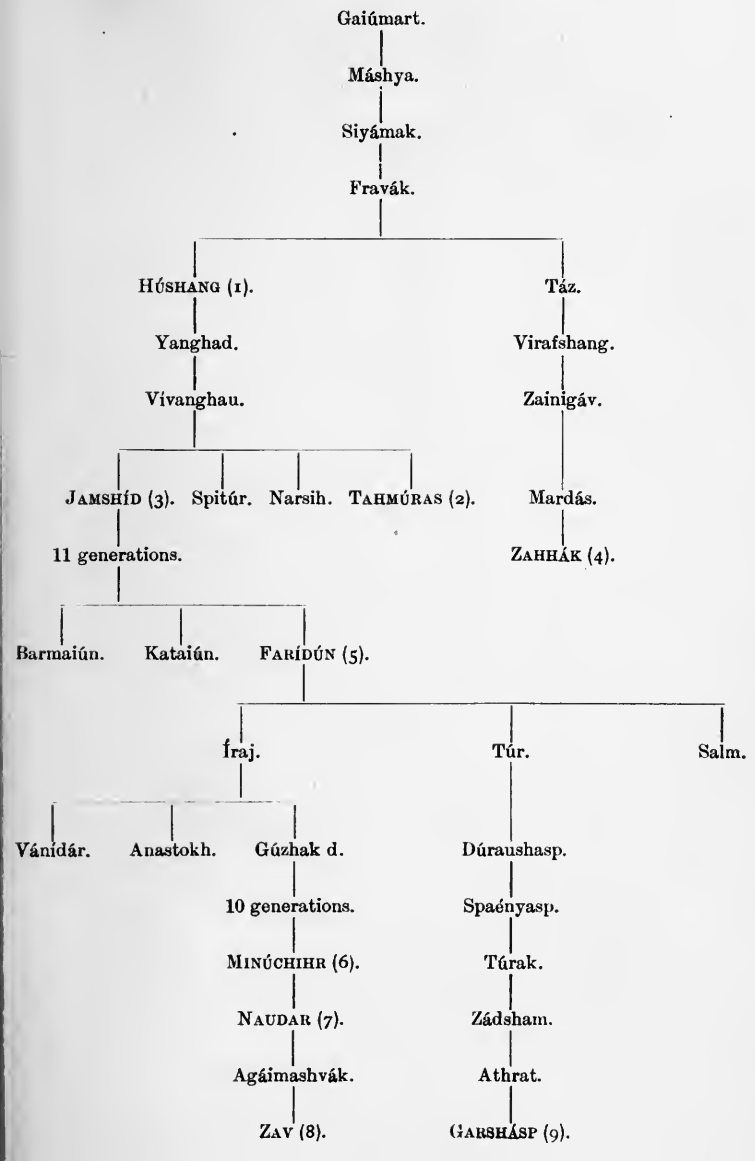
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE PISHDÁDIANS

(According to the Sháhnáma.)



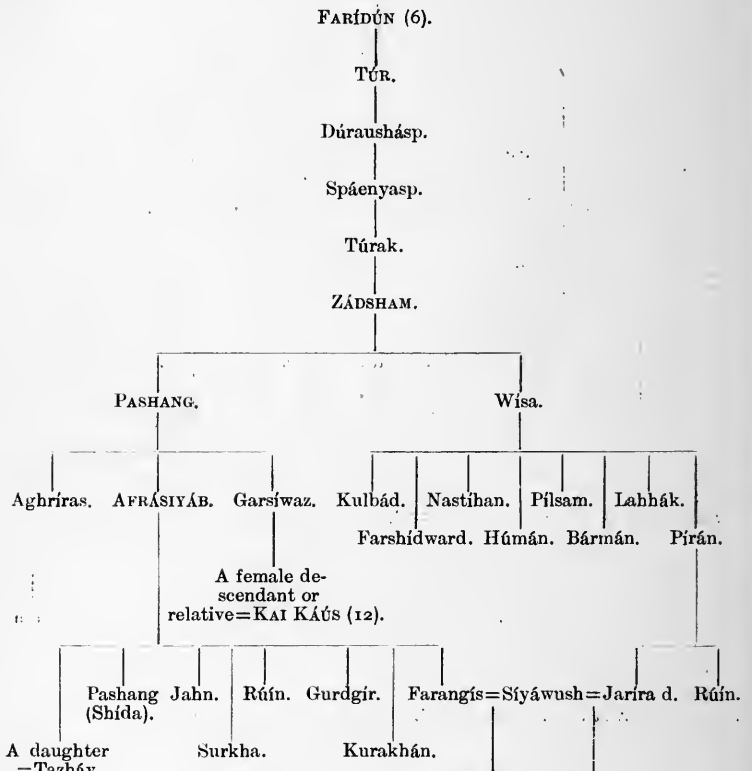
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE PISHDÁDIANS.

(ACCORDING TO THE BUNDAHISH.)



THE KINGS AND HEROES OF TÚRÁN

(SHÁHNÁMA AND BUNDAHISH COMBINED.)



THE PRELUDE

ARGUMENT

The poet, after invoking the name of God and praising Him and His wisdom, discourses of the world, of man, of the sun and moon, of the Prophet and his companions, of the compilation of the Sháhnáma, of the poet Dakíkí, and of his own labours in connection with the poem, concluding with the praises of his patrons.

NOTE

§ 5. We read in the Zandavasta: "It (the sky) looks like a palace, that stands built of a heavenly substance, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, shining with its body of ruby over the three-thirds (of the earth)."[1]

§ 7. For 'Alí see p. 12. Muhammadans are divided into many sects. Muhammad is referred to as the lord of the sacred law, *i.e.* the Kurán, of stream, milk, &c. We read there: "A picture of the Paradise which is promised to the God-fearing! Therein are rivers of water which corrupt not; and rivers of milk whose taste changeth not; and rivers of wine delicious to those that quaff it; and rivers of honey clarified: and therein are all kinds of fruit for them, and forgiveness from their lord."[2]

§ 10. The name of Firdausí's friend who procured for him the Sháhnáma of Abú Mansúr (see pp. 67–69) is said to have been Muhammad Lashkarí.[3]

§ 11. Abú Mansúr, son of Muhammad, may have been the son of the Muhammad, son of Abdú'r-Razzák, who had the prose Sháhnáma compiled (see p. 68), if the heading can be trusted.

§ 12. Abú'l Kásim, *i.e.* Firdausí himself. The conquest of Kannúj took place after the completion of the Sháhnáma and in days

[1] DZA, ii. 180. [2] RK, 419. [3] C, Persian Preface, 23.

when Firdausí was in exile. The mention of Kannúj appears to be a flattering anticipation of events on the poet's part.[1]

The "trusty minister" was no doubt Abú'l 'Abbás Fazl.

"The gardens of Iram" were said to have been built by Shaddad, son of Ad, that he might anticipate on earth the joys promised him in Paradise by the prophet Húd. After toil extending over centuries the work was completed, but as Shaddad was on the point of entering into possession, he and all his host were slain by a voice from heaven.[2]

Nasiru'd-Dín, *i.e.* Subuktigín (see p. 20).

Nasr, Mahmúd's youngest brother, acted as commander-in-chief, and governed the province of Níshápúr. After some years of successful administration he was recalled to court and served his brother in various capacities. He was a patron of learning and died young.[3]

"The prince of Túś" appears to have been Arslán Jázib, one of Sultán Mahmúd's most famous generals.

§ 1

In the Name of God the Merciful, the Pitiful

V. 1 In the name of the Lord of both wisdom and mind,
To nothing sublimer can thought be applied,
The Lord of whatever is named or assigned
A place, the Sustainer of all and the Guide,
The Lord of Saturn and the turning sky,
Who causeth Venus, Sun, and Moon to shine,
Who is above conception, name, or sign,
The Artist of the heaven's jewelry!
Him thou canst see not though thy sight thou strain,
For thought itself will struggle to attain
To One above all name and place in vain,
Since mind and wisdom fail to penetrate
Beyond our elements, but operate
On matters that the senses render plain.

[1] Kannúj seems to have been taken in A.D. 1019. EHI, ii. 457.
[2] BAN, iv. 113. [3] KUR, 484.

None then can praise God as He is. Observe
Thy duty: 'tis to gird thyself to serve.
He weigheth mind and wisdom; should He be
  Encompassed by a thought that He hath weighed?
Can He be praised by such machinery
  As this, with mind or soul or reason's aid?
Confess His being but affirm no more,
Adore Him and all other ways ignore, V. 2
Observing His commands. Thy source of might
  Is knowledge; thus old hearts grow young again,
But things above the Veil surpass in height
  All words: God's essence is beyond our ken.

§ 2

Discourse in Praise of Wisdom

Speak, sage! the praise of wisdom and rejoice
The hearts of those that hearken to thy voice,
As God's best gift to thee extol the worth
  Of wisdom, which will comfort thee and guide,
And lead thee by the hand in heaven and earth.
  Both joy and grief, and gain and loss, betide
Therefrom, and when it is eclipsed the sane
  Know not of happiness one moment more.
  Thus saith the wise and virtuous man of lore
Lest sages search his words for fruit in vain:—
"What man soever spurneth wisdom's rede
Will by so doing make his own heart bleed;
The prudent speak of him as one possessed,
And 'he is not of us' his kin protest."
In both worlds wisdom recommendeth thee
  When gyves are on the ankles of the mad;
It is the mind's eye; if thou dost not see
  Therewith thy journey through this world is sad.

It was the first created thing, and still
Presideth o'er the mind and faculty
Of praise—praise offered by tongue, ear, and eye,
All causes it may be of good or ill.
To praise both mind and wisdom who would dare?
And if I venture, who would hear me through?
Since then, O man of wisdom! thou canst do
No good by words hereon, proceed, declare
V. 3 Creation's process. God created thee
To know appearance and reality.
Let wisdom be thy minister to fend
Thy mind from all that self-respect should shun,
Learn by the words of sages how to wend
Thy way, roam earth, converse with every one;
And when thou hearest any man of lore
Discourse, sleep not, increase thy wisdom's store;
But mark, while gazing at the boughs of speech,
How much the roots thereof are out of reach.

§ 3

Of the Making of the World

The first thing needful for thee is to know
The sum of primal elements which He,
Who maketh all things, made from naught to show
The greatness of His own supremacy.
Those elements are fourfold; at their birth
No time elapsed and labour had no share;
Fire shone above, and in the midst were air
And water; underneath was dusky earth.
Fire was the first its virtue to unfold;
About it moisture ceased and dryness came;

Then fire where'er it failed made way for cold,
And moisture followed cold.
Even so the frame
Of this our Wayside Hostelry was made.
When these four primal elements combined,
They wrought, each on the rest, till every kind
Of products as we see them was displayed.
The turning vault of heaven showed its face,
Exhibiting new wonders day by day,
The Seven Planets then began their sway
In yon Twelve Houses; each one took its place,
Foreboding good and ill, and giving fit
Return to every one that hath the wit
To read. The heavens, fettered sphere to sphere,
Moved as their making to completion came,
And then this earth, with mountain, desert, mere,
And upland, shone as 'twere a lamp aflame.
The mountains reared themselves, the streams gushed out,
While from the soil the herbs began to sprout.
Our earth was not vouchsafed a lofty stead;
Obscurity and gloom prevailed around,
But stars displayed their wonders overhead V. 4
And light grew more abundant on the ground;
Then fire arose and water sank, the sun
About the world its course began to run.
The herbage and the various kinds of trees
Grew up as fortune would. No faculties
Have they but growth. Thus fixed they were the prey
Of all the animals that passed, while they,
The roamers, aim at safety, nourishment,
And rest; with such a life they are content.
With sluggish wits and tongues that never spake,
They browse upon the briar and the brake,

Acknowledging no end as wrong or right
And not required to offer reverence
To Him who, having wisdom, justice, might,
Hath not withheld one single excellence.

§ 4

Of the Nature of Man

A farther step—man cometh into sight;
Locks had been made; he was the key of each.
With head erect and cypresslike in height,
Submiss to wisdom and endowed with speech,
Possessed of knowledge, wisdom, reasoning,
He ruleth other creatures as their king.
Observe awhile with wisdom for thy guide:
Doth "man" imply one nature, one alone?
Thou know'st it may be but the feeble side
Of mortal man, wherein no trace is shown
Of aught beyond, and yet two worlds agree—
A mighty partnership—to furnish thee.
By nature first, in order last, art thou;
Hold not thyself then lightly. I have known
Shrewd men speak otherwise, but who shall trow
The secrets that pertain to God alone?
Look to the end, act ever rightfully
And toil, since sloth and knowledge ne'er agree;
But if thou wouldst escape calamity,
V. 5 In both worlds from the net of bale be freed
And in God's sight a righteous man indeed,
Then to yon swiftly turning dome thy gaze
Direct, that cause of anguish and relief,
A dome not fretted by the lapse of days
And unaffected by our joy or grief;

It stayeth not to rest but turneth still,
Not perishing like us but undecayed:
There both the term and process are displayed,
There are revealed to thee both good and ill.

§ 5

Of the Nature of the Sun

Of ruby is yon azure dome, not made
Of air and water, dust and smoke; 'tis all
With lamp and torch in many a spot arrayed
Like gardens for the New Year's festival.
Within the dome a gladdening Gem behold
Revolving; thence the light of day is spread,
And every morning like a shield of gold
It raiseth from the East its shining head;
The earth is clad in robes of spreading light,
The sun declineth and there cometh night;
Day ne'er o'ertaketh night, nor night the day,
Most regular in all their movements they.
O thou my Sun! hast thou for me no ray?

§ 6

Of the Nature of the Moon

Though night be dark there is a light assured:
See that thou use it not unworthily.
Two days and nights its features are obscured,
Worn soothly by revolving; presently
'Tis seen again but pallid, thin, and backed,
Like one who by the pangs of love is racked.

V. 6 Then if the gazer far away secure
A glimpse thereof, 'tis quickly lost to sight;
But on the following eve it seemeth more
And yieldeth unto thee a larger light.
In fourteen days it waxeth full and bright,
In fourteen waneth till its course is run,
Diminishing as night succeedeth night
And drawing nearer to the blazing sun.
Such was the nature given by God's decree
And will be, while the moon itself shall be.

§ 7

The Praise of the Prophet and his Companions

The Faith and knowledge trusty guides are they,
And 'tis for thee to seek Salvation's way;
If thou wouldst have thy heart not sad, not see
Thy spirit wretched through eternity,
To take the Prophet's teaching be thy part,
There wash away the darkness of thy heart.
What was it that He said, the inspiréd Lord,
Of bidding and forbidding—Heaven's own word?
"I am the City of the Doctrine, he
That is the gateway to it is 'Alí."
I witness that His heart is in that word
As though, as thou mayst say, His voice I heard.
Regard then each companion and 'Alí
As those that gave the Faith stability;
These are the moons, the Prophet is the sun;
With them in union is the way to run.
Slave of the Prophet's slaves with praise I greet
The dust upon his mandatary's feet,
V. 7 What others say to me is no concern,
This is my way, from this I never turn.

The sage regardeth as a sea this world,
A sea whose waves are driven by the blast;
There seventy gallant ships go sailing past,
Each with her canvas every stitch unfurled.
One stately vessel is in bridal gear,
As beauteous as the eye of chanticleer.
Muhammad and 'Alí are there within
That stately vessel, they and all their kin.
The sage beholding from afar that sea
Of viewless shore and depth, and ware that he
Must face the waves where all must drown, "If I
Shall go down with Muhammad and 'Alí,"
He saith, "I sink in goodly company,
And surely He will rescue me from ill,
Who is of standard, crown, and throne the Lord,
The Lord of wine, of honey, and of rill,
Of founts of milk and floods which spread abroad."
If on the other world thou fix thine eyes
Keep close beside the Prophet and 'Alí,
And, should ill follow, lay the blame on me,
Who take myself the course that I advise.
In this Faith was I born, in this will die;
The dust upon the Lion's foot am I.
Thy heart, if prone to err, is thine own foe,
And can the world more abject miscreants know
Than haters of 'Alí, for born in shame
Are they, and destined to eternal flame?
Take not this world in jest, but walk with those
Whose steps are right; right as thine end propose
If thou wouldst be with men of glorious name.
Why do I talk so long? I fail to see
A limit to my theme's fertility.

§ 8

On the Compilation of the Shâhnâma

V. 8 All have gone sweeping in the garth of lore
And what I tell hath all been told before,
But though upon a fruit-tree I obtain
No place, and purpose not to climb, still he
That sheltereth beneath a lofty tree
Will from its shadow some protection gain;
A footing on the boughs too I may find
Of yonder shady cypress after all
For having left this history behind
Of famous kings as my memorial.
Deem not these legends lying fantasy,
As if the world were always in one stay,
For most accord with sense, or anyway
Contain a moral.
In the days gone by
There was an Epic Cycle spread broadcast
Among the learned archmages, and at last
A certain paladin, of rustic birth,
A man of courage, wisdom, rank, and worth,
An antiquary, one who ransacked earth
For any legends of the ages past,
Intent on learning what might yet be known,
Called hoar archmages out of every clime,
To ask about the annals of the throne,
The famed successful heroes of old time,
What men were doing in those days that we
Inherit such a world of misery,
And how each day beneath auspicious skies
They carried out some daring enterprise.
The archmages told their legendary store,
How this world fared and what kings undertook,

And as he listened to the men of lore
He laid the basis of the famous book,
Which now remaineth his memorial,
Amid the plaudits both of great and small.

§ 9

Of the poet Dakíkí

Now, when the readers of the book had brought
The stories into vogue, all hearts were caught,
At least among the men of parts and thought.
A brilliant youth well skilled in poetry V. 9
Arose, of ardent mind and eloquent;
"I will retell these tales in verse," said he,
And every one rejoiced at his intent;
But vicious habits were his friends, though we
Should hold all vices foes that we should dread,
And death, approaching unexpectedly,
Imposed its gloomy helmet on his head.
He gave his life to vice, and earth ne'er gave
Him true enjoyment for a single day
While fortune quickly turned its face away:
He perished by the hand of his own slave.
Departing thus he left those tales of yore
Untold; their wakened fortune slept once more.
O God! forgive his faults, and in Thy grace
Assign him at the last an honoured place.

§ 10

How the present Book was begun

Mine ardent heart turned, when Dakíkí fell,
Spontaneously toward the Íránian throne;
"If I can get the book I will retell,"
I said, "the tales in language of mine own."

I asked of persons more than I can say,
For I was fearful as time passed away
That life would not suffice, but that I too
Should leave the work for other hands to do.
There was besides a dearth of patronage
For such a work; there was no purchaser.
It was a time of war, a straitened age
For those who had petitions to prefer.
Much time elapsed. I still concealed from all
My secret purpose, for I could not see
One who was worthy to partake with me
This enterprise. What in this world can be
More excellent than noble words? Men call
Down blessings on them, men both great and small.
Good words had God vouchsafed not to provide,
How had the Prophet ever been our guide?
V. 10 I had a dear friend in the city, thou
Hadst said: "They twain have but one skin." One day
He said: "I like thy scheme; pursue thy way;
Thy feet are in the right direction now.
I undertake for my part to procure
This ancient Persian book; but be not slack.
Of youth and eloquence thou hast a store,
Thy speech possesseth too the ancient smack.
The stories of our kings afresh relate,
And raise thy reputation with the great."
He brought the volume to me and anon
The darkness of my gloomy soul was gone.

§ 11

In Praise of Abú Mansúr, Son of Muhammad

When I obtained the volume a grandee
Of noble lineage and conspicuous worth,
Still in his youth, a paladin by birth,

Possessing prudence, wit, and energy,
A lord of counsel and of modesty,
To hear whose gentle accents was my joy,
Said unto me: "What means can I employ
To make thee give thy life to poetry?
I will do all and hide thy poverty."
He used to tender me as one would tend
Ripe apples, lest a breath of wind should spoil;
Thus through that noble and kind-hearted friend
I soared to Saturn from our grimy soil.
In his eyes gold and silver were as dust
While rank gained lustre. Earth seemed vile indeed
Before him. He was brave and one to trust,
And when he perished was as in a mead
A lofty cypress levelled by a gust.
I see no trace of him alive or dead;
By murderous Crocodiles his life was sped.
Woe for that girdle and that girdlestead,
That royal mien, that high imperial head!
Bereft of him my heart's hopes ceased to be,
My spirit quivered like a willow-tree;
But I bethink me, to redress this woe, V. 11
Of counsel which to that great prince I owe;
He said: "This Tale of Kings, if 'tis thy fate
To tell it, to the great king dedicate."
Those words gave solace to my heart; there came
Thereto a sense of gladness and content;
I took in hand my story in the name
Of him who is o'er kings pre-eminent,
The lord of earth, the lord of crown and throne,
Whose conquering fortune sleep hath never known.

§ 12

The Praise of Sultán Mahmúd

Ne'er, since the making of the world was done,
Hath such a king been seen by human eye;
The crown above his throne is like the sun,
And maketh earth as bright as ivory.
How canst thou say: "It is the sun indeed"?
From him by far more glorious rays proceed.
Abú'l Kásim! this all-victorious one
Hath set his throne yet higher than the sun!
His are the rays which illustrate the sky,
His is the Grace which openeth afar
Yon mines of gold.
Awoke my slumbering star.
Ideas poured through my brain tumultuously.
Methought: "The time for speaking in good sooth
Hath come, the outworn age regaineth youth."
By thoughts of this great monarch occupied
I fell asleep one night with lips all praise,
While my free heart, although my lips were tied,
Shone in the dark. Then I beheld in sleep
A dazzling lustre rising from the deep
And making by the brightness of its rays
The gloom of earth like glittering gems. The waste
Grew like brocade beneath that radiant light,
And in the midst a turquoise throne was placed.
Upon the throne there sat a moon-like king
With on his head a crown for covering.
His army stretched two miles. To left there were
Seven hundred elephants in all their might.
V. 12 Before him stood a trusty minister
To guide him to the Faith and to do right.

By that Sháh's Grace, by all those troops outspread
And mighty elephants my head was dazed,
And as upon his royal face I gazed
To that illustrious company I said:—
"Is this the sky and moon, or throne and crown?
Are these his soldiers or the stars come down?"
One answered: "'Tis the king of Rúm and Ind,
King from Kannúj e'en to the river Sind,
While in Túrán and in Írán men give
As slaves obedience to his will and live
Thereby. With justice decked he earth and now,
That done, hath set the crown upon his brow.
Mahmúd the worldlord, the great Sháh, doth bring
Together sheep and wolf for watering.
The monarchs from Kashmír down to the sea
Of Chín are instant in his eulogy,
And children yet within their cots proclaim
With lips unweaned as their first word his name
Do thou too tell his praise, for thou canst speak,
And through him everlasting glory seek.
All do his bidding and keep fealty."
When I awakened to my feet I sprang,
Oh! what a while that night his praise I sang!
No drachms had I but poured my soul, and cried
To mine own heart: "My dream is justified,
For his renown is patent far and wide."
Then praise to him who praiseth the Most High
For sleepless fortune, crown, and signet-ring.
His glory maketh earth like garths in Spring
With flower-painted soil and cloudy sky—
A sky whence in their season showers come
And make the world a garden of Iram.
What good is in Írán his justice giveth,
His name alone is heard where any liveth.

A bounteous Heaven at banquets thou wilt find,
A sharp-clawed Dragon in the fray meanwhile;
He is an elephant, hath Gabriel's mind,
Hands like a winter-cloud, heart like the Nile.
V. 13 When he is wroth, opposing fortune's might
Is, as dínárs are, worthless in his sight;
To boast of crown and hoard is not his part,
And war and travail darken not his heart.
All those who are among his fosterlings,
Freeborn or otherwise, but noble still,
Devoted lieges of the king of kings,
With loins girt ready to perform his will,
Have each a province under their control,
Each hath his name inscribed on every roll.
The foremost is his brother, who in years
Is younger, but in courage hath no peers;
They who are courtiers of his Grace acquire
Joy in the shadow of the age's king,
For he who hath Násiru'd-Dín for sire
Hath round his throne the Pleiads in a ring,
And is the lord of prowess, rede, and might
In whom the nobles, one and all, delight.
Next is the prince of Tús, a valiant lord
Who mocketh lions in the battle-tide,
And lavisheth what fortune may accord
To him, desiring honour, naught beside.
He leadeth men to God; his prayer is still
That the Sháh's head may be preserved from ill.
May earth ne'er see that royal head go down,
And may the Sháh rejoice for ever thus,
Possessing health of body, throne, and crown,
Unpained, untroubled, and victorious.

Now to the opening of my work once more
To tell the tales of famous kings of yore.

ARGUMENT

The poet tells the history of the first ten Sháhs of Írán, describes the progress of the world from barbarism to culture, and the invention of the arts and sciences, and finally how the Grace departed from the Pishdádian Dynasty through the unworthiness and degeneracy of its representatives.

NOTE

The word Pishdádian, the name given to the Sháhs of the first Iránian Dynasty, means those of the old law or original dispensation. Zoroastrianism was built upon an older foundation of nature-worship, to which it bears some such relation as the New Testament bears to the Old. One of the gods of the elder faith—Ahura, the Asura of India—became the supreme deity, Ahura Mazda, of the new dispensation, and the Urmuzd of the Sháhnáma. Accordingly Gaiúmart, the first Sháh in the poem, is expressly recognised in the Zandavasta, as the first worshipper of Urmuzd.[1] Húshang, the second Sháh, institutes the worship of fire—a characteristic feature of Zoroastrianism. Urmuzd in the Zandavasta makes a covenant with Yima, the fourth Sháh, and tries to persuade him to undertake the part of lawgiver afterwards taken by Zoroaster, but Yima through modesty declines.

Zoroastrianism therefore in a sense existed before Zoroaster, with whose advent the Zandavasta ends; hence there is less anachronism than might be supposed in the allusions, often made in the earlier parts of the poem, to fire-worship, the Zandavasta, and similar matters. Zoroaster was the first recipient of the *complete* revelation.

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[1] DZA, ii. 200.

I
THE PISHDAADIAN DYNASTY

I

GAIÚMART

HE REIGNED FOR THIRTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Gaiúmart, the first Sháh and the first ruler of the world, incurs the envy of Áhriman, who sends a host of dívs to attack him, commanded by the Black Dív—the son of Áhriman. Siyámak, the son of Gaiúmart, with an army encounters the Black Dív and is slain, but is avenged by his son Húshang, who succeeds to the throne on the death of his grandfather.

NOTE

The poet in his account of Gaiúmart omits much Zoroastrian lore. In the Bundahish Urmuzd is represented as first creating two beings—the representatives of mankind, and of the animals and plants, respectively. These were Gaiúmart and the Primeval Ox. For three thousand years they lived happily and unmolested in the world of Urmuzd. At the expiration of this period Áhriman assailed the creation of Urmuzd, and slew both the Ox and Gaiúmart; but the latter survived the former by thirty years, which became the duration of the reign of the first Sháh in the poem. The Ox in dying gave origin to the plants and animals, and Gaiúmart to the first human couple—Máshya[1] and Máshyói—who in turn produced offspring among which was Siyámak, who is represented as the son of Gaiúmart in the Sháhnáma. In the poem, too, the attack on Gaiúmart is made indirectly by means of the Black Dív, not directly by Áhriman as in the Bundahish. The reader may be reminded that the Bundahish is a Pahlaví version of the lost book of the Zandavasta known as the Dámdád or "races produced."

[1] *I.e.* man. DZA, i. lviii.

It will be noticed that Gaiúmart is stated to have made his home upon a mountain. Mountains were looked upon as sacred places in old times as being nearer heaven. Urmuzd reveals the Zandavasta to Zoroaster on the mountain of the holy Questions.[1] In the division of mankind into castes in the reign of Jamshíd the mountains are specially set apart for the priests. The mother of Farídún with her infant son takes refuge with a holy hermit who dwells on Mount Alburz, and there too Kai Kubád, the founder of the Kaiánian Dynasty, receives the news of his election to the throne.

§ 1

The Greatness of Gaiúmart and the Envy of Áhriman

What saith the rustic bard? Who first designed
To gain the crown of power among mankind?
V. 14 Who placed the diadem upon his brow?
The record of those days hath perished now
Unless one, having borne in memory
Tales told by sire to son, declare to thee
Who was the first to use the royal style
And stood the head of all the mighty file.
He who compiled the ancient legendary,
And tales of paladins, saith Gaiúmart
Invented crown and throne, and was a Sháh.
This order, Grace, and lustre came to earth
When Sol was dominant in Aries
And shone so brightly that the world grew young.
Its lord was Gaiúmart, who dwelt at first
Upon a mountain; thence his throne and fortune
Rose. He and all his troop wore leopard-skins,
And under him the arts of life began,
For food and dress were in their infancy.

[1] Introd. p. 62.

He reigned o'er all the earth for thirty years,
In goodness like a sun upon the throne,
And as a full moon o'er a lofty cypress
So shone he from the seat of king of kings.
The cattle and the divers beasts of prey
Grew tame before him; men stood not erect
Before his throne but bent, as though in prayer,
Awed by the splendour of his high estate,
And thence received their Faith.
He had a son
Named Siyámak, ambitious like his sire,
A youth well favoured, skilled, and fortunate,
His father's Life, whose joy was gazing on him,
That fruitful offshoot of the ancient stem.
That Life the father cherished tenderly,
And wept for love, consumed by dread of parting.
Thus time passed onward and the kingdom prospered,
For Gaiúmart had not an enemy V. 15
Except, in secret, wicked Áhriman,
Who led by envy sought the upper hand.
He had a son too, like a savage wolf
Grown fearless, and a host of warriors.
The son assembled these and sought his sire,
Resolved to win the great Sháh's throne and crown,
Whose fortune joined with that of Siyámak
Made the world black to him. He told his purpose
To every one and filled the world with clamour;
But who told Gaiúmart about the foe?
The blest Surúsh appeared in fairy-form,
Bedight with leopard-skin, and told the king
The projects that his foes were harbouring.

§ 2

How Siyámak was Slain by the Hand of the Dív

News of that foul dív's acts reached Siyámak,
Who listened eagerly; his heart seethed up
With rage. He gathered troops, arrayed himself
In leopard-skin, for mail was yet unworn,
And went to fight. When host met host he came
In front unarmed to grapple with the son
Of Áhriman. That horrible Black Dív
Clutched at, bent down that prince of lofty stature
And rent him open. Thus died Siyámak
By that foul hand and left the army chiefless.
When Gaiúmart heard this the world turned black
To him, he left his throne, he wailed aloud
And tore his face and body with his nails;
V. 16 His cheeks were smirched with blood, his heart was broken,
And life grew sombre. All the soldiers wept,
Consumed upon the flames of woe, and wailed
As clad in turquoise-coloured garb they stood
Before the portal of the Sháh. All cheeks
Were wine-red, for all eyes shed tears of blood.
Birds, timid beasts and fierce, flocked to the mountain
With doleful cries in anguish, and dust rose
Before the court-gate of the mighty Sháh.
When one year had passed thus the blest Surúsh
Was sent by God; he greeted Gaiúmart
And said: "Lament no more, control thyself,
Do as I bid, collect thy troops and turn
Thy foemen into dust, relieve earth's surface
Of that vile dív and thine own heart of vengeance."

The famous Sháh looked up and cursed his foes,
Then, calling by the highest of all names
Upon his God, he wiped his tears away
And prosecuted vengeance night and day.

§ 3

How Húshang and Gaiúmart went to Fight the Black Dív

The blesséd Siyámak had left a son,
His grandsire's minister, a prince by name
Húshang—a name implying sense and wisdom.
It was the lost restored and fondly cherished,
And therefore being set on war the Sháh
Sent for the prince and frankly told him all:—
"I mean to gather troops and raise the war-cry,
But thou being young shalt lead for I am spent." V. 17
He raised a host of fairies, lions, pards,
And raveners, as wolves and fearless tigers,
But took the rear, his grandson led the host.
The Black Dív though in terror raised the dust
To heaven, but his claws were hanging slack
Frayed by the roaring beasts. Húshang saw this
And putting forth his hands like lion's paws
Made earth too narrow for the lusty dív,
Then flayed him, lopping off his monstrous head,
And trampled him in scorn thus flayed and shent.
The days of Gaiúmart had reached their close
When he achieved this vengeance on his foes;
He passed away, the world was for his heir,
But see who hath had glory to compare
With his! He owned this tricky world and made
The path of gain his path, and yet he stayed
Not to enjoy, for like a story done
Is this world: good and ill abide with none.

II

HÚSHANG

HE REIGNED FORTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Húshang succeeds his grandfather Gaiúmart as Sháh. He is a great culture-hero, and invents the arts of working in metals, irrigation, agriculture, &c. He introduces the use of domestic animals and discovers fire. He institutes its worship, and founds the feast of Sada.

NOTE

Húshang—the Haoshyangha of the Zandavasta—is, according to the older authorities, the first Sháh of the Pishdádian dynasty, and the grandson, not the son, of Siyámak. Siyámak and his wife Nashák produced a pair named Fravák and Fravákaín, who produced in their turn fifteen pairs. Of these, nine pairs proceeded on the back of the ox Sarsaok through the ocean—the chain of rivers, lakes, seas, and gulfs surrounding the central clime in the old cosmogony—to the other six climes and stayed there, while the other six pairs, of whom Húshang and his wife Gúzhak were one, remained to people the central clime within which Irán is situated.[1]

§ 1

The Accession of Húshang and his civilising Arts

Húshang, a just and prudent sovereign,
V. 18 Assumed his grandsire's crown. For forty years
Heaven turned above him. He was just and wise.

[1] WPT, i. 58.

He said: "I lord it o'er the seven climes,
Victorious everywhere. My word is law,
I practise bounteousness and equity;
So hath God willed."
He civilised the world,
And filled the surface of the earth with justice.
He was the first to deal with minerals
And win the iron from the rock by craft.
He gained more knowledge and, inventing smithing,
Made axes, saws, and mattocks. Next he turned
To irrigation by canals and ducts;
Grace made the labour short. As knowledge grew
Men sowed and reaped and planted. Each produced
The loaf whereof he ate, and kept his station.
Till then men lived on fruit in poor estate
And clad themselves in leaves. Religious rites
Existed, Gaiúmart had worshipped God.
Húshang first showed the fire within the stone,
And thence through all the world its radiance shone.

§ 2

How the Feast of Sada was Founded

One day he reached a mountain with his men
And saw afar a long swift dusky form
With eyes like pools of blood and jaws whose smoke V. 19
Bedimmed the world. Húshang the wary seized
A stone, advanced and hurled it royally.
The world-consuming worm escaped, the stone
Struck on a larger, and they both were shivered.
Sparks issued and the centres flashed. The fire
Came from its stony hiding-place again
When iron knocked. The worldlord offered praise
For such a radiant gift. He made of fire
A cynosure. "This lustre is divine,"
He said, "and thou if wise must worship it."

That night he made a mighty blaze, he stood
Around it with his men and held the feast
Called Sada; that bright festival remaineth
As his memorial, and may earth see
More royal benefactors like to him.

By Grace and kingly power domesticating
Ox, ass, and sheep he turned them to good use.
"Pair them," he said, "use them for toil, enjoy
Their produce, and provide therewith your taxes."

He slew the furry rovers for their skins,
Such as the squirrel, ermine, fox, and sable,
So sleek of hair; the rovers clothed the talkers.

V. 20 He gave, spent freely, and enjoyed the fruit,
Then passing took naught with him but repute.
In life no little share of toil had he
In musings past all count and grammarye,
And when a better life was his elsewhere
He left the throne of greatness to his heir.
The time that fortune gave him did not last
For long, Húshang, the wise and prudent, passed.
To thee too this world will not give its love,
Nor will it from its face the veil remove.

III

TAHMÚRAS

TAHMÚRAS, THE BINDER OF THE DÍV, REIGNED THIRTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Tahmúras, the son of Húshang, continues his father's work as a culture-hero, in the domestication of animals, the invention of weaving, &c., conquers and enslaves Áhriman, and defeats the dívs, whose lives he spares on condition that they shall teach him the art of writing.

NOTE

According to the Bundahish, Tahmúras—the Takhma Urupa of the Zandavasta—was the great grandson of Húshang, and the brother of Jamshíd, who, however, is represented as his son in the poem. The legend of the binding of Áhriman by Tahmúras is several times mentioned in the Zandavasta, where he is represented as praying that he may conquer all demons and men, all sorcerers and fairies, and ride Áhriman, turned into the shape of a horse, all around the earth for thirty years.[1] From other sources we learn that Áhriman, while kept as a charger by Tahmúras, persuaded the latter's wife to reveal her husband's secrets, and acting on the information thus gained threw off Tahmúras and swallowed him while he was riding down Mount Alburz. Yim (Jamshíd), hearing of his brother's misfortune, succeeded in dragging the corpse from the entrails of the fiend, and thus restored the culture of the world which had perished with Tahmúras.[2]

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[1] DZA, ii. 252, 292.

[2] *Id.* 252, note. WPT. iii. 60, and note.

The reader will note the reappearance of the Black Dív in this reign after his apparently complete destruction by Húshang. The explanation of course is that the aim of the poet is to follow his authorities, not to make consistent stories. He is here dealing with another legend, so the Black Dív reappears.[1]

§ 1

Tahmúras ascends the Throne, invents new Arts, subdues the Dívs, and dies

Húshang possessed a wise and noble son
Hight Tahmúras—the Binder of the Dív—
Who took the throne and girt his loins to rule,
Then called the archmages and in gracious words
Said: "Throne and palace, crown and mace and cap
Are mine to-day, and when my rede hath purged
The world a mountain-top shall be my footstool.
I will restrain the Dív, will reign supreme,
And use the useful for the common gold."
He sheared the flocks, and men began to spin;
He thus invented clothes and draperies.
He chose the swiftest quadrupeds and made them
To feed on barley, grass, and hay; he noted
V. 21 The shyest of the beasts of prey, and chose
The jackal and the cheetah, luring them
From hill and plain, and taught them to obey him.
Among the well-armed birds he chose the hawk
And noble falcon, and began to tame them
While men looked on amazed. His orders were
To rear the birds and speak to them with kindness.
He brought the cocks and hens to crow at drumbeat,[2]
And turned all hidden properties to use.
He said: "Address your prayers and praise to Him
Who made the world, and us to rule the beasts:
Praise be to Him, for He directed us."

[1] See Introd. p. 48.

[2] The drum beaten outside palaces in the East at dawn.

He had a famed and honest minister
By name Shídásp, an upright man who took
No step unless toward justice. Through the day
He fasted, through the night he prayed, and lived
In charity with all. The Sháh's good fortune
Was his sole wealth, ill doers he restrained
And taught the Sháh all good, acknowledging
No rank but excellence till Tahmúras,
Purged of his faults and glorious with the Grace,
Bound Áhriman with spells and rode him horsewise
At whiles around the world. Thereat the dívs
Rebelled and held a conclave, for their throne
Of gold was void. When Tahmúras was ware V. 22
He was enraged and spoiled their trafficking,
Girt him with Grace and took his massive mace.
Then all the dívs and warlocks sallied forth—
A huge magician host. The Black Dív led them
And vapoured, while their shouts affronted heaven.
It darkened, earth turned sable and all eyes
Grew dim. The illustrious worldlord Tahmúras
Advanced girt up for battle and revenge.
There were the roar of flame and reek of dívs,
Here were the warriors of the lord of earth,
Who ranked his troops and speedily prevailed,
For of the foe he bound the most by spells
And quelled the others with his massive mace.
The captives bound and stricken begged their lives.
"Destroy us not," they said, "and we will teach thee
A new and fruitful art."
He gave them quarter
To learn their secret. When they were released
They had to serve him, lit his mind with knowledge
And taught him how to write some thirty scripts
Such as the Rúman, Persian, Arabic,
Sughdí, Chíní, and Pahlaví, and thus
Delineate sounds. How many better arts

Explored he in a reign of thirty years,
Yet passed away! His time of life was spent
And all his toils became his monument.
O world! caress not those whom thou wilt soon
Cut off, for such caressing is no boon;
Thou raisest one to very heaven on high,
Then biddest him in sorry dust to lie.

IV

JAMSHÍD

HE REIGNED SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

Jamshíd succeeds his father Tahmúras as Sháh, and becomes the greatest and most famous of the culture-heroes. He continues the work of his predecessors, makes additions of his own, and introduces the luxuries and refinements of life. He divides mankind into four castes or classes. He travels over the world, and is the first to cross the sea in ships. He aspires to the dominion of the air, obtains it, and lives in ever closer communion with God. Áhriman is rendered powerless for ill, disease and death cease, and the world passes through the Golden Age. At length, spoiled by success, Jamshíd comes to think himself God, and orders that divine honours shall be paid to himself alone. The Grace of God abandons him. Áhriman is unchained and incites Zahhák, who has become his instrument, to make war on Jamshíd, and the latter is slain.

NOTE

Jamshíd, as we have already seen, is the brother, not the son, of Tahmúras in the older form of the legends. With the reign of Jamshíd the Vedas, Zandavasta, and Sháhnáma meet on common ground. In the Vedas Manu and Yama are the twin sons o Vivasvat, the bright or shining one, *i.e.* the sun. Manu is the progenitor and lawgiver of the Aryan race and Yama is a god.[1] In the Zandavasta Yima is the son of Vívanghat, is the Íránian Noah, has a covenant with God, and is offered by Him the post afterwards accepted by Zoroaster. In the legend of the building

[1] DHA, iv. 31.

of his Var, or underground palace, in anticipation of the Flood, we have the origin of Firdausí's account of the architectural achievements of Jamshíd: "Then Yima said within himself: 'How shall I manage to make that Vara which Ahura Mazda has commanded me to make?' And Ahura Mazda said unto Yima: 'O fair Yima, son of Vívanghat! Crush the earth with a stamp of thy heel, and then knead it with thy hands, as the potter does when kneading the potter's clay. . . .' And Yima made a Vara, long as a riding-ground, on every side of the square. . . . There he established dwelling-places, consisting of a house with a balcony, a courtyard, and a gallery. In the largest part of the place he made nine streets, six in the middle part, three in the smallest."[1]

He is described as "the bright Yima, the good shepherd . . . he ruled over the seven Karshvares (Climes) of the earth, over the Daévas (demons) and men. . . . He who took from the Daévas both riches and welfare, both fatness and flocks, both weal and Glory. In whose reign both aliments (food and drink) were never failing for feeding creatures, flocks and men were undying, waters and plants were undrying; in whose reign there was neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither old age nor death, nor envy made by the Daévas, in the times before his lie, before he began to have delight in words of falsehood and untruth. But when he began to have delight in words of falsehood and untruth, the Glory was seen to flee away from him in the shape of a bird. When his Glory had disappeared, then the great Yima . . . the good shepherd, trembled and was in sorrow before his foes; he was confounded, and laid him down on the ground."[2] Elsewhere his being sawn asunder is mentioned, the act not being referred directly to Zahhák but to Spityura, "he who sawed Yima in twain."[3]

Spityura was a brother of Yima's. He is not mentioned in the Sháhnáma; but the enmity between brothers, so characteristic of Eastern life, crops up again and again in the poem. Thus the two brothers of Farídún envy and try to murder him, and the incident recurs with more disastrous results in the case of Farídún's own sons.

The division into castes also appears in the Zandavasta, where both the three and the four castes are mentioned, and the first three are there stated to have been instituted by Zoroaster, who placed his three earthly sons at the head of them.[4] In the poem they are the institution of his great predecessor Jamshíd.

Jamshíd is a contraction of Yima and Khshaéta (king).[5]

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[1] DZA, i. 18. [2] *Id.* ii. 293. [3] *Id.* 297.
[4] *Id.* 201, and see MZA, iii. 265. [5] HEP, 277.

For Iblís, see Introduction, p. 70.

Zahhák will be dealt with under his proper head; but it may be pointed out with regard to the strange story of his second fall, owing to the pleasures of the table, that in the Bundahish Máshya and Máshyói—the original human pair—who apparently at first lived entirely on water, are incited to partake of stronger meats owing to their relish for the weaker sorts being taken from them by the demons.[1]

Elsewhere in the same work we read: "On the nature of the resurrection and future existence it says in revelation, that, whereas Máshya and Máshyói . . . first fed upon water, then plants, then milk, *and* then meat, men also when their time of death *has* come, first desist from eating meat, then milk, then from bread, till when they shall die they always feed upon water. So, likewise, in the millennium. . . . They will desist from meat food, *and* eat vegetables *and* milk; afterwards they abstain from milk food *and* abstain from vegetable food, *and* are feeding on water; *and* for ten years before Sóshyans comes they remain without food, *and* do not die."[2]

Sóshyans is the third of the divine sons of Zoroaster, and the Messiah of Zoroastrianism. There is plenty in the above extract to account for such a legend as that of the text.

§ 1

The Greatness and Fall of Jamshíd

Jamshíd, the mighty son of Tahmúras, V. 23
Full of his father's maxims, girt himself,
Succeeded to his glorious father's throne,
And wore in kingly wise the crown of gold.
His girdle was the Grace of king of kings,
And all the world obeyed him, contests ceased,
The age had rest, and bird and dív and fairy
Were his to bid, the world took added lustre,
Through him the throne of Sháhs was glorified.
"Mine is the Grace," he said, "I am both king
And archimage, I will restrain ill-doers
And make for souls a path toward the light."

[1] WPT, i. 54, 55. [2] *Id.* 120.

He first wrought arms and oped for warriors
The door of fame. His Grace made iron yield;
He fashioned it to helmets, hauberks, breastplates,
And coats of armour both for man and horse.
His ardent mind achieved the work and made
Good store in fifty years. Another fifty
He spent on raiment fit for fight or feast;
And made of spun and floss silk, hair and cotton,
Fine fabrics, cloth of hair and rich brocade.
He taught to spin and weave, and when the stuffs
Were made he showed men how to full and sew them
Then to the joy of all he founded castes
V. 24 For every craft; it took him fifty years.
Distinguishing one caste as sacerdotal
To be employed in sacred offices,
He separated it from other folk
And made its place of service on the mountains
That God might be adored in quietude.
Arrayed for battle on the other hand
Were those who formed the military caste;
They were the lion-men inured to war—
The Lights of armies and of provinces—
Whose office was to guard the royal throne
And vindicate the nation's name for valour.
The third caste was the agricultural,
All independent tillers of the soil,
The sowers and the reapers—men whom none
Upbraideth when they eat. Though clothed in rags,
The wearers are not slaves, and sounds of chiding
Reach not their ears. They are free men and labour
Upon the soil safe from dispute and contest.
What said the noble man and eloquent?
"'Tis idleness that maketh freemen slaves."
The fourth caste was the artizans. They live
By doing handiwork—a turbulent crew,

Who being always busied with their craft
Are given much to thought. Jamshíd thus spent
Another fifty years and did much good,
For each man learnt his place and others' too.
He bade the foul dívs temper earth with water
And taught them how to fashion moulds for bricks.
They laid foundations first with stones and lime,
Then raised thereon by rules of art such structures
As hot baths, lofty halls, and sanctuaries. V. 25
He searched among the rocks for stones whose lustre
Attracted him and came on many a jewel,
As rubies, amber, silver, gold. Jamshíd
Unlocked their doors and brought them forth by spells.
He introduced the scents that men enjoy
As camphor, genuine musk, gum Benjamin,
Sweet aloe, ambergris, and bright rosewater.
Next leechcraft and the healing of the sick,
The means of health, the course of maladies
Were secrets opened by Jamshíd: the world
Hath seen no other such discoverer.
He crossed the sea in ships. For fifty years
His wisdom brought to light the properties
Of things. These works achieved, Jamshíd ambitioned
Rank loftier still, and by his royal Grace
Made him a throne, with what a wealth of gems
Inlaid! which when he willed the dívs took up
And bare from earth to heaven. There the Sháh,
Whose word was law, sat sunlike in mid air.
The world assembled round his throne in wonder
At his resplendent fortune, while on him
The people scattered jewels, and bestowed
Upon the day the name of New Year's Day,
The first of Farwardín and of the year,
When limbs repose from labour, hearts from strife.

V. 26 The noble chieftains held a festival,
Called for the goblet, wine, and minstrelsy,
And ever since that time that glorious day
Remaineth the memorial of that Sháh.
Thus things continued for three centuries,
And all the while men never looked on death;
They wotted not of travail or of ill,
And dívs like slaves were girt to do them service;
Men hearkened to Jamshíd with both their ears,
Sweet voices filled the world with melody,
And thus till many years had come and gone
The royal Grace shone brightly from the Sháh:
His ends had been attained, the world reposed,
And still new revelations came from God,
Men saw but goodness in their king, the earth
Sérved him, he reigned—a monarch with the Grace.
One day contemplating the throne of power
He deemed that he was peerless. He knew God,
But acted frowardly and turned aside
In his ingratitude. He summoned all
The chiefs, and what a wealth of words he used!
"The world is mine, I found its properties,
The royal throne hath seen no king like me,
For I have decked the world with excellence
And fashioned earth according to my will.
From me derive your provand, ease, and sleep,
Your raiment and your pleasure. Mine are greatness
V. 27 And diadem and sovereignty. Who saith
That there is any great king save myself?
Leechcraft hath cured the world, disease and death
Are stayed. Though kings are many who but I
Saved men from death? Ye owe me sense and life:
They who adore me not are Áhrimans.
So now that ye perceive what I have done
All hail me as the Maker of the world."

Thereat the archmages hung their heads, perplexed
To answer and God's Grace departed from him,
The world was filled with din, the Court deserted,
None who desired renown stayed in his presence.
For three and twenty years the empty portal
Told of the crime that equalled him with God,
Brought on disaster and o'erturned the state.
How saith the seer, the man of Grace and wisdom?
"King though thou art serve God. Great fears oppress
The heart that is devoid of thankfulness."
Day darkened to Jamshíd, he lost the Grace
That lighteneth the world, and though with tears
Of blood he sought for pardon Grace was not,
And dread of coming evil was his lot.

§ 2

The Story of Zahhák and his Father

One of the desert spear-armed Bedouins
Of noble birth then lived—a virtuous king, V. 28
Just, highborn, generous, and hight Mardás,
Who sought his God with reverence and sighs,
He kept a thousand head of all milch cattle,
Goats, camels, sheep, and kine—a gentle breed—
With Arab steeds, all timid beauties they,
And grudged the milk to none. He had a son
Whom much he loved—Zahhák, a gallant prince,
But hasty. People called him Bíwarasp.
Ten thousand is "bíwar" in ancient Persian,
And he possessed ten thousand Arab steeds
With golden equipage—a famous stud.
Most of his days and nights he spent on horseback

Engaged in superintendence not in war.
One day Iblís approached him as a friend
And led his wits astray. The youth gave ear
With pleasure and all unsuspectingly
Gave to Iblís heart, reason, and pure soul,
And heaped the dust on his own head. Iblís
Exulted seeing that the youth was snared
And gulled the simpleton with specious words,
Thus saying: "I could tell thee many things
Known to myself alone."
The youth made answer:—
"Tell me at once, my worthy monitor!"
V. 29 Iblís replied: "First promise, then my story."
The guileless youth swore as Iblís dictated:—
"Thy secret shall be kept, thy bidding done."
Then said Iblís: "Great prince! shall any rule
Here but thyself? What profiteth a sire
With such a son? Now hearken to my rede:
The lifetime of this ancient potentate
Continueth, thou art shelved. Seize on his court
And goods. His place will suit thee, thou shalt be
King of the world if thou durst do my bidding."
Zahhák looked grave; to shed his sire's blood grieved him.
He said: "Not so, suggest some other course:
This cannot be."
"Then thou," Iblís rejoined,
"Art perjured and wilt still be despicable,
Thy father honoured."
Thus he snared the Arab,
Who asked: "What must I do? I will obey."
Iblís replied: "Leave me to scheme. Thy head
Shall touch the sun. I only ask thy silence;
No help need I, myself am competent,
But keep the sword of speech within the scabbard."

Now in the palace was a jocund garth,
And thither used Mardás to go at dawn
To bathe him ere he prayed, without a slave
To light him on his way, The wicked Dív,
Intent on ill, dug in the garden-path
A deep pit, masked and made it good with boughs. V. 30
Ere dawn the Arab chieftain hied him thither
And, as he reached the pit, his fortunes fell;
That good man tumbled, broke his back, and died.
He ne'er had breathed a cold breath on his son,
But cherished him and lavished treasure on him,
Yet that abandoned youth respected not
His father, but conspired to shed his blood.
I heard a sage once say: "Though fierce in strife
No son will dare to take his father's life;
If such a crime should seem to be implied,
Seek for the reason on the mother's side."
Vile and unjust Zahhák thus seized the throne,
Assumed the Arabs' crown and governed them
For good or ill.
Iblís encouraged thus
Began again and said: "Since thou hast turned
To me, and gained thy heart's desire, come pledge me
Thy word once more to do as I require;
And then thy realm shall spread throughout the world,
Birds, beasts, and fishes shall be all thine own."
When this was said he set about to use,
Most marvellous! another kind of ruse.

§ 3

How Iblís turned Cook

Then as a youth well spoken, clean, and clever, V. 31
Iblís went to Zahhák with fawning words,

"Let me," he said, "who am a noted cook,
Find favour with the king."
By appetite
Seduced, Zahhák received and welcomed him,
So that the monarch's faithful minister
Gave to Iblís the royal kitchen's key.
Foods then were few, men did not kill to eat
But lived on vegetals of all earth's produce;
So evil-doing Áhriman designed
To slaughter animals for food, and served
Both bird and beast. He fed the king on blood
To make him lion-fierce, and like a slave
Obeyed him. First he fed his lord on yelk
To make him strong; he liked the flavour much
And praised Iblís, who said: "Illustrious monarch!
For ever live! To-morrow I will serve thee
So as to please thee well."
All night he mused
What strange repast to proffer on the morrow,
And when the azure vault brought back again
The golden Gem he hopefully presented
A meal of partridges and silver pheasants.
V. 32 The Arab monarch ate and his small wits
Were lost in admiration. On the third day
Iblís served lamb and fowl, and on the fourth
A chine of veal with saffron and rosewater,
Musk and old wine. Zahhák when he had tasted,
In wonder at his cook's ability,
Said: "Worthy friend! ask thou my recompense."
He answered: "Live, O king! in wealth and power.
My heart is thine, thy favour my soul's food;
Yet would I ask one boon above my station:
'Tis leave to kiss and lay my face and eyes
Upon thy shoulders."
Off his guard Zahhák
Replied: "I grant it; it may do thee grace."

Iblís received permission, kissed and vanished.
A marvel followed—from the monarch's shoulders
Grew two black snakes. Distraught he sought a cure
And in the end excised them, but they grew
Again! oh strange! like branches from a tree.
The ablest leeches gave advice in turn
And used their curious arts but all in vain.
At length Iblís himself came hurrying
Dight as a leech. "This was thy destiny,"
He said; "cut not the snakes but let them live.
Give them men's brains and gorge them till they sleep. V. 33
It is the only means, such food may kill them."
The purpose of the foul Dív shrewdly scan:
Had he conceived perchance a secret plan
To rid the world of all the race of man?

§ 4

How the Fortunes of Jamshíd went to Wrack

Thereafter tumult, combating and strife
Arose throughout Írán, the bright day gloomed
And men renounced Jamshíd, who when his Grace
Was darkened turned to folly and perverseness.
Pretenders started up, on every march
The disaffected nobles levied troops
And strove. Some set forth for Arabia,
For they had heard: "There is a monarch there—
An awe-inspiring king of dragon-visage."
Thus all the discontented cavaliers
Went to Zahhák and offered fealty,
Saluting him as monarch of Írán.
The king of dragon-visage came like wind
And donned the Íránian crown, collected troops—
The bravest of Arabia and Írán—

And having seized the throne of Sháh Jamshíd
Slipped on the world as 'twere a finger-ring.
Thus fell Jamshíd. Pressed by the world's new lord
He fled, surrendering crown, throne and treasure,
Host, power and diadem. The world turned black
V. 34 To him, he disappeared and yielded all.
He was in hiding for a century,
But in the hundredth year the impious Sháh
Appeared one day beside the sea of Chín.
Zahhák clutched him forthwith, gave him small respite,
And sawing him asunder freed the world
From him and from the fear that he inspired.
Long was he hidden from the Dragon's breath,
But there was no escaping in the end,
For fortune whirled him like a yellow straw
And both his throne and greatness passed away.
What better Sháh was ever on the throne,
And yet what profit could he call his own
From all his toils? His seven centuries
Brought him great blessings and calamities.
What need hast thou then for a length of years?
The world will keep its secrets though for food
It give thee sweets and honeycomb, and rude
Ungentle voices banish from thine ears.
Wilt thou then say: "Its love is spent on me,
In every look affection is expressed?"
Wilt thou confide therein caressingly
And tell it all the secrets of thy breast?
'Twill play with thee a pretty game indeed
Anon, and cause thy wretched heart to bleed.
My heart is weary of this Wayside Inn:
O God! release me soon from toil therein.

V

ZAHHÁK

HE REIGNED A THOUSAND YEARS

ARGUMENT

With the accession of Zahhák evil becomes triumphant everywhere. He practises and encourages black arts, idolatry, and human sacrifice. He has a warning dream concerning his destined conqueror Farídún, whom he strives in vain to capture. At length the people, driven to exasperation by Zahhák, revolt to Farídún at the instigation of Káwa the smith. Farídún and Zahhák meet, and the latter is taken prisoner.

NOTE

Zahhák, as we have already seen,[1] was originally an evil spirit of the Indo-Iránian nature-worship. In the Zandavasta he still occasionally appears in his character of water-stealer. "Zarathustra asked Ardvi Súra Anáhita" (Anaitis, the good genius of the waters): "'O Ardvi Súra Anáhita! With what manner of sacrifice shall I worship thee? . . . So that Mazda (Urmuzd) may make thee run down (to the earth), so that he may not make thee run up into the heavens, above the sun; and that the Serpent may not injure thee.'"[2]

More generally, however, he is represented as a fiend, created by Áhriman to vex the Iránian race, and carry off the light of sovereignty; while in the Sháhnáma he loses to a great extent his supernatural character, and is, as already has been pointed out,[3] the protagonist of the Semitic race in their dealings with the

[1] Introd. p. 7. [2] DZA, ii. 74. [3] Introd. p. 54.

people of Írán. He is accordingly represented as a native of Arabia, to have invaded Írán, and to have had his capital at a city which is perhaps best identified with Babylon. We read in the Zandavasta: "To her (*i.e.* Anaitis) did Azi Daháka (Zahhák), the three-mouthed, offer up a sacrifice in the land of Bawri, with a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs. He begged of her a boon, saying: 'Grant me this boon, O good, most beneficent Ardvi Súra Anáhita! that I may make all the seven Karshvares (Climes) of the earth empty of men.' Ardvi Súra Anáhita did not grant him that boon. . . . To her did Thraétaona (Farídún), the heir of the valiant Áthwya clan, offer up a sacrifice . . . saying: 'Grant me this, O good, most beneficent Ardvi Súra Anáhita! that I may overcome Azi Daháka, the three-mouthed, the three-headed, the six-eyed . . . that demon, baleful to the world . . . that Angra Mainyu (Áhriman) created against the material world, to destroy the world of the good principle; and that I may deliver his two wives, Savanghavák (Shahrináz) and Erenavák (Arnawáz), who are the fairest of body amongst women, and the most wonderful creatures in the world.'"[1]

Zahhák's palace is called in the Zandavasta Kvirinta, which may mean in the Avasta language "a stork." There is a legend that the palace was in the form of that bird.[2]

We learn from the Dínkard that the legend of Zahhák was contained in the Kitradád and Súdkar Nasks of the Zandavasta. The latter Nask contained information "About the smiting *by* Frédún, for the sake of killing Dahák; the striking of *his* club upon the nape of the neck, the heart, and even the skull; and Dahák's not dying from that beating. Then smiting *him* with a sword, and the formation of noxious creatures of many kinds, from the body of Dahák, at the first, second, and third blow. The exclamation of the creator Aúharmazd to Frédún thus: 'Thou shouldst not cut him who is Dahák, because if thou shouldst cut him, Dahák would be making this earth full of serpents, toads, scorpions, lizards, tortoises, and frogs;' with the mode of binding *him* with awful fetters, in the most grievous punishment of confinement. This, too, *that* when *Az*-í Dahák was bound, the report of the same proceeded thus through all the regions, which are seven, that downstricken is *Az*-í Dahák, but he *who* smote *him* is Frédún the Áspikán, the exalted *and* mighty . . . and those which are evil do not mention *Az*, nor demand the virtuous maiden with importunity, nor even coveted wealth. This, too, that when information came to him of women *or* property, that

[1] DZA, ii. 60–62 and notes.

[2] *Id.* 253 and note.

seemed to him desirable to possess, *they were* then admitted by him into a golden cage."[1]

Zahhák is looked upon in the Sháhnáma as exemplifying in his own person all the chief characteristics of the non-Aryan peoples with whom the Íránians came in contact—idolatry, black arts, serpent-worship, and human sacrifice. It is a remarkable fact, as is pointed out by Fergusson,[1] that serpent-worship seems always to have been accompanied by human sacrifice. He also appears to consider that the former was essentially Túránian, not Aryan or Semitic, and he points out that in the bas-relief at Nakhs-i-Rustam, in which Urmuzd is represented as bestowing the crown on Ardshír Pápakán, the first Sháh of the Sásánian dynasty, the god is seated on a horse, and beneath his feet lies Ardawán, the last king of the Parthian dynasty, with two serpents round his head.[2]

In the Sháhnáma, however, Zahhák is essentially Semitic, and his reign of a thousand years may be taken as typifying that race in their relations to the Íránians from the earliest traditions of Assyrian oppression to the political overlordship of the Khalífas of Baghdad in the poet's own days.

The reader will notice that Zahhák is not slain by Farídún but imprisoned—a point indicative of his supernatural character; and also that the legend of Káwa the smith is, as one would naturally expect, a West Íránian tradition, as shown by its association with the city of Ispahán. The historical flag of the Persian empire, known as the flag of Káwa, the traditional origin of which will be found in the text, fell into the hands of the Muhammadans at the battle of Kádisiyya, A.D. 637. The natives of the town of Damáwand, situated on the south side of the mountain of that name, still celebrate a feast, called "Íd-i-Kúrdí," or the Kúrds' Holiday, to commemorate the death of Zahhák,[3] while a cyclopean terrace in the neighbourhood is pointed out as the place where, in accord to Eastern usage, his drums were beaten at dawn.[4]

Zahhák's minister, Kundrav, has had a strange eventful mythological history. In the Vedas he appears as Gandháva, the divine guardian of the Soma—the sacred drink-offering, the Homa of Írán. In the Zandavasta he is a monstrous fiend or monster known as Gandarewa or Gandarep, the slaying of whom was one

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[1] WPT, iv. 27, 214.
[2] "Tree and Serpent Worship," p. 3, 2nd ed. 1873.
[3] *Id.* pp. 42–44.
[4] Morier, "A Second Journey through Persia," p. 357.
[5] GHP, i. 31.

of the great feats of the ancient Íránian hero Garshásp.[1] In the Sháhnáma he is represented as a human being—the factotum of Zahhák. The two are a good illustration of the relationship that exists between Indian and Íránian mythology, between the Vedas and the Zandavasta, and of the genesis of the legends of the Sháhnáma.

Some readers may like to see the version of the legend of Zahhák as given in the Armenian History attributed to Moses of Chorene, which though subsequent to his time is probably centuries anterior to the Sháhnáma, and shows that the legend was known in all its essential features long before Firdausí's days. It runs thus in Whiston's Latin version of the original:—

"Quid autem tibi sunt voluptati viles ac vanae de Byraspe Astyage[2] fabulae? aut cur nobis ineptos atque insulsos, ac rationis expertes Persarum sermones, laborem imponis explicandi, nempe de primo ejus benefacto malefico, Daemoniisque ei ministrantibus, útque errorem & falsitatem frustrari non potuerit, ac super humerorum osculatione, unde Draconum ortus fuit, ac deinde flagitii frequentia homines per ventris usum perdidit; útque Rhodanes[3] quidem posteà catenis eum aeneis constrinxerit, atque in montem, qui vocatur Dembavendus, abduxerit . . . is qui scelera machinabatur, domi eum forîsque sine suspicione erudire solebat, in Byraspis humeris caput reponens, ac maleficas artes in aurem inculcans, unde in fabulis narrant, puerum Satanae, ministrum ei fuisse, ejúsque voluntati obsecundâsse; útque etiam subinde, quasi praemium ab eo postulans, humeros ejus oscularetur. Caeterùm quod narrant, Dracones pullulâsse, sive ipsum Byraspem in Draconen prorsus mutatum fuisse, ita res se habet. Quippe cum immanem hominum numerum Daemoniis ille immolare coepisset, indignabunda multitudo ab eo tandem abalienata fuit, ísque igitur communi omnium consensu pulsus, ad montem supra memoratum confugit. Ibi, cum acriùs premeretur, sua eum caterva deseruit, quâ re confisi, qui eum persecuti erant, dies aliquot in iis locis residerunt. At Byraspes, cohortem dispersam cogens, ad inopinantes impetum facit (*sic*) magnúmque attulit detrimentum; sed vicit tandem multitudo, & Byraspes se in fugam contulit, quem comprehensum propè eum montem peremerunt, atque in magnam sulphuris foveam conjecerunt."[4]

For the mythological account of Abtín, the father of Farídún, see the introductory note to the next reign. His legend up

[1] See introductory note to the next reign.

[2] See Introd. p. 72.

[3] *I.e.* Farídún.

[4] *Mosis Chorenensis*, ed. Whiston, 77–80.

to the point where it is taken up in the Sháhnáma may be briefly summarised as follows. He was the head of a family of Persian landowners or thanes who dwelt in the Alburz range to the south of the Caspian and claimed to be descended from Jamshíd. He began the war of independence against Zahhák, but after some success was forced to take refuge with the remnant of his adherents at the court of the king of Ghílán, who received him kindly, but, fearing the vengeance of Zahhák, subsequently furnished him with ships and provisions, and dismissed him to seek his fortune elsewhere. After a month's voyage on the Caspian Abtín arrived at the court of the king of the Scythians, whose daughter Farának fell in love with him. Incidents similar to those in the story of Zál and Rúdába in the present volume followed. In the end Abtín married Farának, by whom he had two sons, and lived happily and in high favour with his father-in-law. He could not rest, however. In dream after dream he was incited to resume the war of independence against Zahhák, and at length, in spite of the opposition of his father-in-law, set sail with wife, family, and adherents, and after various adventures landed near Ámul in Mázandarán, where he made his home in the surrounding forests. Here he gathered a band of followers and resumed his guerilla warfare against Zahhák, in the midst of which Farídún was born, the birth being heralded by many prodigies. At this point the Sháhnáma takes up the story.[1]

§ 1

The Evil Customs of Zahhák and the Device of Irmá'íl and Karmá'íl

Zahhák sat on the throne a thousand years V. 35
Obeyed by all the world. Through that long time
The customs of the wise were out of vogue,
The lusts of madmen flourished everywhere,
All virtue was despised, black art esteemed,
Right lost to sight, disaster manifest;
While dívs accomplished their fell purposes
And no man spake of good unless by stealth.

[1] The above is summarised from GHP, i. 171, 211, &c.

Two sisters of Jamshíd, their sex's crown,
Were brought out trembling like a willow-leaf.
Of those two ladies visaged like the moon
The names were Shahrináz and Arnawáz.
Men bore them to the palace of Zahhák
And gave them over to the dragon king,
Who educated them in evil ways
And taught them sorcery and necromancy.
The only teaching that he knew was bad—
To massacre, to pillage, and to burn.
Each night two youths of high or lowly birth
Were taken to the palace by the cook,
Who having slaughtered them took out their brains
To feed the snakes and ease the monarch's anguish.
Now in the realm were two good high-born Persians—
The pious Irmá'íl and Karmá'íl
The prescient. Talking of the lawless Sháh,
Of his retainers and those hideous meals,
One said: "By cookery we might approach
The Sháh, and by our wits devise a scheme
V. 36 To rescue one from each pair doomed to death."
They went and learned that art. The clever twain
Became the monarch's cooks and joyed in secret.
The time for shedding blood and taking life
Came, and some murderous minions of the Sháh
Dragged to the cooks with violence two youths
And flung them prone. The livers of the cooks
Ached, their eyes filled with blood, their hearts with wrath,
And each glanced at the other as he thought
Of such an outrage by the Sháh. They slew
One of the youths and thought it best to mingle
His precious brains with sheep's and spare the other,
To whom they said: "Make shift to hide thyself,
Approach not any dwelling-place of man,
Thine are the wastes and heights."

A worthless head
Thus fed the serpents, and in every month
The cooks preserved from slaughter thirty youths,
And when the number reached two hundred saved
Provided them, the donors all unknown,
With sheep and goats, and sent them desertward.
Thus sprang the Kúrds, who know no settled home,
But dwell in woollen tents and fear not God.
Zahhák was wont, such was his evil nature,
To choose him one among his warriors
And slay him for conspiring with the dívs.
Moreover, all the lovely noble maidens
Secluded in their bowers, not tanged of tongues,
He took for handmaids. Not a jot had he V. 37
Of faith, king's uses, or morality.

§ 2

How Zahhák saw Farídún in a Dream

Observe God's dealings with Zahhák when he
Had forty years to live. One longsome night
He slumbered in the arms of Arnawáz,
And saw a vision of three warriors—
Boughs of the tree of kings. The youngest one,
Who held the middle place, was cypress tall,
In face, in armour, and in mien a king.
He rushed with ox-head mace to fight Zahhák,
Smote him upon the head, stripped off his skin,
And used it as a rope to bind his hands
Firm as a rock,[1] placed on his neck a yoke,
Then casting earth and dust upon his head

[1] Cf. Keresáspa's account of his treatment of Gandarep. See introductory note to Farídún.

Dragged him before the crowd in shame and anguish
Toward Mount Damáwand.
The tyrant writhed:
Thou wouldst have said: "His liver split with fright."
He yelled. The palace of the hundred columns
Shook, and the sun-faced ladies left their couches,
While Arnawáz said to him: "Sháh! what was it?
Confide in me; thou wast asleep in peace
At home! What saw'st thou? Say what came to thee?
The world is at thy will, beast, dív, and man
V. 38 Watch o'er thee and the seven climes are thine—
All 'twixt the moon and Fish.[1] What made thee start?
O master of the world! Oh! answer me."
The chief replied: "I may not tell, or else
Ye will despair my life."
Then Arnawáz:—
"Be pleased to tell us; we perchance may find
A cure, no ill is irremediable."
He told them every whit, then said the Fair:—
"Neglect it not but seek a remedy.
Thy throne's seat is the signet of the age,
Thy famous fortune brighteneth the world,
Beneath thy finger-ring thou hast the earth
With all its fairies, dívs, beasts, fowls, and men.
Call both the archmages and astrologers—
The wisest of each realm—and tell them all.
See if the hand that threateneth thy life
Is that of fairy, dív, or man. This known
Act vigorously; quail not before thy foes."
The lady's counsel pleased the Sháh.
Night then
Was dark as raven's plumes, but when at length
The Lamp showed o'er the hills, and thou hadst said,
"Strewed yellow gems upon the azure vault,"

[1] See Introd. p. 71.

Zahhák brought archimages shrewd of heart
And told to them the dream that pierced his liver.
He said: "Expound this dream without delay, V. 39
And make my soul a pathway toward the light."
He asked them privily about the future,
Demanding: "What will be my latter end,
And who succeed me? Tell or hide your heads
In shame."
They talked together sad at heart,
With parched lips and with sallow countenances:
They said: "If we tell truly what is fated
We shall be tortured, haply lose our lives;
And if we do not act straightforwardly
As well wash hands of life."
None dared to speak:
Their fortune was in jeopardy three days.
Upon the fourth the Sháh was wroth, exclaiming:—
"Foretell the future or be hung alive."
They drooped their heads, their hearts were rent, their eyes
Wept tears of blood. Among them was a man,
Wise, honest, prescient, by name Zirak—
The chief of all the band of archimages.
Concerned but fearless he addressed Zahhák:—
"Indulge no vapouring for none is born
Except to die. There have been kings ere thee
Fit for the throne of power. Both griefs and joys
Enough they reckoned up yet their time came.
If thou wert standing there— an iron wall—
Yon heaven would grind thee, thou wouldst not endure.
One will hereafter take thy throne and fling
Thy fortune to the ground. His name is Farídún,
And he will be a royal heaven to earth.
As yet he is not born, thy time of woe V. 40
Hath not arrived, but when his honoured mother
Hath borne him he will be a fruitful tree.

At man's estate his head will reach the moon
And he will seek thy belt, crown, throne, and casque.
In stature a tall cypress, he will shoulder
A mace of steel, will smite thy head therewith
And drag thee from the palace to the street
In bonds."
"Why bind me," said the impious king,
"In vengeance?"
Then Zirak: "Wert thou but wise . . . !
But all make pretexts for injurious acts.
Thy hand will slay his father and that wrong
Will fill the son's brains with revengeful thoughts:
Besides the nurse of this young atheling—
The cow, Birmáya hight—will perish too
By thy hand; so in vengeance he will brandish
An ox-head mace."
Zahhák heard anxiously,
And swooned upon his throne. The noble archmage
Turned him and fled away in dread of ill.
The Sháh recovered and resumed his seat.
He diligently sought throughout the world
For traces faint or clear of Farídún;
No food, no slumber, or repose took he,
His daylight turned to lapislazuli.

§ 3

The Birth of Farídún

Years passed away, calamity approached
The dragon-king, the blesséd Farídún
Was born, the fashion of the world was changed.
Of cypress height he shone forth with the Grace
Of kings of kings which erst Jamshíd possessed,

Was like the sun, as needful as the rain
To earth and fit as knowledge to the mind;
Revolving heaven loved him tenderly. V. 41
Then lived the cow Birmáya, chief of kine,
Born with a coat all bright and peacock-hued.
The wise, the archmages, and astrologers
Collected round her; none had seen or heard
Of such a cow before.
Meanwhile Zahhák
Was searching everywhere, and filling earth
With hue and cry, till Farídún became
A source of danger to his sire Abtín,
Who fled for life but to the Lion's toils,
For certain of the followers of Zahhák,
That impious monarch, met Abtín one day,
Seized him and bore him, like a cheetah bound,
Before the Sháh, who had him put to death.
When Farídún's wise mother Farának,
A glorious dame devoted to her child,
Perceived her husband's evil fate she fled;
And came heart-broken weeping to the field
Wherein the beautiful Birmáya was.
Still shedding drops of blood she bade the hind:—
"Protect this suckling for me, be a father
To him, and give him milk of yon fair cow.
Ask what thou wilt, e'en to my soul 'tis thine."
The hind replied: "I will perform thy bidding
And be as 'twere a slave before thy child."
Then Farának resigned the babe to him, V. 42
With all instructions that were requisite,
And that wise guardian like a father fed
The child for three years with Birmáya's milk;
But as Zahhák ne'er wearied of the search,
And as the cow was talked of everywhere,
The mother hasted to the field again

And spake thus to the guardian of her child:—
"A prudent thought—a thought inspired by God—
Hath risen in my heart. What we must do
Is this—there is no remedy, my son
And my dear life are one—I must abandon
This land of sorcerers, depart unmarked
To Hindústán and bear him to Alburz."
Then like a roe or one who rideth post
She took the young child to that lofty mountain
Where dwelt a devotee dead to the world,
To whom she said: "I am, O holy one!
A woeful woman from Írán. Know thou
That this my noble son will be hereafter
The leader of his people, will discrown
Zahhák and tread his girdle in the dust.
Take thou this child and father him with care."
The good man took her child and never breathed
One cold breath on him.
When the rumour reached
Zahhák about the cow and field he went,
Like some mad elephant, and slew Birmáya,
With all the other cattle that he saw
Within the field, and harried all the land.
He went next to the home of Farídún,
Searched it, but all in vain, for none was found,
And burned the lofty palace to the ground.

§ 4

How Farídún questioned his Mother about his Origin

V. 43 Now Farídún, when twice eight years had passed,
Sought out his mother on the plain and said:—
"Disclose thy secret, say who is my father,

What is my lineage, whom shall I declare
Myself in public? Let me have the truth."
She said: "I will tell all, my noble boy!
Within Írán erewhile lived one Abtín,
Of royal race, discerning mind, wise, brave,
And inoffensive, sprung from Tahmúras;
Abtín knew all the pedigree. Thy sire
And my dear spouse was he; my days were dark
When we were parted. Now Zahhák the warlock
Stretched from Írán his hand against thy life,
But I concealed thee. Oh! what woeful days
I passed while that brave youth—thy father—forfeited
His own sweet life for thee! Now on Zahhák
The warlock's shoulders grew two snakes which sucked
The life-breath of Irán, and thy sire's brains
Were taken from his head to feed them. I
In course of time came on an open pasture,
As yet unknown to fame, and there beheld
A cow like jocund spring, well shaped and coloured
From head to foot: before her sat her herd
Upon his heels as one before a king.
I put thee in his charge. For long he nursed thee V. 44
Upon his breast, the cow of peacock-hues
Supplying thee with milk that made thee thrive
Like some bold crocodile, until the tidings
Of cow and meadow reached the Sháh, and then
I bare thee from the pasture in all haste
And fled Írán and home and family.
He came and slew the noble, tender nurse
That could not speak to thee, then sent the dust
Up from our home and turned it to ditch."
The prince, enraged thereat, mused on revenge,
And said with aching heart and knitted brows:—
"The lion groweth brave by venturing,

And since the sorcerer hath done his part
Mine is to take my scimitar and lay
His palace in the dust; such is God's will."
She said: "This is not well; thou canst not stand
Alone against the world. He hath the crown
And throne, and troops at his command, who come
From all the realm to battle when he willeth,
A hundred thousand strong. View not the world
With boyish eyes; the laws of blood-revenge
Demand it not. Drunk with the wine of youth
Men think themselves the only ones on earth
And vapour, but be thy days mirth and joy.
Do thou, my son! bear this advice in mind,
Give all words save thy mother's to the wind."

§ 5

The Story of Zahhák and Káwa the Smith

Zahhák had "Farídún" upon his lips
V. 45 Both day and night, his lofty stature bent
Beneath the terrors of his heart until
One day, when sitting on the ivory throne
And wearing on his head the turquoise crown,
He called the notables from every province
To firm the bases of his sovereignty,
And said to them: "Good, wise, illustrious men!
I have, as sages wot, an enemy
Concealed, and I through fear of ill to come
Despise not such though weak. I therefore need
A larger host—men, dívs, and fairies too—
And ask your aid, for rumours trouble me;
So sign me now a scroll to this effect:—
'Our monarch soweth naught but seeds of good,
He ever speaketh truth and wrongeth none.'"

Those upright men both young and old subscribed
Their names upon the Dragon's document,
Against their wills, because they feared the Sháh.
Just then was heard outside the palace-gate
The voice of one that clamoured for redress.
They called him in before the Sháh and set him
Among the paladins. Zahhák in dudgeon
Said: "Tell us who hath wronged thee."
Then the man
Smote on his head before the Sháh and cried:—
"O Sháh! my name is Káwa and I sue
For justice. Do me right. I come in haste
Accusing thee in bitterness of soul;
An act of justice will enhance thy greatness. V. 46
I have had many an outrage at thy hands,
For thou hast stabbed my heart unceasingly,
And if the outrages had not thy sanction
Why hath my son been taken? I had once
In this world eighteen sons: but one is left!
Have mercy! Look on me this once! My liver
Is ever burning! What is mine offence,
O Sháh? Oh, say! If I have not offended
Seek not occasion 'gainst the innocent,
Regard my plight and save thyself from woe.
My back is bent with length of years, despair
Hath seized my heart, my head is all distraught,
My youth is gone, my children are no more,
And children are the nearest kin on earth.
Oppression hath a middle and an end,
And pretext ever. Tell me what is thine
For wronging me and ruining my life.
A smith am I, an inoffensive man,
Upon whose head the Sháh is pouring fire,
And thou art he, and, though of dragon-form,
Must still do justice in this cause of mine.

Since thou dost rule the seven provinces
Why should the toil and hardship all be ours?
We have accounts to settle—thou and I—
And all will be aghast if they shall show
That this my son hath perished in his turn
With all the rest to feed those snakes of thine."

The monarch listened and was sore amazed.
They set the young man free and strove to win
The father by fair words, but when Zahhák
Bade him subscribe the scroll he read it through
And shouted to the ancients of the realm:—
V. 47 "Confederates of the Dív with impious hearts!
Ye set your faces hellward and have yielded
To that man's bidding. I will not subscribe,
Or ever give the Sháh another thought."

He shouted, rose in fury, rent the scroll
And trampled it; then with his noble son
In front of him went raving to the street.
But all the courtiers blessed the Sháh and said:—
"Illustrious king of earth! may no cold blast
From heaven pass o'er thee on the day of battle.
Why was this insolent Káwa countenanced
As though a friend of thine? He tore the scroll,
Refusing to obey thee, and is gone
Bent on revenge and leagued, as thou wouldst say,
With Farídún! A viler deed than this
We never saw and marvel such should be."

He answered quickly: "I will tell you wonders.
When Káwa entered and I heard his cries,
A mount of iron seemed to rise betwixt us;
And when he beat his head a strange sensation
Convulsed me. How 'twill end I cannot tell;
The secrets of the sky are known to none."

When Káwa left the presence of the Sháh,
A crowd assembled in the market-place.

And still he shouted, crying out for aid
And urging all to stand upon their rights.
He took a leathern apron, such as smiths
Wear to protect their legs while at the forge,
Stuck it upon a spear's point and forthwith
Throughout the market dust began to rise.
He passed along with spear in hand exclaiming:—
"Ye men of name! Ye worshippers of God!
Whoe'er would 'scape the fetters of Zahhák V. 48
Let him resort with me to Farídún
And shadow in his Grace. Come ye to him;
The ruler here is Áhriman—God's foe."
So that poor leather, worthless as it was,
Discriminated friends and enemies.
He took the lead, and many valiant men
Resorted to him; he rebelled and went
To Farídún. When he arrived shouts rose.
He entered the new prince's court, who marked
The apron on the spear and hailed the omen.
He decked the apron with brocade of Rúm
Of jewelled patterns on a golden ground,
Placed on the spearpoint a full moon—a token
Portending gloriously—and having draped it
With yellow, red, and violet, he named it
The Káwian flag. Thenceforth when any Sháh
Acceded to the throne, and donned the crown,
He hung the worthless apron of the smith
With still more jewels, sumptuous brocade,
And painted silk of Chín. It thus fell out
That Káwa's standard grew to be a sun
Amid the gloom of night, and cheered all hearts.
Time passed and still the world maintained its secret.
When Farídún saw matters thus, and all men
Submiss to vile Zahhák, he came to Farának
With girded loins, crowned with a royal casque,

And said: "I go to battle, but do thou
Devote thyself to prayer. The Maker ruleth.
In weal and woe alike clasp hands to Him."
With tears and bleeding heart she cried: "O God!
My trust hath been in Thee. Turn from my son
V. 49 The onslaughts of the wicked on his life,
And rid the world of these infatuates."
Then Farídún gat ready with despatch
And secrecy. He had two brothers, both
Of noble birth and older than himself,
Hight Kaiánúsh and prosperous Purmáya.
He said to them: "Live, gallant hearts! in joy.
Revolving heaven bringeth naught but good;
The crown of power is coming back to us.
Provide me cunning smiths and let them make me
A massive mace."
They sought the smiths' bázár
In haste, whence all the aspiring craftsmen went
To Farídún, who taking compasses
Showed to the smiths the pattern, tracing it
Upon the ground. It had a buffalo's head.
They took the work in hand, and having wrought
A massive mace they bore it to the hero.
It shone as brightly as the noonday sun,
And Farídún, approving of the work,
Bestowed upon the makers raiment, gold,
And silver, holding out to them beside
Bright hopes and promise of advancement, saying:—
"If I shall lay the Dragon in the dust
I will not leave the dust upon your heads,
But justify the entire world, since I
Have Him in mind who judgeth righteously."

§ 6

How Farídún went to Battle with Zahhák

With head raised o'er the sun he girt his loins
For vengeance for his father, and set forth
Upon the day Khurdád right joyfully
With favouring stars and splendid auguries.
The troops assembled at his gate, his throne
Was lifted to the clouds. The first to go
Were baggage and provisions for the army V. 50
On buffaloes and high-necked elephants.
Purmáya rode with Kaiánúsh beside
The Sháh, like younger brothers and true friends.
He went like wind from stage to stage; revenge
Was in his head and justice in his heart.
The warriors on their Arab chargers reached
A spot where people dwelt who worshipped God,
And Farídún dismounting greeted them.
When night was darkening one in friendly guise
Approached him, walking with a measured tread,
With musky hair descending to the feet
And favoured like a maid of Paradise.
It was Surúsh, who came thence to advise
The king of good and ill, came like a fairy
And taught him privily the magic art,
That he might know the key of every lock
And by his spells bring hidden things to light;
While Farídún, perceiving that the work
Was God's not Áhriman's or come of evil,
Flushed like a cercis-bloom and joyed to see
How lusty he and his young fortune were.
The cooks prepared a feast—a noble banquet,
One fit for mighty men. Now Farídún,
The drinking done, being heavy sought repose.

His brothers, seeing that God sped his cause,
And that his fortune slumbered not, departed
Without delay to compass his destruction.
There was above their heads a lofty cliff
And underneath the Sháh slept peacefully.
His two abandoned brothers scaled the height
That night unseen, and scrupling at no crime
Set loose a mighty crag upon the brow
To fall directly on their brother's head,
V. 51 And kill him in his sleep. The crashing crag,
For God so ordered, roused the slumberer,
Who by his magic art arrested it
In mid career: it stopped dead. Farídún
Went on his way but kept the matter secret.
In front marched Káwa with the Káwian standard,
Soon to become the ensign of the realm.
Thus Farídún advanced, as one who sought
A diadem, toward the Arwand, or call it,
As Arabs do, the Dijla, if thou knowest not
The ancient tongue. He marched another stage
And came upon the Dijla, at Baghdád.
On drawing near he sent to greet the guard
And said: "Despatch to this side instantly
Your boats and vessels, bear me across with all
Mine army and let none be left behind."
The river-guard sent not his boats nor came
At Farídún's behest, but made reply:—
"The Sháh gave privy orders: 'Launch no boat
Without a passport under mine own seal.'"
The prince, enraged and fearless of the stream,
Girt like a king and bent upon revenge,
Plunged with his rose-red charger in the flood.
V. 52 With one accord his comrades girt themselves,
Turned toward the stream, and on their brave, fleet steeds

Plunged over saddle-back. The warriors' heads
Reeled while their swift steeds struggled with the tide,
And with their necks emerging seemed to be
The phantom cohort of a dream. The warriors
Reached the dry land undamped in their revenge
And set their faces toward Bait al Mukaddas.

This men called when they used the ancient tongue
Gang-i-Dizhukht; to-day 'tis known among
The Arabs as "The Holy Place." The fair
Tall palace of Zahhák was builded there.

When they approached the city that they sought,
And Farídún beheld it a mile off,
He saw a pile whose building towered o'er Saturn,
So that thou wouldst have said: "'Twill catch the stars!"
It shone like Jupiter in heaven; the place
Appeared all peace and love and happiness.
The hero recognised that seat of power
And springlike beauty as the Dragon's dwelling,
And said: "The man who reared a pile like that
From dust I fear me cottoneth with the world,
But still 'tis better to press on than tarry."

This said he grasped his massive mace and gave
His fleet steed rein, and thou hadst said: "A flame
Shot up before the guards."

He entered riding— V. 53
An inexperienced but valiant youth,
Who called upon the name of God—while they
That were on guard fled from him in dismay.

§ 7

How Farídún saw the Sisters of Jamshíd

Then Farídún o'erthrew the talisman,
Raised heaven-high by Zahhák, because he saw
That it was not of God, with massive mace

Laid low the sorcerers within the palace—
All fierce and notable dívs—and set himself
Upon the enchanter's throne. This done he took
Possession of the royal crown and palace,
But though he searched he failed to find Zahhák.
Then from the women's bower he brought two Idols
Sun-faced, dark-eyed; he had them bathed, he purged
The darkness of their minds by teaching them
The way of God and made them wholly clean;
For idol-worshippers had brought them up
And they were dazed in mind like drunken folk.
Then while the tears from their bright eyes bedewed
Their rosy cheeks those sisters of Jamshíd
Said thus to Farídún: "Mayst thou be young
Till earth is old! What star was this of thine,
O favoured one! What tree bore thee as fruit,
Who venturest inside the Lion's lair
So hardily, thou mighty man of valour?
What anguish and what bale have we endured
All through this dragon-shouldered Áhriman!
V. 54 Oh! what a miserable world for us
Did this infatuated sorcerer make!
Yet saw we never here a man so hardy,
Bold, and ambitious as to think that he
Could take the throne."
He answered: "Throne and fortune
Abide with none. My sire was fortune's favourite,
But still Zahhák seized on him in Írán
And slew him cruelly, so I have set
My face against Zahhák's throne in revenge.
He slew the cow Birmáya too—my nurse,
A very gem of beauty. What could he,
That villain, gain by slaughtering that dumb beast?
Now I am ready and I purpose war;
I came not from Írán to bring him pardon,

Or good will, but to brain him in revenge
With this ox-headed mace."
When Arnawáz
Heard this she guessed the secret, and replied:—
"Then thou art Farídún the Sháh and wilt
Abolish necromacy and black art,
For thou art fated to destroy Zahhák:
The binding of thy loins will loose the world.
We twain, pure, modest, and of royal seed,
Submitted only through the fear of death,
Else would we ever sleep or wake, O king!
Beside a serpent-spouse?"
Then Farídún:—
"If heaven over us shall do me right
I will cut off this Dragon from the earth,
And purge the world of its impurity.
Now speak the truth at once and tell me where
That vile one is."
Those fair dames told him all;
They thought: "The Dragon's head will meet the shears,"
And said: "He went to Hindústán to practise
Some spell-work in that land of sorcerers.
He will cut off a thousand innocent heads, V. 55
For he is terror-struck at evil fortune,
Because a seer hath said: 'Earth will be void
Of thee, for Farídún will seize thy throne
And thy prosperity wither in a moment.'
Struck by the words his heart is all aflame,
And life affordeth him no happiness.
Now is he slaughtering beasts and men and women
To make a bath of blood and thus defeat
That prophecy. Those serpents on his shoulders
Keep him in long and sore disquietude.

From clime to clime he roveth, for the snakes
Give him no rest. 'Tis time for his return,
But place there is not."

Stricken to the heart
That lovely pair revealed the mystery:
The exalted chieftain listened eagerly.

§ 8

The Story of Farídún and the Minister of Zahhák

Zahhák while absent left in charge of all
A man of wealth, who served him like a slave,
So that his master marvelled at his zeal,
One named Kundrav, because he used to limp[1]
Before the unjust king. He came in haste
And saw within the hall a stranger crowned,
Reposing on the throne, in person like
A cypress over which the full moon shineth,
On one side Shahrináz the cypress-slim,
Upon the other moon-faced Arnawáz.
The city swarmed with soldiers, and a guard
Stood ready armed before the palace-gate.
All undismayed, not asking what it meant,
Kundrav approached with lowly reverence,
Then offered homage, saying: "Live, O king!
V. 56 While time shall last. Blest be thy sitting here
In Grace, for thou deservest sovereignty.
The seven climes be thine and be thy head
Above the rain-clouds."

Being bid approach
He told the Sháh the secrets of his office
And was commanded: "Serve a royal feast,
Let wine be brought, call minstrels fit to hear,

[1] Firdausí's etymology must not be relied upon. See the introductory note to this reign.

To cheer me at the banquet, fill the goblet,
Spread out the board, and summon worthy guests."
Kundrav obeyed and brought bright wine and minstrels,
And noble guests whose birth entitled them.
So Farídún quaffed wine and chose the lays
And held that night a worthy festival.
Kundrav at dawn left the new prince in haste
And on a swift steed sought Zahhák. Arrived
He told the things that he had seen and heard :—
" O king of chiefs ! the token of thy fall
Hath come, three men of noble mien arrived
With troops ; the youngest of the three, in height
A cypress and a king in face, is placed
Between the other two and hath precedence.
His mace is like a mountain-crag and shineth
Amid the host. He entered thine abode
On horseback, and the others rode with him—
A noble pair. He went and sat upon
The royal throne and broke thy charms and spells.
As for the dívs and warriors in thy palace
He struck their heads off as he rode along V. 57
And mingled brains and blood ! "
Zahhák replied :—
" 'Tis well, guests should enjoy themselves."
Kundrav
Retorted : " One that hath an ox-head mace !
Beware of such in coming and in going ;
Besides, he sitteth boldly on thy couch,
Eraseth from the crown and belt thy name,
And maketh thine ungrateful folk his own :
If such a guest thou knowest know him such."
Zahhák said : " Trouble not, it bodeth well
When guests are at their ease."
Kundrav replied :—
" Yea, I have heard so ; hear thou my rejoinder :

If this great man be any guest of thine
What business hath he in thy women's bower?
He sitteth with the sisters of Jamshíd
The worldlord, taking counsel, while this hand
Is toying with the cheek of Shahrináz
And that with Arnawáz' carnelian lip.
At night he doth still worse and pilloweth
His head on musk! What musk? The locks of Moons
Who ever were the idols of thy heart."
Zahhák, wolf-savage, wished that he were dead.
With foul abuse he sternly hoarsely threatened
That luckless one: "No more shalt thou have charge
Of any house of mine."
Kundrav replied:—
"Henceforth, O king! I deem thy fortune shent.
How shouldst thou make me ruler in the city,
Or give me even minstrels' work, when thou
Hast lost the throne of power? For like a hair
From dough hast thou departed from the throne
Of sovereignty. Think, sire! what thou wilt do.
V. 58 Have thine own interests no concern for thee?
They ne'er before were in such jeopardy."

§ 9

How Farídún bound Zahhák

Roused by that talk Zahhák resolved to act,
And bade his keen-eyed roadsters to be saddled.
Now as he neared the city by a byway
With valiant dívs and warriors, and saw
His palace-roofs and gate he vowed revenge.
The troops of Farídún received the tidings
And flocked to meet him. Leaping from their steeds
They struggled hand to hand. The citizens,

Such as were warlike, manned the roofs and gates
For Farídún; Zahhák had maddened them.
Bricks from the walls, stones from the roofs, with swords
And poplar arrows in the street, were plied
As thick as hail; no place was left to stand.
The mountains echoed with the chieftains' shouts,
Earth trembled neath the chargers' tramping hoofs,
A cloud of black dust gathered, and the flints
Were pierced by javelins. From the Fane of Fire
One shouted: "If some wild beast had been Sháh,
We—young and old—had served him loyally,
But not that foul Zahhák with dragon-shoulders."
The warriors and citizens were blent
Together as they fought—a mass of men.
O'er that bright city rose a cloud of dust
That turned the sun to lapislazuli.
Anon Zahhák alone in jealous fear V. 59
Approached the palace, mailed, that none might know him.
Armed with a lasso sixty cubits long
He scaled the lofty edifice in haste
And saw beneath him dark-eyed Shahrináz,
Who toyed bewitchingly with Farídún.
Her cheeks were like the day, her locks like night,
Her lips were opened to revile Zahhák,
Who recognised therein the act of God—
A clutch of evil not to be evaded—
And with his brain inflamed by jealousy
Dropped one end of the lasso to the court
And so slid down from that high roof, regardless
Of throne and precious life. As he descended
He drew a keen-edged poniard from its sheath,
Told not his purpose or his name, but clutched
The steel-blue dagger in his hand, athirst
For blood—the blood of those two beauteous dames.

His feet no sooner rested on the ground
Than Farídún rushed on him like the wind
And beat his helm in with the ox-head mace.
"Strike not," cried blest Surúsh, who hurried thither,
"His time hath not yet come, but bind him vanquished
Firm as a rock and bear him to some gorge,
Where friends and kinsmen will not come to him."
When Farídún heard that he tarried not,
But gat a lasso made of lion's hide
And bound Zahhák around the arms and waist
With bonds that no huge elephant could snap,
Then sitting on Zahhák's own golden throne
Determined all the evil usages
And made a proclamation at the gate:—
"Ye citizens possessed of Grace and wisdom!
Disarm and follow but one path to fame,
V. 60 For citizens and soldiers may not seek
A common excellence; this hath his craft
And that his mace; their spheres are evident
And, if confounded, earth will be so too.
Depart rejoicing, each one to his work,
And live and prosper long, because the foul one,
Whose acts brought terror on the world, is bound."
Men hearkened to the great redoubted Sháh.
Then all the leading, wealthy citizens
Drew near with gladness bringing offerings
And heartily accepted Farídún,
Who graciously received them and discreetly
Gave each his rank's due, counselled them at large,
And offered up his prayers and thanks to God,
Then said: "The realm is mine, your fortune's star
Is bright, for me alone did God send forth
From Mount Alburz by Grace, and for your sakes,
To set the world free from the Dragon's bane.

Blest as we are by Him who giveth good
We ought to walk toward good upon His paths.
As king I may not tarry in one place,
Else would I pass with you a length of days."
The nobles kissed the ground. Anon the din
Of drums rose from the gate whereon all eyes
Were fixed, the people yelled against the man,
Whose days were almost sped: "Bring forth the Dragon
Bound in the lasso's coils as he deserveth."
The troops withdrew no wealthier than they came,
And took Zahhák, bound shamefully and flung
In wretched plight upon a camel's back
On this wise to Shírkhán. Call this world old[1]
Or ever thou shalt hear this story told.
What changes numberless have passed and still
Must pass hereafter over plain and hill!
Thus fortune's favourite bore Zahhák toward V. 61
Shírkhán, and driving him among the mountains
Was purposing to cast him headlong down,
When came the blest Surúsh and whispered thus
The prince in friendly wise: "Convey the captive
Thus to Mount Damáwand with speed, and take
No escort, or but what thy safety needeth."
He bore Zahhák as one that rideth post
And fettered him upon Mount Damáwand;
So when new bonds were added to the old,
And fate had not another ill in store,
The glory of Zahhák became like dust
And earth was cleansed from his abominations,
He was removed from kindred and from friends,
And bonds alone were left him in the mountains,
Where Farídún chose out a narrow gorge—
A chasm which he had marked of viewless depth—

[1] In the Persian, "Shírkhán," with one letter changed, would mean "call old."

And having studded it with heavy nails,
Whereon the brain might chafe, secured Zahhák,
Bound by the hands upon a crag, that so
His anguish might endure. Thus was he left
To hang: his heart's blood trickled to the ground.
Come let us, lest we tread the world for ill,
Be on attaining every good intent;
No good or evil will endure but still
Good furnisheth the better monument.
A lofty palace, wealth of every kind,
Will not avail; thy monument on earth
Will be the reputation left behind
And therefore deem it not of little worth.
No angel was the glorious Farídún,
Not musk and ambergris; he strove to win
By justice and beneficence the boon
Of greatness: be a Farídún therein.
By godlike travail undertaken he
First cleansed the world from its iniquity.
The binding of Zahhák, that loathly one
Devoid of justice, was the chief deed done.
V. 62 He next avenged the murder of Abtín,
Caused all the world to recognise his sway,
And lastly purged the surface of earth clean
Of madmen, and took miscreants' power away.
O world! how loveless and malign art thou
To breed the quarry and then hunt it down!
Lo! where is Farídún the valiant now,
Who took away from old Zahhák the crown?
Upon this earth five hundred years he reigned
And then departing left an empty throne;
Bequeathing earth to others, he retained
Of all that he possessed regret alone.
So is it with us whether great or small
And sheep or shepherd, 'tis the same with all.

VI

FARÍDÚN

HIS REIGN WAS FIVE HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

Farídún, when firmly established on the throne, marries his three sons to the three daughters of Sarv, king of Yaman, and subsequently dividing the earth into three parts gives one to each of his sons. The two elder, becoming envious of the youngest, murder him, and are themselves slain by the grandson of their murdered brother, Minúchihr, who succeeds to the throne after the death of Farídún.

NOTE

In the Vedas we find the expression Tritá Áptyá. Tritá is the name of a semi-divine personage, who is endowed with the gift of healing by the gods. Áptyá may be a proper name, a patronymic, or mere epithet. The fact that it is found in connection with other names besides Tritá's rather points to the last. We also find in the Vedas a hero named Traitaná, who is recorded to have slain a giant. Tritá and Traitaná, who were probably quite distinct personages originally, appear to have become confused together even in the Vedas themselves, the exploits of each were attributed to the other also, and the confusion was handed down to later times. Thus we find Tritá struggling with the storm-fiend for the possession of the waters,[1] and Traitaná endowed with the gift of healing. In the Zandavasta, Tritá Áptyá and Traitaná become three personages—Thrita, Áthwya, and Thraétaona respectively. Thrita is there represented as the first healer, and also as the third who offered the drink-offering of the Haoma. The word Sáma is also associated with him, a word which is said to mean

[1] See Introd. p. 7.

"appeaser," with reference apparently to his medical powers. The priest and medicine-man were one originally. In reward for offering the Haoma two sons were born to Thrita, of whom one was the hero Keresáspa. Áthwya is represented as being the second to offer the Haoma, and as a reward for so doing a son is born to him too—Thraétaona, whose double character as hero and physician is clearly indicated. He is described as the smiter of the dragon Daháka, and is also worshipped in his capacity as healer to avert or cure sickness. The word Sáma, originally an epithet applied to Thrita, became applied to his son Keresáspa as a patronymic. He is thus described as Sáma Keresáspa, and a special epithet is bestowed on him sometimes to the exclusion of other titles—that of Narimanau, "the manly minded."

He is described in the Zandavasta as "the holy Keresáspa, the Sáma, the club-bearer with plaited hair,[1] . . . the manly-hearted Keresáspa . . . he who was the sturdiest of the men of strength, next to Zarathustra, for his manly courage. For Manly Courage clave unto him. . . . Manly Courage, firm of foot, unsleeping, quick to rise, and fully awake, that clave unto Keresáspa."[2] Short accounts of his exploits occur in the Zandavasta,[3] but the fullest are found in a Pahlaví version of the fourteenth Fargard of the lost *Súdkar Nask*. It appears that Keresáspa, great as he was as a hero, fell a victim to the wiles of one of Áhriman's evil creations—the Pairika Knathaiti, who we are told "clave unto Keresáspa."[4] The Pairika is the Parí, our Peri or Fairy, and symbolises idolatry in Zoroastrian mythology.[5] Keresáspa therefore neglected the worship of fire and became an idolater. For this he was cast into hell, where he remained till Urmuzd, having heard him commended by Zoroaster, summoned him, and he pleaded to be released in consideration of the good works achieved by him while on earth. He urged that he slew the serpent Srórvbar, "which *was* swallowing horses *and* swallowing men, and its teeth were as long as my arm, its ear was as large as fourteen blankets, its eye was as large as a wheel, and its horn was as much as Dahák[6] in height. And I was running as much as half a day on *its* back, till *its* head *was* smitten by me at the neck *with* a club made for *my* hand, and *it was* slain outright by me . . . by me Gandarep[7] *was* slain outright, by whom twelve districts *were* devoured at once. When I looked among the teeth of Gandarep, dead men were sticking among his teeth ; and my beard *was* seized by him,

[1] DZA, ii. 223. [2] *Id.* 295. [3] *Id.*
[4] *Id.* i. 6. [5] *Id.*, note. [6] *i.e.* Zahhák.
[7] See introductory note to Zahhák.

and I dragged him out of the sea; nine days and nights the conflict *was* maintained by us in the sea, and then I became more powerful than Gandarep. The sole of Gandarep's foot was also seized by me, and the skin *was* flayed off up to *his* head, and with it the hands and feet of Gandarep *were* bound . . . and Gandarep *was* taken aiid slain by me . . . Grant *me*, O Auhar-mazd! heaven *or* the supreme heaven! for I have slain the highwaymen who were so big in body that, when they were walking, people considered in this *way*, that 'below them are the stars and moon, and below them moves the sun *at* dawn, and the water of the sea reaches up to their knees.' And I reached up to their legs, and they were smitten on the legs by me; they fell, and the hills on the earth were shattered by them." Keresáspa went on to tell how the demons urged on the wind to attack him, how it came on in its strength, uprooting every shrub, and tree, and reducing earth to powder in its path, and how he withstood it and prevailed. He finally pleaded that when, in the fulness of time, Zahhák shall escape from the fetters wherewith Farídún bound him to Mount Damáwand, and threaten the world with destruction, he (Keresáspa) alone can conquer and finally destroy that evil spirit. Urmuzd, in consideration for the outraged spirit of fire, long remained obdurate to the pleadings of Keresáspa, though supported by those of Zoroaster himself and others, but finally yielded, and Keresáspa was admitted into heaven.[1]

With regard to the final destruction of Zahhák by Keresáspa we find information in the Bundahish and in the Bahman Yast. Combining the accounts given, we learn that Keresáspa obtained immortality while on earth, but that owing to his slighting fire-worship he was wounded by a Turk named Nihávy, and fell asleep in the valley of Pishín in Kábulistán. He is there watched over by the divine glory, and by the guardian spirits of the righteous till the epoch when the powers of evil shall rally for the last great struggle against good, and Áhriman summon Zahhák from Mount Damáwand. Zahhák will rush forth freed from the fetters of Farídún, first apparently swallow Áhriman himself, and then a third of mankind, cattle, sheep, and other creatures of Urmuzd, smite the water, fire, and vegetation, and commit grievous sin. Then the water, the fire, and vegetation will lament before Urmuzd and pray that Farídún may be revived to slay Zahhák, else fire declares that it will not heat, and water that it will not flow. Then Urmuzd will bid Surúsh and another angel to rouse Keresáspa the Sáman. They will go to him and call him thrice.

[1] WPT, ii. 369–382.

At the fourth summons he will wake and go forth to encounter Zahhák, smite him on the head with the famous club, and slay him. All evil, sin, and misery will cease, and the era of eternal happiness begin.[1]

In the Sháhnáma, Thrita, Áthwya, Thraétaona, and Sáma Keresáspa Narimanau reappear under changed aspects. Thrita and Thraétaona coalesce into Farídún, while Áthwya becomes Abtín, the father of Farídún. Sáma Keresáspa Narimanau splits up into several personalities—Sám, the grandfather, and Narímán, the great grandfather, of Rustam, Garshásp, a more remote ancestor of his, perhaps Garshásp, the hero mentioned in the present reign, and possibly Garshásp, the tenth Sháh. In the case of Sám and Narímán the epithets and patronymics of earlier times become the names of heroes of later ages.[2]

The three sons of Farídún—Salm, Túr, and Íraj—appear in the Zandavasta as Sairima, Túra, and Airyu respectively. Firdausí seems to derive the first, of course wrongly, from the Arabic "salámat," "safety."[3] Túr may be connected with an Aryan root "tu" meaning "to swell, to grow great or strong." Íraj is the same word as Aryan and means "noble."

For the ethnical significance of the names, see Introd. p. 54.

§ 1

How Farídún ascended the Throne

When Farídún attained his wish, and reigned
Supreme on earth, he ordered crown and throne
According to the usance of old times
Within the palace of the king of kings;
And on the first of Mihr, a blesséd day,
Set on his head the royal diadem.

[1] WPT, i. 119, 233–235.

[2] For the subject-matter of the above *cf.* HEP, 277, 278; DZA, i. 225; MZA, iii. 233; WPT, ii. 369.

[3] In the oldest Pahlaví—that of the inscriptions—the letters *r* and *l* were represented by distinct signs, but in the later Pahlaví—that of the manuscripts—the same sign stood for both letters; it is easy to understand the confusion that resulted, especially in the case of proper names. See DEI, i. 19.

In those days, apprehensive of no evil,
All men began to tread the path of God,
Abstaining from contention and observing
A feast inaugurated royally.
Then sages sat rejoicing and each held
A ruby goblet, then the wine was bright,
The new Sháh's face was bright and all the world
Itself was brightened as that month began.
He bade men kindle bonfires and the people V. 63
Burned ambergris and saffron; thus he founded
Mihrgán.[1] That time of rest and festival
Began with him, and his memorial
Is still the month of Mihr. He banished then
All grief and labour from the minds of men.
He dedicated not a single day
To evil in five centuries of sway,
But yet the world remained not his. Then shun
Ambition and escape from grief, my son!
Note well that this world is no property,
And small contentment wilt thou gain thereby.
Now Farának yet knew not that her child
Had come to be the Sháh, or that Zahhák
Had lost the throne and that his power was ended.
At length news of the happy youth arrived
And of his being crowned. She bathed herself
And prostrate in God's presence offered thanks
Because of this most happy turn of fortune,
And uttered maledictions on Zahhák;
Then to all those who were in poverty
And strove to hide it she afforded aid,
But kept alike their secret and her own.
She spent a week on alms till paupers failed;
Another week she feasted all the nobles,
Bedecked her house as it had been a garden

[1] A feast held on the 16th of Mihr and the five following days.

And there received her guests. She then unlocked
The portal of her secret hoards, brought forth
The various treasures that she had amassed,
And purposed to distribute all her store.
It seemed the time to ope the treasury,
For drachms were trifles since her son was Sháh.
She made no stint of robes and royal jewels,
Arabian steeds with headstalls wrought of gold,
V. 64 Habergeons, helmets, double-headed darts,
Swords, crowns and belts. Intent upon her son
She placed her wealth on camels and despatched it
With praises on her tongue. The king of earth
Beheld, accepted it, and blessed his mother.
The leaders of the army when apprised
Sped to the monarch of the world and cried:—
"Victorious Sháh and worshipper of God,
To whom be praise! may He give praise to thee.
Thus may thy fortune grow from day to day,
Thus may the fortunes of thy foes be shent,
May heaven make thee still victorious
And mayst thou still be gracious and august."
The wise came to the Sháh from their retreats
And poured before his throne gold mixed with gems;
The nobles too from all his provinces
At that hocktide assembled at his gate,
Where all invoked God's blessing on the crown,
The throne, the diadem, and signet-ring.
With hands upstretched they prayed right heartily:—
"May such joy last, the Sháh bear fruit for ever."
As time went on he journeyed round the world,
Examining its sights and mysteries,
Marked each injustice and all wasted lands,
Bound evil hands with bonds of kindliness—
A policy that well beseemeth kings—

Bedecked the world like Paradise, and raised
Instead of grass the cypress and the rose-tree.
He reached Tammísha, passing by Ámul,[1]
And built a seat there in the famous chace:
Kús is the modern title of the place.

§ 2

How Farídún sent Jandal to Yaman

Now fifty years had passed, and by good fortune V. 65
He had three noble sons fit for the crown,
Of royal birth, as tall as cypresses,
With cheeks like spring, in all points like their father.
Two were the stainless sons of Shahrináz,
The youngest fair-cheeked Arnawáz had borne;
And though they could outpace an elephant
Their father in his love had named them not.
In time the Sháh perceived them fit to rule
And called Jandal, a noble counsellor,
In everything devoted to his lord,
And said: "Go round the world, select three maidens
Of noble lineage worthy of my sons,
In beauty fit to be affined to me
And named not by their sire for fear of talk,
Three sisters in full blood with fairy faces,
Unstained, of royal race, so much alike
In height and looks that folk can scarce discern
Betwixt them."
Having heard he undertook
The fair emprise, for he was shrewd and upright,
Of plausible address and full of tact.
He left Írán with certain of his friends
To make inquiries and receive reports.

[1] In Mázandarán.

Then when he heard of any chief with daughters
He sought to learn about them privily,
Yet could not find among the wealthy thanes
One fit to be affined to Farídún.
V. 66 This shrewd and holy man at length reached Sarv—
The monarch of Yaman—with whom he found
The object of his search—three maidens such
As Farídún required. With stately step,
As 'twere a pheasant pacing toward a rose,
He came to Sarv, and having kissed the ground
Explained his coming, praised the king and said:—
"For ever live, exalted sovereign,
Thou ceaseless lustre of the crown and throne!"
The king said: "Be thy praise in every mouth.
What is thy message? What are thy commands?
Art thou ambassador or principal?"
Jandal replied: "May every joy be thine,
And ever far from thee the hand of ill.
I come as some poor heathen to convey
A message from Írán. Great Farídún
Saluteth thee by me. Thou ask'st my business:
I answer: Mighty Farídún applaudeth thee,
And great are they whom he despiseth not.
He said: 'Say to the monarch of Yaman:—
So long as musk hath scent perfume the throne,
Be thy griefs scattered and thy wealth amassed,
And ever, king of Arabs! mayst thou be
Safeguarded by the stars from all mishap.
What thing is there more sweet than life and children?
Yea, they are sweeter than all else beside,
For none is dearer than a child, that bond
Is as no other bond. If any man
Hath three eyes I possess them in my sons,
But know that they are better still than eyes
For those that look on them give thanks. What said

The sage when he defined a proper league?
'"I ne'er ally myself but with my betters."
A sage intent on good will seek his friends
Among his peers, men may be fortunate
But monarchs are not well without a host.
My realm is prosperous, I have treasure, might, V. 67
And daring, with three sons who well deserve
To reign—wise, men of knowledge and of prowess,
Without a want or wish unsatisfied.
For these three princes in domestic life
I need three consorts of a royal race,
And I have news (whereon I send in haste)
By means of mine informants that thou hast
Among the ladies that are in thy bower,
O honour-loving king! three maiden daughters
As yet unnamed, whereat my heart rejoiced,
For my three sons of course are nameless still.
'Twere surely well for us to intermingle
These precious gems of two varieties,
Three virtuous maids with three aspiring princes,
Fit joined to fit, no room for scandal there.'
Such is his message; think of thy reply."
The monarch of Yaman drooped like the jasmine
When out of water, thinking: "If these Moons
Are taken from me, and I see them not
About my couch, my day will turn to night.
No need to answer yet; I will consult
With those who share with me the consequence."
He first assigned the ambassador a lodging,
Then having closed the audience sat and pondered.
The monarch summoned from the Bedouins
Full many a chieftain well approved in war,
And made the matter manifest to all:—
"I have as only issue of my wedlock V. 68
Three Lights that are resplendent in mine eyes,

And Farídún hath sent an embassage
To spread a goodly snare before my feet;
He would deprive me of these Eyes of mine,
And I would fain consult thereon with you.
The ambassador saith thus: 'Thus saith the Sháh:—
"I have three princes who adorn my throne
And seek for favour and affinity
With thee by marriage with thy virtuous daughters."'
If I shall answer, 'Yes,' and mean it not,
'Twill be a lie; to lie is not for kings;
If I shall acquiesce in his request
My heart will be on fire, my face all tears;
And if I shall refuse my heart will feel
His vengeance—not a matter for a jest
From one who is the monarch of the world;
And travellers too have heard of what Zahhák
Hath suffered from him. Now advise me well."

The veteran valiant chiefs thus made reply:—
"We disapprove of veering to each gust.
Be Farídún however great a king
No earringed slaves are we, but say our say
And take the consequence. 'Tis ours to handle
The bridle and the lance; we make the earth
A winefat with our swords, we make the air
A reed-bed with our spears. If thy three children
Are held so dear unlock thy treasury
And shut thy lips; or, if thou wilt use craft,
But fearest Farídún, make such demands
That none shall ever hear the like again."

The king heard while the chieftains said their say,
But felt no less uncertain of his way.

§ 3

How the King of Yaman answered Jandal

At length he called the Sháh's ambassador V. 69
And spake to him at large in gracious words:—
"I am the servant of thy lord; in all
That he commandeth me will I obey.
Thus say to him: 'Exalted as thou art,
Still thy three sons are precious unto thee;
And kings esteem their own sons very precious
When they are such as ornament the throne.
I grant what thou hast said, I too have children
And judge by them; yet if the mighty Sháh
Were to require mine eyes of me, or ask
The kingdom of Yaman and desert-tribes,
It were of lesser moment than for me
To never look upon my children more;
Still if the Sháh wish this I may not walk
Save as he biddeth me, and my three children,
If so he will, shall cease to be my kin;
But when shall I behold those princely sons
Who are the lustre of thy crown and throne?
Let those blithe youths come hither and illume
My gloomy soul; to see them will rejoice
My heart, and I will contemplate their shrewdness;
Then I will give to them my three bright Eyes
According to our customs. Furthermore,
When I perceive that they are upright men,
I will join hand in hand in league with them,
And whensoe'er the Sháh would see his sons
They shall return.'"
Jandal, the sweet-voiced speaker
On hearing kissed the throne with reverence,

Then uttering praises hied him to his lord,
V. 70 To whom he told what he had said and heard.
The monarch bade his sons attend, he spake
About the mission of Jandal, and said:—
"The monarch of Yaman is king of peoples,
Sarv is a cypress throwing lengthy shadows.
He hath three daughters—pearls as yet unpierced—
Who are his crown, for he hath not a son.
Before all three of them Surúsh would kiss
The ground, I ween, if he might have such brides.
These I demanded of their sire for you
And took such order as becometh us.
Your duty now will be to go to him,
But be discreet in all things small and great.
Be complaisant but guarded therewithal,
Heed what he saith and answer courteously.
If he consulteth you advise him well.
Now hearken to my words and ye shall prosper:
Among the peoples none can equal Sarv,
For he is fluent, ardent, shrewd, and pure.
Allow him not to find you off your guard,
For wise men work with subtilty. The first day
He will assign you chief seats at a feast,
Bring forth three sun-faced maids like garths in spring,
All full of grace, of colour, and perfume,
And seat them on the throne, these Cypresses
V. 71 In height and in appearance so alike
That none could tell their order as to age.
Now of these three the youngest will walk first,
The eldest last, the other in the midst.
The king will place the youngest maid beside
The eldest youth, beside the youngest prince
The eldest maid, and pair the mid in age.
Know, for 'tis worth your while, that he will ask:—
'How range ye in respect of age these damsels?'

Reply: 'The youngest hath the highest place,
The eldest hath a place below her rank,
The mid in age is placed as she should be,
And thou hast failed in this attempt of thine.'"
The pure and high-born three paid all regard
To what their father said, and left his presence
Fulfilled with wisdom and with artifice.
How should the sons by such a father taught
Be ill advised or indiscreet in aught?

§ 4

How the Sons of Farídún went to the King of Yaman

They summoned archimages and made ready;
Their retinue was like the starry sky,
All men of name with sunlike countenances.
Sarv, hearing of their coming, decked his host
Like pheasant's plumes, and sent to welcome them V. 72
A goodly band of kinsfolk and of magnates.
As those three noble princes reached Yaman
Both men and women met them on their way,
Bestrewing saffron mixed with precious jewels
And mingling musk with wine. The horses' manes
Were drenched therewith, and underneath their feet
Gold coins were flung. A palace was prepared
Like Paradise itself; they overlaid
The bricks with gold and silver; all the hangings
Were of brocade of Rúm—a mass of wealth.
There Sarv disposed his guests and by the morn
Had put them at their ease. He brought his daughters,
As Farídún had said, out of their bowers,
Like shining moons too dazzling for the eye,
And ranged them just as Farídún foretold.

Sarv asked the eldest prince: "Which is the youngest
Of these three Stars, which is the mid in age,
And which the eldest? Thus distinguish them."
They answered as they had been taught, and so
Sewed up the eyelids of his craft, while he
And all his warriors were lost in wonder.
He saw that his inversion naught availed
And answered, "Yea," and paired the pairs aright.
The introduction ended in betrothal.
The three princesses, blushing for their father,
Went from the presence of the three young princes
In sweet confusion, blushes on their cheek
And many a word of tenderness to speak.

§ 5

How Sarv proved the Sons of Farídún by Sorcery

V. 73 Then Sarv assembled boon-companions
And passed the day with minstrels, wine, and talk,
But his three sons-in-law—the sons of Farídún—
Drank not except to him. When wine prevailed,
And sleep and rest were needed, Sarv bade set
Some couches by a fountain of rose-water,
And there the three illustrious athelings
Slept in a garden in a bower of roses,
Which scattered blossoms o'er them, but meanwhile
The sorcerer-king had thought of a device:
He left the royal pleasance and prepared
His spells. He brought a frost and mighty blast
To slay the princes; over hill and plain
It froze so sharply that the crows grew numb.
The arch-enchanter Farídún's three sons
Leapt from their couches at the grievous cold;

And by the Grace of God and their own skill,
By kingly magic and their hardihood,
Opposed the spell and kept the frost away.
Now when the sun shone o'er the mountain-tops,
Sarv, anxious to know all, approached in haste
His three exalted sons-in-law in hope
To find their cheeks like lapislazuli,
Congealed with frost, and their emprise defeated,
So that his daughters might remain to him
As his memorial; such was his hope,
But sun and moon were adverse to his wishes,
For he beheld three princes like new moons
Fresh-seated on their royal thrones, and knew
That spells had failed him and his time was lost.
He gave an audience; all the chiefs attended. V. 74
He opened and brought forth his ancient treasures,
Disclosing what had been secreted long,
And brought too and committed to their lords
Three maids sun-cheeked, like garths of Paradise
(No archimage ere planted pines like them),
With crowns and trinkets, ignorant of pain,
Unless it be a pain to plait the hair:
They were three new Moons and three warrior-kings.
He thought with bitterness: "The fault is mine,
Not Farídún's, and may I never hear
Of female issue from this royal stock;
He hath a lucky star who hath not daughters,
But he who hath them hath no star to shine."
Then to the assembled sages: "Kings may well
Wed Moons. Bear witness all! that I have given
My three Eyes to these men in lawful marriage,
To hold them dear as their own eyes are dear,
And limn them like their own lives on their hearts."

He uttered this aloud and then he bound
On many vigorous camels' lusty backs
The baggage of the brides. Yaman was bright
With gems. The daughters' litters moved in file
With parasols and riches fit for kings.
Sarv ordered everything and said farewell.
Thus did the youths set out upon their way
To Farídún with hearts alert and gay.

§ 6

How Farídún made Trial of his Sons

V. 75 When tidings that the princes had returned
Reached Farídún he went to meet them, longing,
By trial of their characters, to end
His boding fears, so changed him to a dragon—
One, thou wouldst say, no lion could escape—
Which hissed and bellowed with its jaws aflame.
As soon as he perceived his three sons near,
Like sombre mountains in a cloud of dust,
He too threw dust about and made it fly,
While earth re-echoed with his bellowings.
He rushed in fury toward his eldest son,
That prince of many virtues, who exclaimed:—
"No man of sense and wisdom thinketh good
To fight with dragons."
Then he showed his back
And fled. The father turned toward the next,
His second son, who when he saw the dragon
Strung up his bow and drew it, saying thus:—
"When fight is toward, what matter if the foe
Be roaring lion or brave cavalier?"
But when the youngest son came up he looked
Upon the dragon and cried out: "Avaunt!
Thou art a leopard: ware the lions' path!

If e'er the name of Farídún hath reached
Thine ears contend not with us, for we three
Are sons of his, and every one of us
A wielder of the mace, and warrior.
Unless thou turnest from thy waywardness
I will discrown thee of thy loathly face."
The glorious Farídún thus heard and saw,
And having proved their mettle disappeared.
He went away but came back as their sire V. 76
With all the pomp and circumstance befitting,
With kettledrums and huge fierce elephants
And bearing in his hand the ox-head mace.
The leaders of the host were at his back,
And all the world was his. The noble princes
Dismounted when they saw the Sháh, they ran
To him and kissed the ground, dazed at the din
Made by the elephants and kettledrums.
The father grasped their hands and welcomed them,
Each to his proper place. On his return
He prayed and offered up much thanks to God—
The Author of his weal and of his woe—
Then summoned his three sons and seating them
Upon the throne of majesty spake thus:—
"That loathly dragon which would scorch the world
Was your own father, who desired to prove
Your mettle, and this known returned with joy.
Now in my wisdom I have chosen fit names
For you. Thou art the eldest, be thou Salm
And have thy wish on earth—thou soughtest safety
And didst not shun to flee the monster's maw.
The rash man who despiseth elephants
Or lions—call him frantic and not brave.
My second son, who from the first showed fight,
Whose courage is more ardent than a flame,

Him name we Túr—a lion brave; not even
A mighty elephant could vanquish him.
To dare is all the virtues in his case,
For no faint heart is master of a throne.
The youngest is a man of sleight and fight,
One that can bide his time and yet be prompt.
He chose the middle course 'twixt dust and flame,
The prudent man's. Brave, young, and sensible
V. 77 He must alone be praised. Be he Íraj,
And may his end be all supremacy,
Because at first he was not choleric,
But at the time of stress his courage grew.
I open now my lips with joy to name
These Arab dames with fairy countenances."
He named the wife of Salm, Árzú;[1] the wife
Of Túr, Máh-i-Ázáda Khú; the wife
Of blest Íraj, Sahí, to whom Canopus
Was but a slave in beauty. Afterwards
He brought a catalogue embracing all
The stars within the circling sphere of heaven,
Whose aspects readers of the stars had taken,
Spread it before him and observed the fortunes
Of his illustrious sons. Salm's horoscope
Was Jupiter in Sagittarius.
Next came the horoscope of glorious Túr—
The Sun ascendant in the Lion's House—
A presage brave; but when the Sháh observed
The horoscope of blest Íraj he found
The Moon in Cancer; thus the stars revealed
A destiny of strife and woe. The Sháh
Was sorely troubled, with a deep cold sigh
Perceived that heaven loved not his bright-souled son,
And as he mused thereon he could not be
But filled with thoughts of grave anxiety.

[1] Árzú means Desire; Máh-i-Ázáda Khú, Moon of noble-nature; and Sahí, Stately.

§ 7

How Farídún divided the World among his Sons

These secrets known, the Shâh divided earth
And made three realms: he joined Rúm with the West,
Túrán with Chín, Arabia with Írán.
He first took thought for Salm and gave him Rúm V. 78
And all the West, commanding him to lead
An army thither; so Salm took the throne,
And all the West saluted him as lord.
Next Farídún assigned Túrán to Túr
To rule the Turkmans and the land of Chín,
Providing troops; Túr led his army forth,
Arrived, assumed the seat of sovereignty,
Girt up his loins and opened wide his hands.
The nobles showered upon him precious stones,
And all Túrán hailed him as king. Íraj
Came last, the sire selected all Írán
For him. This with Arabia and the throne
Of majesty and crown of chiefs he gave,
Perceiving that Íraj deserved to rule.
How all the princes, prudent, wise, and shrewd,
All-hailed him as the master of Írán!
As marchlords thus these men of noble birth
Acceded to their thrones in peace and mirth.

§ 8

How Salm grew Envious of Íraj

Much time rolled on, while fate reserved its secrets,
Till wise Shâh Farídún was worn with age
And strewed with dust the Garden of his Spring.

This is the common lot of all mankind—
Man's strength is weakness when he groweth old.
Then gloom began to gather in the state,
The princes of the realm waxed turbulent.
Immersed in greed Salm changed in heart and mind.
V. 79 He sat in conclave, for he much misliked
His sire's apportionment, which gave Íraj
The throne of gold. In rancour and with frowns
He hurried off a camel-post, an envoy,
To give this message to the king of Chín:—
"Live ever glad and happy! Know, great king
Of Turkmans and of Chín! that our shrewd hearts
Did ill to acquiesce when we were wronged:
Though we are cypress-tall our souls are base.
Mark with discerning heart this tale of mine;
None such hath reached thee from the days of old:—
Three sons were we who graced our father's throne,
And now the youngest hath the chiefest place!
Since I am first in wisdom and in years
Such fortune doth befit my signet-ring,
While if crown, throne, and diadem should pass
From me, O king! should they not deck thyself?
Shall both of us continue thus aggrieved
By that injustice which our father did
In giving to Íraj Írán, Yaman,
And Araby; the West and Rúm to me;
To thee the wastes of Turkestán and Chín?
The youngest hath Írán; I cannot brook
This settlement; thy father must be mad."
The message filled Túr's brainless head with wind,
And savage as a lion he replied:—
"Heed well my words and tell them to thy lord:—
'It was when we were youths, O most just king!
That we were cheated by our father thus.

This is a tree which his own hands have set;
The fruit is blood, the leafage colocynth;
So let us meet and parley as to this, V. 80
Fix on our course of action and raise troops.'"
Now when the envoy brought this answer back
The face of that veiled secret was laid bare,
This brother came from Chín and that from Rúm,
And, poison being mixed with honey thus,
They met together to deliberate
The matter both in council and in state.

§ 9

How Salm and Túr sent a Message to Farídún

They chose a priest, a shrewd, bright, heedful man
And plausible, and then excluding strangers
Concerted plans. Salm put their case in words,
Washed off all filial reverence from his eyes,
And thus addressed the envoy: "Hence away,
In spite of dust and tempest, swift as wind
To Farídún and heed not aught beside.
On reaching him greet him in both our names
And say: 'In heaven and earth the fear of God
Should equally prevail, the young may hope
To see old age, but hoar hairs turn not black.
By long abiding in this straitened place
Thou straitenest the long home for thyself.
All-holy God bestowed the world upon thee
From yonder bright sun unto sombre earth,
Yet didst thou choose to act in mere caprice, V. 81
Not heeding His commands, and to entreat
Thy sons with scath and fraud instead of justice;
For thou hadst three, wise, brave, and youths no longer,

And though no excellence appeared in one
So that the others should bow down to him,
Yet one thou blastedst with a dragon's breath,
Another's head thou raisedst to the clouds;
On one thine eyes reposed with joy, and he
Now hath the crown and is beside thy couch,
While we who are as good as he by birth
Are deemed unworthy of the royal throne.
O upright judge and monarch of the world!
May justice such as this be never blessed!
If then his worthless head shall be discrowned,
Earth rescued from his sway, and thou wilt give him
Some corner of the world where he may sit
Like us in anguish and oblivion—well:
Else will we bring the Turkman cavaliers
And eager warriors of Rúm and Chín—
An army of the wielders of the mace—
In vengeance on Írán and on Íraj.'"

The priest at this harsh message kissed the ground,
Then turned and mounted swift as wind-borne flame.
When he approached the court of Farídún
And marked the cloud-capt buildings from afar,
Which stretched from range to range, while at the gate
Chiefs sat and those of highest rank behind
The curtaĩn, on the one side pards and lions
Chained, on the other fierce war-elephants,
While from that noble band of warriors
The noise that rose was like a lion's roar,
V. 82 "It must be heaven," he thought, "and not a court:
The troops around it are a fairy host!"

The wary watchman went and told the Sháh:—
"A man of noble mien and high estate
Hath come as envoy to the Sháh."

He bade
His servants raise the curtain and bring in

The envoy, when dismounted, to the court,
Who when he saw the face of Farídún,
Saw how the Sháh engrossed all eyes and hearts,
His stature cypress-like, his face a sun,
His hair like camphor and his rose-red cheeks,
His smiling lips, his modest countenance,
And royal mouth, which uttered gracious words,
Did reverence and wore the ground with kisses.
The Sháh commanded him to rise and sit
Upon the seat of honour due to him,
Then asked him first about the noble pair:—
"Enjoy they health and happiness?" and next
About himself: "Art weary with long travel
O'er hill and plain?"
He answered: "Noble Shah!
May none behold the world without thee! Those
Of whom thou speakest are as thou wouldst wish,
And live but by thy name. Thy slave am I,
Albeit all unworthy and impure.
The message that I bring to thee is harsh
And sent in anger by no fault of mine,
But if my lord commandeth I will tell
The message sent by two imprudent youths."
The Sháh commanded him to speak and heard
The embassage delivered word by word.

§ 10

How Farídún made Answer to his Sons

When he had heard, the Sháh's brain seethed with anger.
"O man of prudence!" thus he made reply,
"Thou needest no excuse, for I have eyes V. 83
And have discerned this for myself already.

Tell mine unholy and abandoned sons—
This pair of Áhrimans with dregs of brains:—
"'Tis well that ye reveal your natures thus
And send a greeting worthy of yourselves;
For if your brains are empty of my teaching,
And ye have no idea what wisdom is,
Not fearing God, ye could not well do other.
My hair was once as black as pitch, my stature
Was cypress-tall, my face was like the moon.
The sky which hath bent down this back of mine
Is yet unfallen and revolveth still:
So time will bend you too, and even that
Which bendeth you itself will not endure.
Now by the highest name of holy God,
By yon bright sun, and by the teeming ground,
By throne, by crown, by Venus and the moon,
I never cast an evil look upon you.
I called the sages into conference,
The archimages and astrologers;
Abundant time was spent therein that so
We might divide the earth with equity;
I had no object but to deal with fairness;
There was no knavery from first to last;
My secret motive was the fear of God,
My longing to fulfil all righteousness;
Since earth was given to me full of men
It was no wish of mine to scatter them;
I said: "On each of my three lucky Eyes
Will I bestow a populous dominion."
If Áhriman hath now seduced your hearts
From mine advice to dark and crookéd ways,
Consider if the Omnipotent will look
With approbation on this deed of yours.
V. 84 One proverb will I speak if ye will hear:—
"The crop that ye have sown that shall ye reap."

He that instructed me was wont to say:—
"Our other home is that which will endure."
But your lusts sit where reason should be throned.
Why are ye thus confederate with the Dív?
I fear that in that Dragon's clutch your bodies
And souls will part. Now that I leave the world
It is no time for wrath and bitterness;
Yet thus he saith—the man consumed with years,
Who had three sons, three men of noble birth:—
By hearts released from passions dust is held
As precious as the wealth of king of kings;
But whoso selleth brother for the dust
Men rightly say that he was bastard-born.
The world hath seen and will see men like you
In plenty; but it cottoneth to none.
Now if ye know aught of avail with God
To save you on the Day of Reckoning,
Seek that, make it the provand for the way
And be less careful for the things of earth!'"
The envoy hearing kissed the ground and went;
Thou wouldst have said: "His way-mate is the wind."
The envoy being gone the Sháh resumed
His seat, then called his noble son Íraj
And told both what had chanced and what might be:—
"Those sons of mine with hearts intent on war
Have set themselves against us from the West.
Their stars dispose them to delight in ill;
Besides their troughs are in two provinces,
Whose fruit is savagery. They will enact
The brother's part while thou shalt wear the crown,
And when thy ruddy face is pale in death
Will shun thy pillow. If thou puttest love
Before the sword thy head will ache with strife,
For from both corners of the world my sons

V. 85 Have shown their real intent. If thou wouldst fight
Make ready, ope the treasury, bind the baggage;
Secure the cup while thou art breaking fast,
For if not they will sup on thee, my son!
Thou needst not earthly helpers, thine allies
Are truth and innocence."
The good Íraj
Gazed on that loving Sháh, his glorious sire,
And said: "My lord! consider how time passeth
Like wind above us. Why should wise men fret?
It withereth the cheek of cercis-bloom,
It darkeneth the radiant spirit's eyes;
It is at first a gain and then a pain,
And when the pain is done we pass away.
Since then our couch is dust, our pillow brick,
Why plant to-day a tree whose roots will ever
Be drinking blood, whose fruit will be revenge?
The earth hath seen and will see many lords
With scimitar and throne and signet-ring
Like us; but they who wore the crown of old
Made not a habit of revenge. I too,
The king permitting, will not live in ill.
I want not crown and throne. I will approach
My brothers in all haste and unattended,
And say: 'My lords, dear as my soul and body!
Forbear your anger and abandon strife:
Strife is unlovely in religious men.
Why set your hopes so much upon this world?
How ill it used Jamshíd who passed away
At last, and lost the crown and throne and girdle!
And you and I at length must share his lot.
Live we in joy together and thus safe
V. 86 From foes.' I will convert their vengeful hearts:
What better vengeance can I take than that?"

The Sháh replied: "Thy brethren, my wise son!
Are set on fight while thou wouldst have a feast.
I cannot but recall this saw to mind:—
'It is no marvel if the moon is bright.'
An answer such as thine becometh well
Thy virtuous self; thou art for brotherhood
And love, but doth a prudent man expose
His priceless life and head to dragon's breath,
Since naught but biting venom cometh thence
By nature? Yet, if such be thy resolve,
Take order for thy going and set forth.
Select a retinue among the troops
To go with thee, and I will write a letter,
With sorrow in my heart, to those two men.
Oh! may thy safe return rejoice my sight,
For when I look on thee my soul is bright."

§ 11

How Íraj went to his Brothers

The great Sháh wrote a letter to the lord
Of all the West and to the king of Chín,
Wherein he offered first his praise to God
Who is and will be to eternity,
And then went on: "This letter of good counsel
Is for two Suns at their meridian,
Two men of weight and courage, kings of earth,
One monarch of the West, the other of Chín,
From him who hath surveyed the world throughout,
To whom mysterious things have been disclosed,
Who brandisheth the sword and massive mace,
Who addeth lustre unto famous crowns,
Who turneth into night the light of day,
Who openeth the hoards of hope and fear,

V. 87 To whom all labours have grown easy, one
In whom all splendour hath displayed itself.
I do not ask of you your diadems,
Your hoarded treasures, thrones, or palaces:
My wish is, after all my weary toils,
That my three sons should dwell in peace and love.
The brother as to whom your hearts are sore
(Though none hath felt a chilling breath from him)
Doth come in haste because of your chagrin,
And of his eagerness to see you both.
He hath resigned his kingship for your sakes—
An action worthy of the noblest men—
And taking to the saddle from the throne
Hath girt his loins that he may do you service.
Now since he is the youngest of the three
He hath a right to love and tenderness.
Hold him in honour, and repent yourselves;
As I have fed his body feed his soul,
And after he hath been with you awhile
Send my beloved one back to me."
They sealed
The letter with the signet of the Sháh.
Íraj set forth with such attendants only,
Both young and old, as were imperative;
And Salm and Túr, when he was drawing nigh,
Unwitting of their dark design, led forth
The troops to meet him as their custom was.
When they beheld their brother's face of love
They showed to him an altered countenance,
And bent on quarrel gave the peaceful one
A greeting but not such as he desired.
Two hearts were full of vengeance, one was calm:
Thus all three brothers sought their royal tents.
The troops saw, as they looked upon Íraj,
That he was worthy of the throne and crown,

And could not rest because the love of him
Possessed their hearts e'en as his face their eyes;
And when, dispersing, mate went off with mate,
Their talk in private was about Íraj:—
"This is the one to be the king of kings! V. 88
May none beside him have the crown of might."
Salm from apart was spying on the troops,
Their doings made him heavy, and he sought
His royal tent with a revengeful heart,
With liver full of blood, and frowning brows.
He had the enclosure cleared while he and Túr
Sat with their counsellors, and talked at large
Of kingship, crown, and all the provinces;
And in the midst thereof Salm said to Túr:
"Why have the soldiers scattered into groups?
Didst thou not mark how, when we were returning,
The soldiers as they passed along the road
Could not refrain from looking at Íraj?
Our troops when they came back were altered men.
He turned my heart to gloom, thoughts thronged, I saw
That henceforth they would wish no Sháh but him.
Unless thou shalt uproot him thou wilt fall
From thine exalted throne beneath his feet."
In such a mind they closed the interview
And spent the night devising what to do.

§ 12

How Íraj was Slain by his Brothers

Now when the veil was lifted from the sun,
As morning dawned and slumber passed away,
The hearts of that insensate pair were eager
To do their deed of shame; they proudly strode
Toward their royal brother's tent. Íraj,
Who saw them coming, met them tenderly.

They went with him inside the tent. The talk
Ran on the why and wherefore of his coming.
Túr said to him: "Since thou art youngest born
Why shouldst thou take the crown of power? Must thou
Possess the throne of princes and Írán
While I am bondslave at the Turkman's gate?
Thine eldest brother chafeth in the West
While thou art crowned and walkest over treasure,
For thus did our aspiring sire apportion
The world in favour of his youngest son."
Íraj made answer in a holier strain:—
"O mighty chieftain, lover of renown!
Seek peace if thou wouldst have thy heart at ease.
I do not want the royal crown or throne,
The style of monarch or the Íránian host;
I do not want Írán, the West, or Chín,
The kingship or the broad expanse of earth.
When majesty produceth naught but strife
One needs must weep o'er such supremacy.
Although thou ridest on the heaven above,
A brick will be thy pillow in the end.
For my part, though the master of Írán,
I am aweary both of crown and throne,
And yield to you the diadem and signet,
So hate me not; there is no feud between us,
No heart need ache through me. I will not have
The world against your will, and though I dwell
Far from your ken I ever act as younger:
My Faith is naught without humanity."
Túr heard the words and little heeded them,
But, angry that Íraj should speak and caring
No jot for peace, he rose up with a cry
And then advancing suddenly, and grasping
The massive seat of gold, he smote Íraj,

Who pleaded for his life: "Hast thou no fear
Of God, nor any reverence for thy sire? V. 90
Is this indeed thy purpose? Slay me not,
For in the end my blood will be required.
Be not thou reckoned with the murderers,
And henceforth thou shalt find no trace of me.
Canst thou approve and reconcile these twain—
To be a murderer and live thyself?
Oh! hurt not e'en the poor grain-dragging ant,
For it hath life, and sweet life is a joy.[1]
I will choose some retreat and earn my bread;
Why gird thy loins to take a brother's life?
Why set on fire our agéd father's heart?
Wouldst have the world? Thou hast it. Shed not blood:
Provoke not God, the Ruler of the world."
Túr heard him speak but answered not a word:
His heart was full, his head was vapouring.
He drew a dagger from his boot, he robed
Íraj in blood, and with the keen bright blade
Entrenched the royal breast. The lofty Cypress
Fell, the imperial girdlestead was broken,
The blood ran down that face of cercis-bloom,
And thus the young illustrious monarch died!
Túr with his dagger cut the prince's head
From the elephantine form and all was over.
O world! since thou hadst nursed him tenderly
Yet didst not spare his life at last, I wis
Not who thy secret favourites may be,
But needs must weep for such an act as this.

[1] The poet puts his own protest into the mouth of Íraj against the ancient Zoroastrian custom of killing ants at sight as being the creation of Áhriman. "The celebrated high-priest of the Parsis, the late Moola Firooz, entered these lines into his Pand Námáh,* which may betoken better days for the wise little creature." DZA, i. 171.

* *i.e.* Book of counsels.

Thou too, O man distracted and distraught,
Whose heart the world hath seared and caused to bleed!
If, as with these, revenge is in thy thought
Take warning by these persecutors' deed.
They filled the head with musk and ambergris
And sent it to the agéd world-divider
V. 91 With these words: "Look upon thy darling's head—
The inheritor of our forefathers' crown—
And give it crown or throne as pleaseth thee."
The royal and far-shadowing Tree had fallen,
And those two miscreants went their way in spleen,
One unto Rúm, the other unto Chín.

§ 13

How Faríd́un received Tidings of the Murder of Íraj

The eyes of Faríd́un were on the road,
Both host and crown were longing for the prince;
But when the time arrived for his return
How did the tidings reach his father first?
He had prepared the prince a turquoise throne
And added jewels to his crown. The people
Were all in readiness to welcome him
And called for wine and song and minstrelsy.
They brought out drums and stately elephants,
And put up decorations everywhere
Throughout his province. While the Sháh and troops
Were busied thus a cloud of dust appeared,
And from its midst a dromedary ridden
By one in grief who uttered bitter cries;
He bore a golden casket, and therein
The prince's head enwrapped in painted silk.
The good man came with woeful countenance
To Faríd́un and wailed aloud. They raised
The golden casket's lid (for every one

Believed the words of him who bore it wild)
And taking out the painted silk beheld
Within the severed head of prince Íraj.
Down from his steed fell Farídún, the troops
All rent their clothes, their looks were black, their eyes
Blanched with their horror, for the spectacle
Was other far than that they hoped to see.
Since in this wise the young king came again
The troops that went to meet him thus returned—
Their banners rent, their kettledrums reversed,
The warriors' cheeks like ebony, the tymbals
And faces of the elephants all blackened, V. 92
The prince's Arabs splashed with indigo.
Both Sháh and warriors fared alike on foot,
Their heads all dust; the paladins in anguish
Bewailed that noble man and tore their arms.
Be on thy guard as touching this world's love;
A bow is useless if it be not bent.
The process of the turning sky above
Is, favouring first, to plunder in the event.
'Twill countenance an open enemy
While those who seek its favour are denied.
One goodly counsel I address to thee:
Let no love for it in thy heart abide.
The troops heart-seared, the Sháh with cries "Alas!
Alas!" went toward the garden of Íraj
Where he delighted to hold festïval
On any royal anniversary.
The monarch entered bearing his son's head,
Beheld the hauzes[1] and the cypresses,

[1] "Behind the state apartments is a beautiful and luxuriant garden, cooled by magnificent hauzes, or ornamental ponds, with stone edges, which keep the water about a foot above the level of the ground; as the water always gently overflows these edges, a sleepy murmur is produced, and the air is cooled by the large evaporating surface."—"Persia as it Is," p. 31, by C. J. Wills, M.D.

The trees a-bloom, the willows and the quinces,
Saw too and strewed dark dust upon the throne
Imperial but unprinced and lustreless
While up to Saturn rose the soldiers' wail.
He cried "Alas! Alas!" plucked out his hair,
He poured down tears, he tore his face and girt
Around his loins a rope besmirched with blood.
He fired the house wherein Íraj had dwelt,
Destroyed the rose-beds, burnt the cypress-trees
And closed up once for all the eye of joy.
He placed the prince's head upon his breast,
And said with head turned God-ward: "Righteous Judge!
Look down upon this murdered innocent,
Whose severed head is here before me now,
While foreign lions have devoured his body.
V. 93 Do Thou so burn up those two miscreants' hearts
That they may never see a bright day more.
So pierce and sear the livers of them both
That even beasts of prey shall pity them.
Oh! grant me, Thou that judgest righteously!
So long a respite from the day of death
That I may see descended from Íraj
One born to fame, and girded to avenge.
Let him behead those two injurious men
As they beheaded him who wronged them not,
And when I have beheld it let me go
Where earth shall take the measure of my height."
He wept thus many days and bitterly.
His pillow was the dust, his bed the ground
Until the herbage grew about his breast
And both those lustrous eyes of his were dimmed.
He gave no audience, but without surcease
Cried out with bitterness: "O gallant youth!
No wearer of a crown hath ever died

As thou hast died, thou famous warrior!
Thou wast beheaded by vile Áhriman;
The maw of lions was thy winding-sheet."
Wails, sobs, and cries robbed e'en the beasts of sleep,
While men and women gathered into crowds
In every province, weeping and heart-broken.
How many days they sat in their distress—
A death in life of utter hopelessness!

§ 14

How a Daughter was Born to Íraj

A while passed and the Sháh went in to view
Íraj's bower, inspected it and marked
The moon-faced beauties who resided there.
He saw a slave of lovely countenance,
Whose name was Máh Áfríd. Íraj had loved her, V. 94
And fate decreed that she should bear him fruit.
The Sháh rejoiced because she was with child,
Which gave him hope of vengeance for his son,
But when her time was come she bore a daughter,
And hope deferred hung heavy on the Sháh.
He nursed the babe with joy and tenderness,
And all the folk began to cherish her
As she increased in stature and in charms.
Thou wouldst have said to her the tulip-cheeked:—
"Thou art Íraj himself from head to foot."
When she was old enough to wed—a Pleiad
In countenance with hair as black as pitch—
Her grandsire chose Pashang to be her spouse:
Pashang was brother's son to Farídún,
Descended from a noble ancestry,
A hero of the seed of Sháh Jamshíd,
Meet for the kingship, diadem, and throne;
And in this way no little time passed on.

§ 15

The Birth of Minúchihr

Mark what a wonder yon blue vault revealed
When nine months had elapsed! That virtuous dame
Brought forth a son fit for the crown and throne,
Who from his tender mother's womb was brought
Without delay before the mighty Sháh.
The bearer said: "O master of the crown!
Let all thy heart be joy: behold Íraj!"
The world-divider's lips were full of smiles;
Thou wouldst have said: "His own Íraj doth live."
He clasped the noble child and prayed the Almighty:—
"Oh! would that I might have mine eyes again,
V. 95 That God would show to me this infant's face."
He prayed so earnestly that God vouchsafed
To give his sight back. When with open eyes
He gazed on that new-comer's face he cried:
"Be this day blest and our foes' hearts plucked out!"
He brought bright wine and splendid cups and called
That babe of open visage Minúchihr,[1]
And said: "From two pure parents there hath come
A proper branch to fruit."
He reared the babe
So tenderly that not a breath passed o'er him.
The slave that carried him upon her breast
Trod not the ground, for underneath her feet
The purest musk was strewn, and as she walked
A sunshade of brocade was o'er her head.
Years passed, no ill befell him from the stars;
Meanwhile the famous monarch taught the child
All those accomplishments that kings require.

[1] The word here translated "open visage" is "manáchihr." For the true meaning of Minúchihr see introductory note to the next reign.

When Farídún had got back sight and heart,
And all the world was talking of the boy,
His grandsire gave to him a golden throne,
A princely turquoise crown, a massive mace
And treasury-key with thrones, torques, casques, and girdles,
A bright-hued tent-enclosure of brocade
With tents of leopard-skin, such Arab steeds
With golden furniture, such Indian scimitars
With golden sheaths, such store of casques and breast-plates,
With buttoned hauberks made in Rúm and bows
From Chach and poplar shafts and shields from Chín
And double-headed javelins of war!
Thus Farídún bestowed his hard-won treasures, V. 96
Convinced that Minúchihr was well deserving,
And felt his own heart full of love for him.
He summoned all his paladins and nobles,
Who came intent on vengeance for Íraj,
And offered homage, showering emeralds
Upon his crown. On that great new-made feast
The sheep and wolf walked side by side on earth.
The leaders were Káran, the son of Káwa,
The chief Shírwí, the fierce and lion-like,
Garshásp the noble swordsman, Sám the champion,
The son of Narímán, Kubád, Kishwád,—
He of the golden helm—and many more
Illustrious men,—the safeguards of the world—
And when the work of gathering troops was done
The Sháh's head towered over every one.

§ 16

How Salm and Túr had Tidings of Minúchihr

When those two miscreants Salm and Túr had heard :—
"The throne of king of kings is bright again,"
They feared their star would sink and sat together
In anxious thought; those wretches' day was darkened
And they resolved to send to ask forgiveness.
They chose a man persuasive, wise, and modest,
To whom they made a passionate appeal,
And fearful of a downfall opened wide
V. 97 The treasury of the West. From that old hoard
They chose a crown of gold. They housed the elephants.
What wagons did they fill with musk and ambergris,
Brocade, dínárs, and precious furs and silks!
On high-necked elephants the embassage
Went from the West in state toward Írán.
The courtiers added tokens of regard,
And when there was as much as heart could wish
The envoy came prepared to start. The kings
Gave him this embassy to Farídún,
Invoking first of all the name of God :—
"May valiant Farídún for ever live
On whom God hath bestowed the royal Grace,
Be his head flourishing, his person loved,
His genius higher than heaven! I present
A case committed to me by two slaves
At this high portal of the king of kings.
Know that two ill-disposed and lawless men,
Whose eyes are wet with shame before their sire,
Repentant, seared at heart, and much to blame,
Now seek how best they may excuse themselves;
Till now they had no hope of being heard.

What do they say? Their words, wise Sháh! are these:—
'Let him that did the evil bear the brunt,
And live in pain of heart and self-reproach
As we are doing now, O noble Sháh!
Thus was it written down for us by fate
And by decree of fate the sequel came;
E'en world-consuming lions and fierce dragons
Escape not from the net of destiny.
Again—the foul Dív bade us put aside
All terror of the Worldlord from our hearts,
He took possession of two wise men's brains,
And mightily prevailed against us both;
And now our hope is that perchance the Sháh
May yet forgive us, and impute the wrong
To ignorance in us, next to high heaven
That is at once our shelter and our scath, V. 98
And thirdly to the Dív that in our midst
Is girded runner-like to work us ill.
Now, if the great king's head no longer harboureth
Revenge on us, our good faith shall be evident.
Let him send Minúchihr and, as an escort,
A mighty army to his suppliants,
With this intent that we may stand as slaves
Before him dutifully; thus our tears
May wash the tree that springeth of revenge,
Our offering shall be our tears and groans,
And when he groweth up our hoards and thrones.'"

§ 17

How Farídún received his Sons' Message

Charged with these words, and doubting what would
follow,
The envoy reached the portal of the Sháh
With treasures of all kinds on elephants.

When Farídún was told he gave command
To spread brocade of Rúm upon the throne
Of king of kings and have the royal crown
Prepared, then took his seat as he had been
An upright cypress 'neath a full-orbed moon
In fitting state with crown and torque and earrings.
Blest Minúchihr sat by him crowned, the nobles
Stood ranked in double file in robes of gold,
With golden mace and girdle, making earth
Another sun. On one side pards and lions
Were chained, on the other huge war-elephants.
Then from the palace issued bold Sháp úr
To introduce Salm's envoy, who on seeing
The palace-gate alighted and ran forward.
V. 99 As soon as he drew near to Farídún
And saw the diadem and lofty throne,
He bent until his visage touched the ground.
The noble Sháh, the monarch of the world,
Bade him be seated on a golden seat.
He did obeisance to the Sháh and said:—
"O glory of the crown and throne and signet!
Thy throne's steps make the earth a rosary,
And thy fair fortune brighteneth the age.
We serve the dust that is beneath thy feet
And only live since thou wilt have it so."
These praises caused the Sháh's face to relax,
Whereat the envoy spake of clemency
With great craft, and the Sháh gave ear to him
While he repeated those two murderers' words,
Endeavouring to keep the truth concealed
And make excuses for their wickedness,
Inviting Minúchihr to visit them
When they would wait upon him as his slaves,
Give him the crown and throne of majesty

And purchase back from him Íraj's blood
With wealth, brocade, dínárs, and jewelry.
The monarch heard the speech and answered it;
Like key to lock so did the answer fit.

§ 18

How Farídún made Answer to his Sons

The Sháh, when he had heard the message sent
By his two wicked sons, said to the envoy:—
"Canst thou conceal the sun, and clearer still
Are shown the secrets of those miscreants' hearts?
I have heard all thy words; now mark mine answer.
Tell those two shameless and unholy men, V. 100
Unrighteous, ill-affectioned, and impure,
That their vain words avail them not, and I
Have also something that I fain would say:—
'If thus your love for Minúchihr hath grown
Where is the body of his famous sire—
Íraj? The maw of wild beasts hideth it,
His head is in a narrow casket laid,
And they who made a riddance of Íraj
Now seek to shed the blood of Minúchihr!
Ye shall not see his face but with an army
And with a casque of steel upon his head,
With mace and Káwian standard while the earth
Is darkened by his horses' trampling hoofs;
With leaders like Káran, who loveth fight,
Shápúr—the valiant backbone of the host—
And by his side Shídúsh the warrior,
Shírwí the lion-strong as pioneer,
King Talímán, and Sarv, king of Yaman,
To head the forces and direct the war;
And we will drench with blood, both leaf and fruit,
The tree sprung out of vengeance for Íraj.

No one hath sought revenge for him as yet
Because I saw the back of fortune bent:
It seemed not good to me to lay my hands
In battle on mine own two sons; but now
From that same Tree which enemies have felled
A fruitful Offshoot hath sprung up; for like
An angry lion Minúchihr shall come,
With loins girt ready to avenge his sire,
Together with the leaders of the troops—
Such chiefs as Sám the son of Narímán,
Garsháṣp, son of Jamshíd—and hosts to reach
From hill to hill, and trample down the world.'
Next for their pleading that 'the Sháh must wash
His heart from vengeance, and forgive our crime,
Because the sky so turned o'er us that wisdom
Was troubled, and affection's seat obscured:'
I have heard all the unavailing plea,
And now that patience is fordone I answer:—
'No man that soweth seed of violence
Shall see good days or jocund Paradise.
V. 101 If ye are pardoned by All-holy God
What need ye fear about a brother's blood?
The wise esteem the self-excuser guilty.
Revere ye not the glorious Lord of all?
Your hearts are black, your tongues speak glozing words;
He will requite you for it in both worlds.
And thirdly, since ye sent an ivory throne
And torquoise crown on mighty elephants,
With purses full of divers-coloured gems,
Am I to balk revenge, to wash away
The blood and sell the prince's head for gold?
Nay! perish first throne, diadem, and Grace!
Worse than a dragon's offspring is the man
Who taketh money for a priceless head.

Shall any say: "The sire in his old age
Is putting price upon his son's dear life?"
As for these gifts of yours—I need them not.
But wherefore utter I so many words?
Your hoary-headed sire will not ungird
The loins of his revenge while life endureth.'
Thy message have I heard. Hear my reply,
Retain it every whit and get thee gone."
The messenger grew pale at this dread speech
And at the bearing of prince Minúchihr,
Leapt up in fear and mounted instantly.
The noble, youthful envoy shrewdly saw:—
"Revolving heaven in no long time will furrow
The visages of Túr and Salm."
He sped
Like rushing wind, his head full of the message,
His heart of bodings. When he saw the West,
With camp-enclosures stretched upon the plain,
He made his way toward Salm's pavilion
Of painted silk with other tents around, V. 102
Where sat both kings in conclave. Word was passed:—
"The envoy hath returned."
The chamberlain
Approached and took him to the royal presence.
They had a special seat prepared for him
And asked for tidings of the new-made Sháh,
Of crown and throne and of Sháh Farídún,
His host, his warriors, and his dominions,
And of the aspect of the turning sky:—
"What favour showeth it to Minúchihr?
Who are the nobles? Who is minister?
What treasures have they? Who hath charge thereof?"
The envoy said: "The portal of the Sháh
Beholdeth that which bright spring seeth not,

For 'tis the jocund Spring of Paradise
Where ground is ambergris and bricks are gold.
The roof above his palace is a heaven,
And Paradise is in his smiling face.
When I approached his lofty residence
Its roof was telling secrets to the stars.
On this hand there were lions, and on that
Were elephants. The world itself was placed
Beneath his throne. Upon his elephants
Were seats of gold, and round the lions' necks
Were jewelled torques. The tymbal-players stood
Before the elephants while trumpets blared.
Thou wouldst have said: 'The precincts seethe, earth shouteth
To heaven.' I came before that well-loved Sháh,
And saw a lofty turquoise throne where sat
V. 103 A monarch like a moon. Upon his head
He wore a sparkling ruby coronet.
His hair was white as camphor, and his cheeks
Were like the petals of the rose. His heart
Is full of clemency, his speech is kind;
He is the hope and fear of all the world.
Thou wouldst have said: 'Jamshíd doth live again.'
A Shoot from that tall Cypress—Minúchihr,
Like Tahmúras, the Binder of the Dív,
Sat on the Sháh's right hand: thou wouldst have said:—
'He is the heart and soul of that great Sháh.'
There Káwa stood, the skilled among the smiths,
With one before him well beseen in war—
His son, Káran by name, the warrior,
The watchful chief, the conqueror of hosts;
The minister—Sarv, monarch of Yaman,
The treasurer—victorious Garshásp,
Were there. The sum within the treasuries
Appeareth not. None ever saw such greatness.

Around the palace were two lines of troops
With golden maces and with golden helms.
Before them there were leaders like Káran,
The son of Káwa, that experienced captain,
And warriors—ravening Lions like Shírwí,
And bold Shápúr, the elephantine chief.
When on the elephants they bind the drums V. 104
The air becometh ebon with the dust.
If these men come to fight us hill and plain
Will be confounded; these men have revenge
At heart; their faces frown; they purpose war."
The envoy having further told the message
Of Farídún, those tyrants' hearts grew sore,
Their faces blue as lapislazuli.
They sat consulting, but had naught determined
When Túr spake thus: "Farewell to peace and joy!
We must not let this hardy lion's whelp
Grow bold and sharp of fang. Will such a youth
Lack prowess, being taught by Farídún?
When grandson communeth with grandsire thus
Some devilry is sure to come of it.
Prepare we then for war and that with speed."
They hurried out their cavalry and mustered
Troops from the West and Chín, whence hubbub rose
And all flocked to the kings—a multitude
Whose star of fortune was no longer young.
Two hosts empanoplied marched on Írán
With mighty elephants, much precious store,
And those two murderers intent on war.

§ 19

How Farídún sent Minúchihr to fight Túr and Salm

The Sháh was told, "A host hath crossed Jíhún,"
And bade prince Minúchihr to pass the frontier

V. 105 Toward the desert, thus advising him:—
"A youth predestined to be fortunate
May happen to ensnare a mountain-sheep
While hunters are before and pards behind;
But having patience, prudence, sense, and wits,
He will take savage lions in his toils,
And now my foes in these my closing days
I would chastise, and wield a sword of fire."
"Great Sháh!" said Minúchihr, "may fate keep ill
For any foe that cometh to attack thee;
May he betray himself both soul and body.
Lo! I will don a coat of Rúman mail
To leave no part exposed, and then in quest
Of vengeance on the battlefield will send
The dust of yon host sunward. None of them
Hold I a man: dare they contend with me?"
He ordered that Káran, who loved the fray,
Should cross the frontier to the desert, taking
The camp-enclosure and the imperial standard.
Then as troop followed troop the hills and plains
Heaved like the sea, the day was dark with dust,
And thou hadst said: "The sun is azure-dim."
A clamour rose enough to deafen ears
Though keen, the neighing of the Arab steeds
Rose high above the tymbals' din. Two lines
Of mighty elephants stretched from the camp
For two miles, sixty carried seats of gold
Inlaid with gems, three hundred bore the baggage,
V. 106 Three hundred were in iron panoply
That hid all but their eyes.
They left Tammísha
And bore the camp-enclosure to the waste.
Káran the avenger was the general,
The host three hundred thousand cavaliers.
The men of name marched mailed, with massive maces,

All bold as angry lions and all girded
For vengeance for Íraj; their steel-blue swords
Were in their hands and Káwa's standard led them.
Then Minúchihr with him who loved the fray,[1]
Káran, went from the forest of Nárwan,
Reviewed and ranged his host on those broad plains.
He gave the army's left wing to Garshásp;
Upon the right was brave Sám with Kubád,
Who set the battle in array. The prince
With Sarv was in the centre, whence he shone
Moon-like, or as the sun o'er some high hill.
Led by Káran, with champions such as Sám,
The Íránian army fought. Kubád was scout,
The heroes of the house of Talímán
Were ambuscaders, and the host was decked
In bridal trim with lion-warriors
And din of drums.

Men bore the news in haste
To Túr and Salm: "The Íránians armed for fight
Are marching toward the desert from the forest,
Their livers' blood afoam upon their lips."

That pair of murderers with a huge array
Set forth intent on vengeance and drew up
Their host upon the plain: they made the Aláns
And sea their base. Kubád the scout advanced,
And Túr on hearing that came forth like wind,
And said to him: "Return to Minúchihr
And say to him: 'Thou bastard just made Sháh!
What though there was a daughter to Íraj, V. 107
Hast thou a right to signet, crown, and throne?'"[2]

"Yea, I will take thy message," said Kubád,
"In thine own words and style, but thou wilt quake
To think hereafter of this monstrous speech.
'Twill not be strange if even savage beasts

[1] Reading with C.

[2] Cf. DEI, ii. 217.

Bewail you day and night, for from Nárwan
To Chín are warlike, vengeful cavaliers.
A glimpse of our bright swords and Káwa's standard
Will make your hearts and brains burst in dismay:
Ye will not know a valley from a hill."
Túr heard and turned away in silent dudgeon,
While blest Kubád went back to Minúchihr
And told the insulting words. The young prince laughed.
"None but a fool," he said, "would talk like this.
But praise to Him—the Lord of both the worlds—
Who knoweth all things secret or revealed!
He knoweth that my grandsire was Íraj,
As blessed Farídún assureth me,
But when I show my person in the fight
My birth and prowess will approve themselves.
Now by the Grace of Him who ruleth sun
And moon I will not leave Túr power to wink,
But show his trunkless head to all the host;
I will avenge my blesséd sire upon him
And turn his kingdom upside down."
He ceased
And issued orders to prepare a feast.

§ 20

How Minúchihr attacked the Host of Túr

V. 108 When the bright world grew dark and scouts dispersed
About the plain, Káran the warrior
And Sarv the counsellor, who led the host,
Observed: "This will be Áhriman's own fight,
A day of martial deeds and vengeance-seeking." [1]
A proclamation issued to the troops:—
"O men of name and Lions of the Sháh!

[1] Reading with C.

Gird up your loins, be vigilant, and may
The Almighty guard you. Whosoe'er is slain
Will go to Paradise washed clean from sin;
While they who shed the blood of warriors
Of Rúm and Chín, and take their lands, shall have
Eternal fame, the Grace of archimages;
The Sháh will give them thrones and diadems,
Their chieftain gold and God prosperity.
Now when the dawn is breaking and the sun
Half risen gird upon your valiant loins
Your maces and your daggers of Kábul,
Take up your stations and preserve your ranks."
The captains of the host, the valiant chiefs,
Drew up before the lion-prince and said:—
"We are but slaves and live to serve the Sháh,
Will do his will and with our swords make earth
Run like Jíhún."
They went back to their tents, V. 109
All purposing revenge.
Now when day broke,
Upheaving night's mid gloom, the prince assumed
His station at the centre of the host
With coat of armour, sword, and Rúman helm.
The soldiers shouted lifting to the clouds
Their spears. He duly ordered all the troops,
The left, the right, the centre, and the wings.
With heads all anger and with brows all frowns
They rolled up earth in marching. It resembled
A ship upon the waves and thou hadst said:—
"It sinketh fast!" From his huge elephant
He dropped a ball, earth heaved like azure sea,
The drummers marched before the elephants
With roar and din like lions in their rage,
While from the sounds of pipe and clarion
Thou wouldst have said: "It is a festival."

The troops moved mountain-like and both hosts shouted.
Anon the plain ran blood: thou wouldst have said
That tulips sprang up. Mighty elephants
Stood as on coral columns in the gore.
V. 110 They fought till night, till Minúchihr, who won
The love of all, obtained the victory;
V. 111 Yet fortune in one stay abideth not,
Now honey and now gall make up man's lot.
The hearts of Túr and Salm were deeply moved
By grief. They listened for a night-surprise,
But no one came e'en when night turned to day,
And they themselves were anxious for delay.

§ 21

How Túr was Slain by the Hand of Minúchihr

Noon passed. With vengeful hearts the brothers met
For consultation; mid their foolish schemes
They said: "Let us attempt a night-attack
And fill the desert and the plain with blood."
That night those miscreants drew their army out,
Bent on a camisade. The Íránian scouts
Gat news thereof, and sped to Minúchihr
To tell him so that he might post his troops.
V. 112 That shrewd man heard and planned a counter-ruse.
He left Káran the host and led himself
An ambuscade with thirty thousand warriors,
All men of name. Túr came at night and brought
One hundred thousand men prepared for fight,
But found the foe arrayed with banners flying
And saw that battle was his sole resource.
A shout rose from the centres of the hosts,
The horsemen made the air a cloud of dust
And steel swords flashed like lightning: thou hadst said:—

"They make air blaze, earth gleam like diamonds."
The clashing of the steel went through the brain,
While flame and blast rose cloudward. Minúchihr
Sprang from his ambush and surrounded Túr,
Who wheeled and fled mid wailings of despair V. 113
From his own troops. Prince Minúchihr pursued,
Hot for revenge, and cried: "Stay, miscreant,
Who lovest fight so well and cuttest off
The heads of innocents! Know'st not that all
Desire revenge on thee?"
He hurled a dart
Against Túr's back, whose sword fell from his grasp.
Then Minúchihr like wind unseated him,
Cast him to earth, slew him, cut off his head,
And left the body for the beasts of prey;
Then went back to his camp to contemplate
That symbol of a fall from high estate.

§ 22

How Minúchihr wrote to Announce his Victory to Farídún

Then Minúchihr wrote to Sháh Farídún
About the war—its fortunes good and ill—
And first he spake of Him who made the world—
The Lord of goodness, purity, and justice:—
"Praise to the Worldlord who hath succoured us!
Men find no other helper in their straits.
He is the Guide, he maketh hearts rejoice V. 114
And changeth not throughout eternity.
Next, praises be to noble Farídún—
The lord of crown and mace, possessed of justice,
The Faith and Grace, crown and imperial throne.
His fortune is the source of righteousness,
His throne of beauty and of excellence.

By virtue of thy Grace I reached Túrán,
Arrayed the host and fought by day and night
Thrice fiercely in two days. I heard that Túr
Designed a night-attack and wanting power
Relied on craft; so I arranged an ambush
And left him nothing but the wind to clutch.
He fled, I followed, and o'ertaking him
Pierced through his armour with a javelin,
And took him from his saddle like the wind.
I flung him as I would a serpent down
And from his worthless body smote the head,
Which lo! I send my grandsire, and forthwith
Will set about a stratagem for Salm.
Since Túr had placed within a golden casket
His royal brother's head in foul contempt,
And had no ruth or reverence for him, God,
Who made the world, delivered Túr to me,
V. 115 And I have slain him as he slew Íraj;
And will lay waste his realm and dwelling-place."
The letter done he sent a cameleer,
Who sped like wind with cheeks suffused with shame
And hot tears in his eyes for Farídún;
How should he like to be the carrier
Of Túr's head to the monarch of Írán?
Though dead sons were perverse their fathers mourn them;
But as the crime was great and unprovoked,
And as the avenger was both young and brave,
The messenger approached with confidence
And laid the head of Túr before the Sháh,
Who prayed to God, the righteous Judge, to pour
On Minúchihr his blessings evermore.

§ 23

How Káran took the Castle of the Aláns

News of the fight and of that Moon's eclipse
Reached Salm, who purposed making a retreat
Upon a lofty castle in his rear;
Such are the ups and downs which fortune hath!
Now Minúchihr had thought of this and said:—
"If Salm declineth battle his retreat
Will be upon the hold of the Aláns, V. 116
And therefore we must occupy the road,
For if he hath the fortress of the sea
No one will wrench him from his foothold there.
It is a place whose head is in the clouds,
'Twas built by cunning from the ocean's depths,
Is furnished well with treasures manifold
And overshadowed by the eagle's wing.
I must make haste to execute my plan
And ply both rein and stirrup."
This he told
Káran, who, as he knew, would keep the secret.
That chief replied: "O gracious sovereign!
If to the least of all his warriors
The Sháh vouchsafeth to entrust a host,
I will secure Salm's only gate for combat
Or for retreat. For this exploit I need
Túr's royal standard and his signet-ring,
Then will I make a shift to seize the hold
And go to-night; but keep the matter close."
He chose six thousand veterans of name,
Who when the sky grew ebon placed the drums
Upon the elephants, and full of fight
Set forward toward the sea. Káran resigned
The army to Shírwí and said: "I go

V. 117 Disguised as envoy to the castellan
To show to him the signet-ring of Túr.
When I am in the castle I will raise
The standard, and will make the blue swords gleam.
Approach ye then the hold, and when I shout
Make onset and lay on."
He left the host
Hard by the hold while he himself advanced,
And when he reached the castle told his tale,
Showed to the castellan Túr's signet-ring
And said: "I come from Túr, who bade me not
Stop to draw breath, and said: 'Go to the castellan
And say to him: "Be watchful day and night,
Share both in weal and woe, guard well the castle,
Be vigilant, and if Sháh Minúchihr
Shall send his troops and standard 'gainst the hold
Assist each other, and put forth your strength;
And may ye overthrow the enemy."'"
The castellan heard this and recognised
The signet-ring; they oped the castle-gates:
He saw the seeming, but he saw no more.
Mark here the rustic poet's moralising:—
"No one but He alone who placed the heart
Within can see its secrets. Be our part
To labour at the duty of the day;
So be the good and evil what they may,
Mine only duty is to say my say."
The castellan re-entered with Káran,
Who loved the fight, the guileless with the guileful.
This chieftain, though prepared for stratagems,
Sealed friendship with a stranger, and in folly
Gave both his head and castle to the winds.
He thus addressed his son—a warrior-pard:—
"My son, who art so skilful and adroit!
V. 118 Do nothing rashly and in ignorance,

But ponder well and mark from first to last
The honied words of one that is a stranger,
Especially in times of war and strife.
Search well and live in dread of ambuscades,
Look deeply whatsoe'er the matter be,
And how a chieftain shrewd of intellect,
By leaving some small detail unexplored,
And not considering the foemen's craft,
May render up his fortress to the winds."
At break of day Káran, who loved the fight,
Set up a standard like the moon full-orbed;
He shouted and made signals to Shírwí
And his exalted chiefs. Shírwí perceiving
The royal standard made toward the hold,
Seized on the gate, threw in his troops and crowned
The chiefs with blood. Here was Káran and there
Shírwí, the sword above, the sea below.
By noon the castle's form and castellan's
Had vanished. Thou couldst see a cloud of smoke,
But ship and castle were invisible.
Fire blazed, wind blew, rose horsemen's shouts and cries
For help. At sunset hold and plain were level,
And twice six thousand of the foe were slain.
A pitchy reek rose o'er a pitchy shore
And all the surface of the waste ran gore.

§ 24

How Kákwí, the Grandson of Zahhák, attacked the Íránians

Káran returned and told the prince, who said :— V. 119
" May horse and mace and saddle ne'er lack thee.
When thou hadst gone another host approached,
Led by a young and battle-loving chief,

A grandson of Zahhák, and called, I hear,
Kákwí—an infidel—with haughty horsemen
And men of name a hundred thousand strong,
And slaughtered many of our lion-warriors.
Salm now is bent on fight since this ally
Hath come to help him from Gang-i-Dizhhukht.[1]
They tell me that he is a warlike dív,
In battle unappalled and strong of hand.
I have not reached him in the combat yet,
Nor ta'en his measure with the warriors' mace,
But when he cometh next to fight with us
I will essay him and will try his weight."
Káran replied: "O prince! who can confront thee
In battle? If he were a pard his skin
Would burst upon him at the thought of fight.
Who is Kákwí? What is Kákwí? Thy foes
Will never play the man. I will devise
A shrewd device in this emergency
That none like vile Kákwí may ever come
Henceforth to fight us from Gang-i-Dizhhukht."
V. 120 The noble prince replied: "Be not concerned.
Thou art exhausted with thy late exploit,
Thy marching and revenge; it is my turn
To do the fighting: breathe awhile, great chief!"
The din of trump and pipe arose without,
The tymbals sounded and the horsemen's dust
Made air pitch-black and earth like ebony.
Thou wouldst have said: "These Diamonds have life,
These maces and these javelins have tongues!"
Shouts rose around and arrows fledged the air
Like vulture's wings, blood grouted hand to hilt
And spurted from the murk; thou wouldst have said:—
"The earth will rise in waves and whelm the sky."

[1] Zahhák's old capital.

Kákwí the chieftain raised the battle-shout
And came forth like a dív, while Minúchihr
Advanced with Indian sword in hand. Both raised
A cry that rent the hills and frayed the hosts.
Thou wouldst have said: "These chiefs are elephants,
Both terrible, both girt, both bent on vengeance."
Kákwí thrust at the girdle of the prince,
Whose Rúman helmet shook: his mail was rent
Down to the belt so that his waist appeared.
The prince's falchion struck Kákwí's cuirass V. 121
And clove it by the neck, and thus they fought
Till noon like pards and puddled earth with blood.
As day declined the prince, sufficed with fight,
Reached out and gripping firmly with his legs
Caught with all ease the girdle of Kákwí,
Dragged from his steed his elephantine form,
Flung him upon the burning sand and gashed
His chest and bosom with the scimitar.
Thus went that Arab to the winds a prey;
His mother bare him for so ill a day!

§ 25

How Salm fled and was Slain by the Hand of Minúchihr

Kákwí being dead, the master of the West,
Whose stay was broken, ceased to seek revenge
And sought to gain his stronghold in his flight,
But when he reached the sea saw not a spar
Of any vessel there. The Íránian host,
Though clogged by killed and wounded on the plain,
Pursued apace, while Minúchihr, all wrath
And vengeance, cast his fleet white charger's mail
And pressed on till within the foemen's dust
And hard upon the king of Rúm he cried:—

"Thou who art guilty of the blackest crime,
V. 122 Who murderedst thy brother for his crown!
Hast thou obtained it? Whither wilt thou flee?
I bring thee now, O king! a crown and throne:
The royal Tree hath come to bearing fruit.
Fly not the throne of greatness! Farídún
Hath got a new throne ready for thine use.
The tree which thou hast planted beareth now,
And thy breast shall receive the produce of it;
If thorns, the tree was planted by thyself;
If painted silk, the weaving was thine own."

As thus he spake he urged his steed along
And in another moment overtook
And clave the king asunder from the neck,
Then bade the head be set upon a spear,
While all admired his might and warlike arm.

Salm's troops were scattered like a flock by snow
And wandered aimlessly in companies
Amid the wastes, the caverns, and the hills.
They bade one wary, wise, and eloquent
To go to Minúchihr forthwith and say
On their behalf: "We are thy subjects all
And only tread the earth to do thy will.
Among us there are some possessed of herds,
And some of tilth and palaces. To fight
Was not our interest but our king's command;
We came as soldiers, not to seek revenge.
We are the Sháh's slaves now and bow our heads
To do his will and pleasure. If he willeth
V. 123 Revenge and bloodshed we can but submit.
We all are guiltless and we all come in,
So let him do as seemeth good to him,
For he is master of our guiltless lives."

Thus spake the sage, the chief in wonder answered:—
"I cast my passions and exalt my name.

What is not God's is Áhriman's and evil;
Be all such banished from my sight, and may
The dívs be punished for their sins. Ye all
Are either foes or friends and mine allies,
But innocent and guilty both are spared
Since God hath given us victory. 'Tis the day
Of justice, wrong hath ceased, the leaders' heads
Are safe from falling now. Seek brotherhood
And use it for a charm, put off from you
The implements of war, be wise and pure
In Faith, secure from ill, and banish vengeance.
Now in your dwellings wheresoe'er they be,
In Chín, Túrán, or in the land of Rúm,
Let all the virtues form your pedestal
And be your homes those of enlightened minds."
The great chiefs praised that noble, upright prince,
And proclamation issued from his tent:—
"Ye paladins whose counsel prospereth!
Shed no more needless blood, the tyrants' fortunes
Are overthrown."
Then all the troops of Chín V. 124
Fell prostrate, brought their arms and gear of war
To Minúchihr, and as they passed him piled
A mountain of horse-armour, helms, and breastplates,
Of maces and of Indian scimitars,
While Minúchihr the chieftain graciously
Entreated each one as his rank might be.

§ 26

How the Head of Salm was sent to Farídún

The hero called a courier, gave to him
The head of Salm, the monarch of the West,
And wrote to tell his grandsire of the fight
And strategy, first giving God the praise

And then the Sháh: "Praise to the conquering World-lord
From whom are virtue, power, and Grace! His blessing
Is now on Farídún, that wise, brave Sháh,
Who hath released us from the bonds of ill,
And hath the wisdom and the Grace of God.
We are avenged upon the cavaliers
Of Chín. We lay in ambush for their lives.
Strong in the Sháh with our avenging scimitars
We smote the heads off those unrighteous men,
V. 125 Who both were reeking with Íraj's blood;
We purged the surface of the earth with steel.
Lo! I am coming like the wind behind
My letter, and will tell thee all that passed."
He sent Shírwí, the aspiring veteran,
Back to the hold, and said: "Explore the booty,
Act as thou seest best, and take the Sháh
The spoil upon high-crested elephants."
He bade the drummers and the pipers fare
Forth from the royal tent, and from that hold
In Chín marched inland back to Farídún.
As he approached Tammísha on his way
His grandsire longed to look at him. The blast
Of clarions ascended from the gate,
The host began to march out. Farídún,
That man of wakeful fortune, decked the backs
Of all the elephants with turquoise thrones,
And golden litters with brocade and gems.
A world of banners, yellow, red, and blue,
Waved overhead. The host marched toward Sarí,
Like black clouds from the waters of Gílán,
With golden bridles and with golden girdles,
With silvern stirrups and with golden bucklers,
With treasures, elephants, and precious stores,
In readiness to welcome Minúchihr.

Now as that prince approached the royal host
His grandsire went afoot to welcome him,
As did the men of Gíl like lions loose,
With torques of gold and helmets black as musk.
The Íránians followed on behind the Sháh, V. 126
Each like a savage lion, troops went first,
The elephants and lions in the midst,
Behind the elephants more valiant troops.
Whenas the flag of Farídún appeared
The host of Minúchihr deployed in line.
That youthful prince, that sapling just producing
Its earliest fruits, dismounted from his steed.
He kissed the ground and blessed the monarch's throne,
His diadem and crown and signet-ring,
But Farídún commanded him to mount,
Kissed him and grasped his hand.
Then Farídún
Returning home sent word to Sám, the son
Of Narímán: "Come presently," for Sám
Had come from Hindústán to help to fight
Against the sorcerers, and brought withal
A mighty store of gold and precious things
Above whate'er the Sháh required of him—
Such myriads of jewels and dínárs
That no accountant could have reckoned them.
Sám, when he reached the monarch of the world,
Saluted both the old Sháh and the young.
The famous monarch seated Sám beside him,
The great king seated the great paladin,
And said: "I put my grandsire in thy charge,
For I must now depart. Help him in all
And make him show a prowess like thine own."
The great Sháh lightly laid the young man's hand
In that world-paladin's, looked up and said:—
"Almighty God! Just Judge who sayest sooth!

V. 127 Thou saidst: 'I am the Almighty, the just Judge,
The Help of the oppressed in their distress.'
Right hast Thou done me, Thou hast holpen me
And given me both crown and signet-ring.
God! Thou hast granted me my whole desire;
Now take me to the other world—a better
Than this—because I would not that my soul
Should tarry longer in this narrow sphere."
Shírwí the chieftain with the spoils approached
The palace of the Sháh, who lavished all
The booty on the troops.
He gave directions,
Two days ere Mihr, for Minúchihr to sit
Helmed on the throne of gold, with his own hands
Crowned the young prince, and gave his last commands.

§ 27

The Death of Farídún

This done, the great king's day and fortune changed,
The leafage withered on the royal tree;
He quitted crown and throne and with the heads
Of those three kings beside him lived in tears
And in austerities: his plaint was this:—
"My days are changed and darkened by these three,
Who were my heart's delight and grief withal,
Thus slain before me miserably, in hatred,
And as my foes would wish. Such ills befell them
Through their perversity and evil deeds;
They disobeyed me and the world frowned on them."
His heart was full, his face all tears till death.
Though Farídún is gone there is his name
Still left through all the years that have passed by;

He was, my son! all excellence and fame— V. 128
One who found profit in adversity.
Then Minúchihr put off the royal crown,
He girt a blood-stained girdle round his loins,
And reared a charnel as the Sháhs were wont
Of ruddy gold and lapislazuli.
They placed a throne of ivory within
And hung a crown above it, visited
The dead to say farewell, as was the use
And ritual, then shut the charnel-door:
In such ill case that dear one left the world!
One sennight Minúchihr gave up to grief,
His eyes were full of tears, his cheeks were pale,
And for a sennight city and bázár
Were mourning with their mourning sovereign.
O world which art all wind and levity!
The man of wisdom hath no joy of thee.
Thou fosterest each one with thy caress,
No matter if his life be more or less,
But when thou willest to revoke the trust
What reckest thou of coral or of dust?
Man! when the world hath snapped in twain the cord
Of this world for thee, be thou liege or lord,
Thy griefs and pleasures as a dream appear:
Vex not thy heart then to continue here.
Blest is the man who, whether king or thrall,
Bequeatheth good as his memorial!

VII

MINÚCHIHR

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

After describing the accession of Minúchihr, the poet proceeds to tell the story of Zál, the son of Sám, how, being born with white hair, he was in consequence exposed by his father on Mount Alburz, how he was found and brought up by the Símurgh, how in after years he and his father became reconciled, and how he rose to greatness. The poet also tells of the loves of Zál and Rúdába, the daughter of Mihráb, the idolatrous king of Kábul, the wrath of Minúchihr thereat, his ultimate consent to the union, and the birth of Rustam, with an account of whose first adventures, and of the death of Minúchihr, the reign concludes.

NOTE

The story, which occupies the reign of Minúchihr, in whose name, which means "offspring of Manu,"[1] we can still trace a connection between Indian and Iránian mythology, between the Vedas and the Zandavasta, is perhaps the most charming in the whole poem; and here first the stream of epic, hitherto confined and cramped, breaks out into broad waters, and carries us to the heroic race who play such an important part throughout the first—the mythic—period of the poem. We have already seen how the titles bestowed on the great hero Keresáspa became separate personalities in later times,[2] and in this reign we have one of his most

[1] Manushchithra in the Zandavasta. For Manu see prefatory note to Jamshíd.

[2] See introductory note to Farídún.

famous feats recorded as an exploit of Sám, the son of Narímán—the slaying of the dragon of the Kashaf. The legend appears to have become localised in the neighbourhood of the poet's own birthplace, Tús, by which the Kashaf flows, and the dragon may be typical of the periodical floods the prevention of which is said to have been an object which the poet had at heart.[1] The feature of Sám's mace is reproduced from the earlier legend, where Keresáspa is described as "bludgeon-bearing."[2]

The gigantic mythical bird, the Símurgh, the Roc of the Arabian Nights, which plays such an important part in the legend of Zál and of his son Rustam, is described in the Bundahish as "the griffon of three natures."[3] It appears to have been conceived of as a sort of gigantic bat.[4] The Bundahish, in its account of birds, says: "There are two of them which have milk in the teat *and* suckle *their* young, the griffon bird, and the bat which flies in the night; as they say that the bat is created of three races (sar*d*ak), the race (áyina) of the dog, the bird, *and* the musk *animal;* for it flies like a bird, has many teeth like a dog, *and* is dwelling in holes like a musk-rat."[5] The Símurgh was the first bird created,[6] and its nest was on the tree of wild vegetable life which grew in the wide ocean near to the tree of immortality. Upon the former tree collect all the seeds which plants have produced during the year, and the office of the Símurgh was to shake the tree and scatter the seeds, which were then collected by another mythical bird, called Chamrosh, which had its nest on the summit of Mount Alburz and protected Írán from invasion. This bird mingled the seeds with the rains, which the good genius Tishtar (Sirius) had rescued from the demons, with a view of pouring them on the earth; the purport of the legend was to account for the rapid vegetation in hot climates.[7] The poet appears to have combined some of the characteristics of several mythical birds—the Chamrosh, the Karshipta, and also of the Vare*ng*ana or raven in his account of the Símurgh. The magical or medicinal efficacy of the raven's feathers is recognised in the Zandavasta, where we read: "Zarathustra asked Ahura Mazda . . . 'If I have a curse thrown upon me, a spell told upon me by many men who hate me, what is the remedy for it?' Ahura Mazda answered: 'Take thou a feather of that bird . . . the

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[1] C, liv.

[2] MZA, iii. 234.

[3] Sih (three), áyína (kind or sort), murgh (bird)=Símurgh. WPT, i. 47, 89, 91.

[4] WPT, i. 71.

[5] *Id.* 50.

[6] *Id.* 89.

[7] *Id.* 70, and iii. 112.

Vare*ng*ana, O Spitama Zarathustra! With that feather thou shalt rub thy own body, with that feather thou shalt curse back thy enemies. If a man holds a bone of that strong bird, or a feather of that strong bird, no one can smite or turn to flight that fortunate man. The feather of that bird of birds brings him help; it brings unto him the homage of men, it maintains him in his glory."[1]

With regard to the account of the employment of anæsthetics on the occasion of the Cæsarean birth of Rustam, we find another instance of their employment by Urmuzd himself in the account of the Creation in the Bundahish. When Áhriman broke into the creation of Urmuzd and attacked the Primeval Ox, we read that Urmuzd had previously ground up healing fruits in water for it, that its death might be the less painful.[2] Similarly we read in Genesis that the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.

The earliest reference to Rustam in literature appears to be an indirect one in the Kur'án.[3] He is also mentioned in the work that passes under the name of Moses of Chorene: "Age vero, si placet, vilia vanaque de eo mendacia declarabo, qualia Persae de Restomo Sazico memorant, quem CXX elephantis viribus fuisse superiorem tradunt. De hujus pariter robore & fortitudinem ea celebrant, quae â similitudine veri longissimê absunt, quem sanê neque Samsoni, neque Herculi, nec Sazico fabulae istae conferunt. Canunt et enim quadrata eum saxa manibus prehendere potuisse, & ad arbitrium suum, magna aeqûe ac parva, divellere, unguibûsque abradere, &, velut in tabulâ, aquilarum figuras, aliaque ejus generis effingere atque unguibus inscribere: Qui cum apud magni maris Pontici litus hostiles quasdam naves offendisset, impetum in eas fecit, quas in altum octo aut decem circiter stadia provectas, ubi consequi non potuit, globosis eas lapidibus incessit, quorum conjectu aquae, ut aiunt, tantoperê diffindebantur, ut naves non paucae demersae fuerint, & fluctuum vis, aquarum fissura altiûs surgentium reliquas naves multos mille passus propulerit. Prôh ingens fabula, aut potiùs, fabularum fabula."[4]

Malcolm identifies the castle on Mount Sipand taken by Rustam with a famous stronghold, known on account of its appearance as "the White Castle," situated in the province of Párs, about seventy-six miles north-west of Shíráz, "on a high hill that is almost perpendicular on every side. It is of oblong form, and

[1] DZA, ii. 240.
[2] WPT, i. 18.
[3] RK, p. 284. Cf. NIN, p. 10.
[4] Whiston, *Mosis Chorenensis*, 96.

encloses a level space at the top of the mountain, which is covered with delightful verdure, and watered by numerous springs. The ascent is nearly three miles ; for the last five or six hundred yards the summit is so difficult of approach that the slightest opposition, if well directed, must render it impregnable . . . In 1810 it was . . . in possession of the tribe of Mumasenni, one of the aboriginal tribes of Persia. Their means of defence were probably still the same as in the days of Roostum: a line of large stones ranged in regular order around the edges of the precipice. Each stone is wedged in by a smaller: when that is removed, the large stone, or rather rock, is hurled down, and sweeps everything before it."[1]

§ 1

How Minúchihr ascended the Throne and made an Oration

They mourned for Farídún for seven days, V. 129
Upon the eighth Sháh Minúchihr came forth
And set the royal cap upon his head;
He countercharmed the spell of sorcerers
And reigned twice sixty years. The paladins
Throughout the world called praises down on him.
When he assumed the crown he gave the world
Glad news of justice, Faith, humanity,
Of goodness, knowledge, purity, and said:—
"I sit enthroned upon the circling sphere,
Dispensing love and justice, wrath and strife.
Earth is my thrall, heaven mine ally, the heads
Of kings my quarry. Mine are Faith and Grace,
Mine to bestow good fortune and to harm.
I wreak revenge by night; the raging fire
Upon Barzín[2] am I, and lord of scimitar
And golden boot. I set up Káwa's standard
And light the clouds, I draw my sword and give
No quarter on the battlefield. My hands
Become a bounteous ocean when I feast,
But when I mount my steed my breath is fire.

[1] MHP, i. 19, and note. [2] The name of a Fire-temple.

I cut the practice of the wicked short
And make the earth a red brocade of blood,
V. 130 I wield the mace, I illustrate the crown
And light the kingdom from mine ivory throne;
Yet in despite of all I am a slave—
A servant of the Maker of the world.
Smite we our faces with our hands and weep,
Let all our conversation be of God,
Of whom we hold the crown, the throne, and host:
We give Him praise and He is our defence.
We tread the path of Farídún the blest—
Our grandsire: he was old, but we are young.
Whoever in the seven climes of earth
Departeth from the Way, abandoneth
The Faith, inflicteth hurt on mendicants,
Oppresseth any one of his own kin,
Uplifteth in the pride of wealth his head,
Or causeth sorrow to the suffering,
All such are infidels in my regard
And worse than evil-doing Áhriman.
All evil-doers that hold not the Faith
Are banned by God and us: hereafter we
Will put our hand upon the scimitar,
And in our vengeance desolate their realm."
All men of name throughout the earth invoked
Their blessings on him with one voice, and said:—
"Thy glorious grandsire, O benignant Sháh!
Taught thee the conduct of the throne and crown.
Be ever thine the throne of mighty men,
The crown and archimages' Grace. Our hearts
Obey thy word, our souls are pledged to thee."
V. 131 Thereat rose Sám, the chief of paladins,
And said to Minúchihr: "O judge most just!
I from the Sháhs have gotten eyes to see,
And see thee just: my part is to applaud.

Sháh of Írán art thou by long descent—
The chosen of the Lions and the brave.
May God watch o'er thy body and thy soul,
Thy heart be glad, thy fortune slumber not.
Thou mindest me of days of yore and art
My place of shelter at the royal throne.
Thou art a lion steadfast in the fight,
Thou art a sun resplendent in the feast.
Be time and earth the dust upon thy feet,
Thy place upon the turquoise throne. Since thou
Hast cleansed earth with thine Indian scimitar
Sit at thine ease and take thy pleasure here.
Henceforward all the warfare is for us;
Thine are the throne, the wine-cup, and the banquet.
The fathers of my race were paladins—
The shelter of the Sháhs and of the great—
And from Garshásp to famous Narímán
Were chiefs and swordsmen. I will compass earth
And put a scantling of thy foes in bonds.
Thy grandsire made me paladin, thy love
And counsel made me wise."
The Sháh returned
His praise, bestowing many a kingly gift,
And then Sám with the paladins withdrew
And so departed on his homeward way,
While all the world conformed to righteous sway.

§ 2

The Birth of Zál

Now will I fashion from the legend-store
A tale of wonder from the days of yore;
Give me thine ear, my son! and learn from me
How Sám became the sport of destiny.

V. 132 Now Sám was childless and in that regard
In need of solace. One among his wives—
A Beauty rosy-cheeked with musky hair—
Gave him the hope of offspring, for that Moon
Was sun-faced, ripe, and was with child by him,
And grievously she suffered with her burden.
When many days had passed the babe was born—
A Beauty like the world-illuming sun,
And like it too in loveliness of face;
But all his hair was white, and since 'twas so
They kept the thing from Sám for one whole week:
The women of that famous paladin
Wept in the presence of the little child,
But not one dared to tell the hero Sám
That his fair spouse had borne a hoary babe.
Anon the infant's nurse, with lion's courage,
Came unabashed before the paladin,
As one who brought good news, blessed him and said:—
"May Sám the hero's days be fortunate,
And may his foemen's hearts be rooted out!
God hath bestowed on thee what thou didst ask—
The very gift whereon thy soul was set:
Behind thy curtain, seeker after glory!
Thy moon-faced spouse hath borne a stainless son,
A paladin, a child of lion-heart,
A boy of spirit, fashioned of pure silver,
And with two cheeks that favour Paradise.
Thou wilt not see a faulty part in him
Except this blemish—that his hair is white.
So heaven willed, O seeker after glory!
Content thee and be not morose and thankless."
The horseman Sám descended from his throne;
He went behind the curtain to "Young Spring,"
And saw a goodly boy with hoary head.

None hath beheld or heard of such; his hair
Resembled snow and yet his cheeks were ruddy. V. 133
Sám at that sight despaired. Great was his fear
Of coming shame; he left the path of wisdom
For courses of his own, looked up to heaven
And prayed to be forgiven his offence.
"O Thou," he said, "above all harm and loss!
Good ever cometh of Thine ordinance.
If I have sinned by any grievous sin,
Or yielded to the faith of Áhriman,
Oh! may the Almighty hearken to my prayer
And in His secret counsels pardon me.
My troubled mind is writhing for sheer shame,
The hot blood is a-tingle in my veins
For this brat like a brat of Áhriman,
With dark eyes and with hair like jessamine.
When any nobles come to speak with me,
And set their eyes on this ill-omened cub,
What shall I say that this dív's bantling is—
A fay or leopard with its spots? The great
Will laugh at me in public and in private
Till shame shall make me curse and quit Írán."
He spake in wrath with frowns and railed at fortune,
Then bade some take the child and carry it
Beyond those fields and fells and far away.
There was a certain mountain named Alburz,
Nigh to the sun and far removed from men,
Where the Símurgh had nested, for the place
Was uninhabited. They left the child
Upon the mountain and returned. Time passed,
While for no fault the infant paladin,
Unable to distinguish black from white,
Was outcast from his father's love; but He,
Who fostereth all, took up the castaway.

V. 134 Once when the lioness her cub had fed,
"If I should give thee my heart's blood," she said,
"I should not look for thanks. I live in thee;
My heart would break if thou shouldst break with me."
Throughout the expanse of earth the beasts we find
More tender to their young than are mankind.
The babe remained where thrown, exposed both day
And night. He sucked his finger-ends and wailed.
Now when the young Símurghs grew ravenous
The mother, soaring o'er her nest, beheld
Earth like a heaving sea, and wailing there
A child rock-cradled with the dust for nurse,
His body bare, his lips unwet with milk,
The dark drear soil about him and above
The noonday sun. Would that he had had pards
For dam and sire, he had at least been shaded!
The Lord gave loving instincts to that fowl,
Which thought not to devour the child herself,
But swooped down from the clouds and with her talons
Took up the infant from the heated rocks,
Then bare him quickly off to Mount Alburz,
Where were her nest and young, for them to tear
Regardless of his cries; but God, who giveth
All good, had ruth on him, his lot was other;
V. 135 For when the fowl and all her brood beheld
That infant, who was weeping tears of blood,
They lavished love on him in wondrous wise,
Astonied at his goodly face. The bird
Chose for him all the tenderest prey, and made
Her little guest suck blood instead of milk.
Long was he lost to sight; but when he came
To man's estate a caravan passed by
And saw one like a noble cypress-tree,
His breast a silver mount, his waist a reed,

And rumour of him spread, for neither good
Nor bad remaineth hid; so Sám in fine
Heard of that high-starred youth of Grace divine.

§ 3

How Sám had a Dream touching the Case of his Son

One night when Sám was sleeping, seared in heart
And overwhelmed by that which time had wrought,
He dreamed that from the land of Ind there came
A noble rider on an Arab steed
Apace, and gave him glad news of his son—
That lofty bough of his of fruitful promise.
When he awoke he called the archimages,
Conversed with them at large, told them his dream
And of the gossip of the caravans:
"What say ye," said he, "touching this affair?
Is it a fair presumption to your minds
That this child liveth, or hath winter's cold
Or summer's heat destroyed him?"
Old and young V. 136
There present answered thus the paladin:—
"Ingrates to God experience good in naught;
For pards and lions on the sands and rocks,
And fish and crocodiles in waterways,
All cherish their own little ones and give
God thanks; but thou didst break the covenant
With Him who giveth good, and cast away
An innocent because of his white hair,
Which shameth not a body pure and bright.
Say not, 'The child is dead,' but gird thyself
And ever persevere in quest of him,
Since one whom God regardeth will not die
Of heat or cold. And now in penitence

Incline to Him—the Author of all good,
The Guide."
So next day and in sore distress
Sám went to Mount Alburz, and when night came
Slept ill at ease. He saw a standard raised
Above the Indian mountains, and a youth
Of beauteous visage with a mighty host,
Upon his left an archmage, on his right
A sage of noble aspect. Of these twain
One came to Sám and said in chilling tones:—
"Audacious man and impious in thine aims!
Is there no fear of God before thine eyes?
If to thy mind a bird is nurse enough
What booteth it to be a paladin?
If white hair be a blemish in a man
Thy beard and head have grown like willow-leaves!
V. 137 God gave thee such and such things: why hast thou
By thine injustice frustrated the gift?
Abhor thy Maker then, for day by day
Thy body changeth hue. Thou didst despise
Thy son, who is the fosterling of God—
The kindliest Nurse for him. As for thyself,
Love is not in thee."
Sám roared out in sleep
As when a mighty lion is ensnared;
He feared that dream portended chastisement
From destiny. Aroused, he called to him
The men of lore and bade the chiefs to horse.
He came in haste toward the mountain-peak
To seek his castaway, and there beheld
A height whose top was midst the Pleiades:
Thou wouldst have said: "It will obstruct the stars."
Upon the top was built a lofty nest,
Where Saturn's influence could not injure it;

Tall posts of ebony and sandal-wood
Laced with lign-aloe stayed it underneath.
Sám gazed in wonder on that stony peak,
On that majestic bird and weird abode.
The building reached to Spica, and was raised
Without hand-labour, with no stones and earth.
A youth stood there—the counterpart of Sám,
Who watched him as he walked about the nest,
Then laid his cheeks upon the ground, and gave
Thanks to the Maker, in that He had made
Such bird upon the mountain, and had raised
Its stony summit to the Pleiades,
Acknowledging: "He is a righteous Judge,
All powerful and higher than the high."
He sought to find a path or any track
Whereby the wild beasts scaled the precipice;
And walked around the mountain giving thanks,
But saw no way to climb it. He exclaimed:—
"O Thou above all place, o'er sun and moon
And shining rainbow! I prostrate myself V. 138
Before Thee, pouring out my soul in awe.
If this youth springeth from my loins indeed,
Not from the seed of evil Áhriman,
Assist thy servant to ascend this height
And show me mercy, sinful as I am."
Thus prayed he to the Just: his prayer was granted.
When the Símurgh looked from the height and saw
Sám with his company, she knew that they
Came not for love of her but for the youth,
To whom she said: "Thou who hast seen the unease
Of nide and nest! I am the only nurse
That fostered thee, the source of all thy weal,
And gave to thee the name Dastán-i-Zand,[1]
Because thy sire dealt with thee treacherously;

[1] *I.e.* "much defrauded," in allusion to Sám's treatment of his son.

Command thy valiant guide to call thee so
When thou returnest home. Thy sire is Sám,
The hero, paladin of paladins,
And most exalted of the mighty men.
He hath come hither searching for his son,
And with him high estate hath come to thee.
Now must I take thee up and bear thee back
Unscathed to him."
He listened while she spake,
His eyes were filled with tears, his heart was sad.
Though he had seen no man, still he had learned
Of her to speak in accents like her own,
With much of wisdom and of ancient lore;
Thus had he language, wisdom, and right rede,
And looked to God for succour. Now observe
His answer to the fowl: "Hast thou in truth
Become aweary of my company?
Thy nest is unto me a shining throne,
Thy pinions are my glorious diadem,
V. 139 And next to God I owe my thanks to thee,
For thou hast turned my hardship into ease."
The bird replied: "If once thou dost behold
The crown, the throne, and doings of the court,
This nest will seem to thee of small account.
Make but one trial of the ways of fate.
I do not send thee hence in enmity;
I pass thee to a kingship. I would fain
Have kept thee here with me, but for thyself
To go is better. Bear this plume of mine
About with thee and so abide beneath
The shadow of my Grace. Henceforth if men
Shall hurt or, right or wrong, exclaim against thee,
Then burn the feather and behold my might,
For I have cherished thee beneath my plumes
And brought thee up among my little ones.

Now like a black cloud will I bear thee off
And carry thee to yonder spot uninjured.
Let not thy heart forget to love thy nurse,
For mine is breaking through my love of thee."
She thus consoled his heart, then took him up,
Bore him with stately motion to the clouds,
And swooping down conveyed him to his sire.
The youth had hair descending to his breast,
An elephantine form and cheeks like spring.
His father seeing him groaned bitterly,
Then quickly did obeisance to the bird,
And offered thanks and praises o'er and o'er.
"O queen of birds," he said, "the righteous Judge
Gave thee thy power and might and excellence,
That thou shouldst be the helper of the helpless,
And in thy goodness justest of the just.
May'st thou for ever make thy foes to grieve
And always be as mighty as thou art."
With that the bird, watched by the eyes of Sám
And all his company, soared mountainward.
He gazing on the youth from head to foot
Adjudged him fit for crown and throne; he had
A lion's breast and limbs, a sunlike face, V. 140
The heart of paladins, a hand to seek
The scimitar, white lashes but with eyes
Pitch-coloured, coral lips and blood-red cheeks.
Except his hair there was no fault at all;
None could discern in him another flaw.
Sám's heart became like Paradise; he blessed
His stainless child. "Have no hard thoughts," he said,
"Forget the past and warm thy heart with love
Toward me—the meanest of the slaves of God.
Henceforth since I have thee I swear by Him
I will not fail in gentleness to thee,

But will fulfil thy wishes good and bad:
Henceforth thy will shall be my rule of right."
He clothed the young man like a paladin
And turned to leave the mountain: having reached
The plain he chose a charger for his son,
As well as royal robes for him to wear,
And gave to him the name of Zál-i-Zar,[1]
Though the Símurgh called him at first Dastán.
Then all the troops with gladness in their hearts
Sought Sám. The drummers led on elephants,
And dust rose like a mount of indigo.
There was a sound of drums and clarions,
Of golden gongs and Indian bells, while all
The horsemen shouted. Thus they journeyed home
Until all joyfully they passed within
The city, greater by one paladin.

§ 4

How Minúchihr took Knowledge of the Case of Sám and Zál

"Sám hath returned in triumph from Alburz!"
Such tidings from Zábul came to the Sháh,
Who joyed exceedingly: the Maker's name
V. 141 Was often on his lips. He had two sons,
Both well beloved, one hight Naudar, the other
Zarasp, both brave and wise, and both endowed
With Grace and Faith, both like Ázargashasp
Upon the plain. He said: "Let famed Naudar
Go with despatch to Sám and look upon
His child that hath been nurtured in a nest,
Congratulate him on the Sháh's behalf
Upon the joy that hath revealed itself;

[1] *I.e.* "Zál the old," in allusion to his white hair.

And bid him come in person to the Sháh
To tell his tale, and afterwards depart
Home like a loyal liege."
Now when Naudar
Reached Sám the son of Narímán he saw
The new young paladin. Then Sám the horseman
Alighted, and Naudar and he embraced.
Sám asked about the Sháh and chiefs, Naudar
Delivered all their greetings. Sám, on hearing
The message of the great king, kissed the ground,
And hasted as commanded to the court.
When he drew near the Sháh went out to meet him.
Sám saw the flag of Minúchihr, dismounted
And went afoot. He kissed the ground and said:—
"For ever live glad and of ardent soul!"
But Minúchihr bade that true-hearted man,
That worshipper of God, to mount again.
They went toward the palace; Minúchihr
Sat down with great rejoicing on the throne,
And placed the royal crown upon his head.
On this side sat Káran, on that side Sám,
Both glad and well content. The chamberlain
Approached with stately step and brought in Zál,
Equipped with golden mace and golden crown. V. 142
The Sháh marked with amaze that lofty stature
And goodly face, "the abode," as thou wouldst say,
"Of life and love." He said to Sám: "Safeguard him
For my sake, never give him needless pain,
But find thy happiness in him alone,
For he hath royal Grace and lion's claws,
The wise man's heart, the prudence of the old.
Teach him our customs both in war and feast;
Bird, nest, and height he knoweth; can he know
What honour and court-usages demand?"

Then Sám told all the story to the Sháh
About the lofty mountain and Símurgh,
And how the precious one was lodged and nurtured
Within the nest till he could feed himself;
Told wherefore he had cast the child away,
And said thus: "Heaven revolved above my head
For many years; the world at length was filled
With strange reports of Zál and the Símurgh.
Commanded by the Lord of all the world
I went to Mount Alburz—no easy place—
And saw a mountain-peak among the clouds;
Thou wouldst have said: 'It is a dome of flint
Upon a sea!' The nest like some tall palace
Was there, well fenced from harm on every side,
With Zál and with the young of the Símurgh
Within it: thou hadst said:—'They are one brood.'
His breath exhaled the very scent of lòve,
And every thought of him rejoíced my heart.
. 143 Oft ran I round the Mount but path was none;
A yearning for my lost son came to me;
My heart burned so that life was well-nigh gone.
I prayed in secret to the holy Judge:—
'Resource of men, without a want Thyself!
Thy witness doth extend to every place,
And heaven turneth only at Thy word.
A slave am I, whose heart is full of sin
Before the Master of the sun and moon;
My hope is in Thy mercy—that alone:
I have no other ground of confidence.
This slave of Thine—the fostered of the fowl—
Brought up in misery and wretchedness,
Who hath but skins to wear instead of silk
And sucketh raw flesh, not his mother's breast—
Restore to me! Disclose for me a way
To him and cut this present trouble short.

Sear not my soul for my defect in love;
Oh! pardon me this once and cheer my heart.'
When I had spoken thus, the Lord vouchsafed
To grant my prayer immediately: the bird
Flew up, and soaring to the clouds wheeled round
Above the head of me the infidel;
Then from the mountain like a cloud in spring
Came with the form of Zál clasped to her breast,
And odours that fulfilled the world with musk.
Mine eyes were tearless, and my lips were dry;
I feared the bird and yearned upon my son,
So that my wits departed clean away.
She brought him to me like the kindliest nurse,
Whereat my tongue began to utter praise,
And strange! I did obeisance to the fowl!
She left my son and went, 'twas God's decree,
And I have brought him, lord of earth! to thee,
And told what heretofore was mystery."

§ 5

How Zál went back to Zábulistán

The Sháh then ordered the astrologers, V. 144
The archmages and the other men of lore,
To ascertain the horoscope of Zál
And so forecast the prince's destiny:—
"What will he be on reaching man's estate?
Ye must inform me as to this at large."
They found the horoscope of Zál and said:—
"This youth will be a famous paladin,
A noble, shrewd, and valiant cavalier."
The Sháh rejoiced and Sám's heart ceased from care.
The ruler of the earth prepared a gift
Of such a sort that he was blessed by all,
Of Arab steeds with golden furniture,

Of Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
Of furs and gold, of jewels and brocade,
Of carpets also an abundant store,
Of Rúman slaveboys in brocade of Rúm
With jewelled patterns on a golden ground,
Of bowls of emerald and turquoise cups,
Of others of pure silver and red gold
Containing saffron, musk, and camphor: these
The servants brought with suits of mail and casques,
Horse-armour, lances, maces, bows and arrows,
A throne of turquoise and a crown of gold,
A ruby signet-ring and golden girdle.
Anon the monarch had a patent drawn,
Like Paradise—all praise—investing Sám
With Mai of Hind, Danbar, Kábulistán,
All from the Indus to the sea of Chín,
V. 145 And from Zábul up to the stream of Bust,
Drawn strictly in accord to precedent.
The patent written and the gifts prepared,
They ordered out the horses for that chief
Of paladins, who rising spake and said:—
"O chosen lord of justice and of right!
Know that between the Moon and Fish no Sháh
Like thee e'er wore the crown; thy goodness, prudence,
Beneficence, and rede rejoice the age.
In thine eyes all the world's wealth is despised:
May men remember no one's name but thine."
He then advanced and kissed the throne.
They bound
The kettledrums upon the elephants
And started for Zábulistán. The towns
And villages turned out to gaze. When Sám
Approached Nímrúz 'twas bruited that the prince—
The lustre of the world—had come with presents,
A crown of gold, grant, patent, and gold girdle.

Sístán was decked throughout like Paradise;
Its bricks were gold and all its soil pure musk.
They flung about dínárs, musk, drachms, and saffron,
And made a holiday for all alike.
The aspiring chiefs from all sides went to Sám,
And said: "May this youth's steps prove fortunate
For thee, blithe-hearted, famous paladin!"
And as they blessed him showered gems o'er Zál.
For each man worthy was a gift prepared,
A robe of honour suited to his station
As being eminent in rank or lore,
While emulation caused all hopes to soar.

§ 6

How Sám gave the Kingdom to Zál

Thereafter Sám set forth before his son
The various virtues that adorn a king,
And having called the fathers of the realm V. 146
Harangued them in set terms at large, and said:—
"Ye holy archimages, wise of heart!
Our monarch in his wisdom ordereth
That I should march upon Mázandarán
Against the Kargasárs.[1] I take with me
A mighty host; my son—mine own heart's blood
And partner of my life—abideth here.
I in the days of youth and arrogance
Pronounced a monstrous sentence on the boy.
God gave to me a son: I cast him out
In ignorance, not wotting of his worth.
Him the Símurgh, that noble bird, bare off,
Him too the Maker passed not by in scorn.

[1] The name of a wild tribe, "the Vulture-heads."

What I despised was precious to the fowl,
Which reared him till he seemed a lofty cypress,
And when the time for pardon came the Lord
Of all the world—God—gave him back to me.
Regard him as my representative,
As mine own self committed to your charge;
I leave to you to teach him what is good
And kindle every virtue in his breast.
Hold him in honour, give him sound advice,
Impart good principles and lofty aims,
For as the Sháh commandeth I depart
With other chiefs against our enemies."

He turned to Zál and said: "Be peaceful, just,
And liberal, hold Zábulistán as home
And all things there as subject to thy will.
Be thine to make the home more beautiful
And friends more happy. Of my treasure-hoards
I leave the key with thee, thy gain is weal,
Thy loss is woe to me. In feast and fight
Do whatsoe'er thy bright soul holdeth good."

Zál answered: "Can I live on here? If one
V. 147 Was ever born defective it was I,
And I have cause to wail. Put me not further
Than ever from thee now that peace hath come.
While I was neath the talons of the bird,
Sucked blood and fared in dust, dwelt in a nest
And had a fowl for friend, I was esteemed
A fowl myself; but she that fostered me
Is far away. Such is fate's fostering!
I have no portion of the rose but thorns
And must submit."

Sám answered: "Be at ease.
Let thy heart rest; command whate'er thou wilt.
The astrologers declare a gracious purpose
Concerning thee—that here shall be thy home

With host and crown. We cannot thwart heaven's will;
Thy portion is to spread around thee love.
Now gather to thee cavaliers and sages,
Delight in men of wisdom, list and learn
From them, be instant both in feast and bounty,
And instant too in justice and all knowledge."
He ceased. The din of tymbals rose, earth turned
To iron and the air to ebony;
The Indian bells and gongs clanged at the portal
As Sám the chief departed to the war V. 148
With troops equipped and eager. For two stages
Zál went to see his father lead the host.
His sire then clasped him closely. Rose wild wailing;
Zál wept his heart's blood down his cheeks, but Sám
Bade him return and go with happy heart
Back to the throne and crown; yet Zál returned
In grief—a happy life without his father!
He sat upon the famous ivory throne,
He set the shining crown upon his head,
He took the armlet and the oxhead mace,
The golden necklace and the golden girdle,
And called the archmages out of every province
In quest of knowledge both of men and things.
Astrologers and men of sanctity,
Brave warriors and warlike cavaliers,
Were with him night and day and counselled him
In every matter, whether great or small.
He profited so much that thou hadst said:—
"He shineth as a star!" In policy
And understanding he had not a peer,
His horsemanship was famous with the great,
Folk thronged him in amazement at his beauty,
And whether near or distant used to think
The camphor locks of Zál as black as ink.

§ 7

How Zál visited Mihráb of Kábul

One day Zál set forth on a royal progress
V. 149 With chiefs attached to him in rede and Faith
To view Kábul, Dunbar, Margh, Mai and Ind.
At every stage he set him up a throne
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
He lavished treasure and indulged in pleasure,
As is the fashion in this Wayside Inn,
And reached Kábul with gladness in his heart.
There was a certain monarch hight Mihráb,
A wealthy and successful potentate,
In stature like a noble cypress-tree,
With cheeks like springtide and with pheasant's tread;
He had a sage's heart, a ruler's brain,
A warrior's shoulders and archmage's sense.
Descended from Zahhák, he ruled Kábul,
But having not the power to fight with Sám
Paid yearly tribute. Hearing that Sám's son
Had come, he left Kábul at dawn with treasure,
With steeds caparisoned, slave-boys, dínárs,
Musk, rubies, spicery, brocade of gold,
Silks, beaver-skins, a royal jewelled crown
And golden torque with emerald ornaments.
He took the chiefs and army of Kábul
As escort. Tidings reached the son of Sám:—
"The stately chief is coming in his state."
Zál went to meet and greet him courteously
With every honour due. In merry mood
They came together to the turquoise throne;
A table fit for paladins was spread
And all sat down with gladness to the feast.

There, while cup-bearers handed cups and wine,
Mihráb observed the son of Sám, on whom
He joyed to gaze, and whom he longed to serve.
Zál's wit and prudence made Mihráb exclaim:— V. 150
"His mother is immortal!"
When Mihráb
Rose from the board, Zál marked his mien and limbs,
And said before the chiefs: "Who girdeth him
More gracefully? Who hath such mien and carriage?
Men would pronounce him matchless in the fight."
One of the noble chieftains said to Zál:—
"He hath a daughter in his house whose face
Is fairer than the sun, like ivory
From head to foot, with cheeks like Paradise,
And as a teak in height. Two musky ringlets
Fall o'er her silvern neck, the ends of them
Would serve for ankle-rings. Her cheeks are like
Pomegranate-blossoms, she hath cherry lips,
Her silvern breasts bear two pomegranate-grains,
Her eyes are twin narcissi in a garden,
Their lashes blackness rapt from raven's plumes,
Her brows are like two bows made at Taráz,
Whipped with the purest musk. If thou wouldst seek
A moon, there is her face; if thou wouldst scent
The musk, there is her hair. From head to foot
She is as Paradise—all music, charm,
And beauty."
This raised tumult in the heart
Of Zál, and rest and reason fled from him;
He thought: "There is no doubt that this fair maid
Is like the sun and moon, for since the sire
Is comely still, how fair the child must be!"
Night came; Zál sat in sad and anxious thought, V. 151
Concerned for her whom he had never seen,
But when the sun's rays struck the mountain-tops

And made the world white crystal he gave audience,
And warriors with their golden scabbards came
To grace the portal of the paladin.
As these great men were calling for their steeds,
Mihráb, the ruler of Kábul, approached
The tent of Zál, the ruler of Zábul.
When he arrived the word was: "Clear the way."
Fresh in his beauty as a laden fruit-tree
He came to Zál, who welcomed him with joy,
Gave him the chiefest room and said: "Request
Whate'er thou wilt—throne, signet, sword or crown."
Mihráb replied: "Exalted, conquering king,
Whose word is law! But one desire have I,
And that an easy one for thee to grant—
That thou be pleased to visit me and make
My soul bright as the sun."
Zál said: "Not so:
Thy palace is not one that I may visit,
For Sám would not approve, nor would the Sháh,
Of us for drinking wine and getting drunk
With idol-worshippers. Save this request
We grant thee all and joy to see thy face."
On hearing this Mihráb did reverence,
But in his heart called Zál an infidel,
Then strode forth blessing much the son of Sám,
Who as he went praised him as he deserved.
V. 152 Now no one hitherto had noticed him,
For all had thought him an outlandish dív,
And since his Faith and manners were not theirs
Refrained from praising him; but when Zál spake
His admiration with such warmth, the courtiers
Began to praise him too, his mien, his stature,
His polished manners, tact and courtesy,
While as for Zál his heart went clean distraught,
His wisdom fled afar and love was lord.

An Arab chief once said in this regard:—
"A horse shall while I live my comrade be,
The vault of circling heaven shall shelter me;
I want no bride to make me delicate,
And cause the wise to mock at mine estate."
Zál, who was stricken to the heart by care,
Kept brooding o'er the matter, sorely pained
For fear lest scandal might result and dim
His glory. Thus heaven oft revolved above,
And all the while his heart was full of love.

§ 8

How Rúdába took Counsel with her Damsels

It came to pass that at the dawn one day
Mihráb walked stately from the audience-chamber,
And going toward his women's bower beheld
Two Suns within the hall; one was Rúdába,
The fair of face, the other was Síndukht,
The prudent and devoted; both were decked
Like garths in spring—all colour, scent, and grace.
He gazed upon Rúdába wonderingly,
Invoking blessings on her. In his eyes
She seemed a cypress neath the orbèd moon, V. 153
Encrowned with ambergris, decked with brocade
And gems—a very Paradise of wealth!
Síndukht, whose smiles displayed her pearly teeth,
Between her jujube lips asked of Mihráb:—
"How did thy visit prosper? May the hand
Of ill be far from thee! What is he like—
Sám's hoary son? What is he suited for—
A nest or throne? Doth he behave as man,
And walk in chieftains' steps?"
Mihráb replied:—
"O fair-faced Cypress with the silvern breast!

Of all the warrior-paladins of earth
Not one can tread his steps; there is no portrait
Inside our halls with such a bridle-hand,
Or such another cavalier on horseback.
He is in heart a lion and in strength
An elephant: his hands are like the Nile.
When he is on the throne he scattereth gold,
When he is in the fray he scattereth heads.
His cheek is ruddy as the cercis-bloom:
Shrewd, young in years and fortune too is he,
In battle like the baleful crocodile,
On horseback like a dragon with sharp claws.
He layeth in the fight the dust with blood
And brandisheth his falchion of blue-steel.
He hath this one defect—his hair is white;
Fault-finders find in him no other fault;
Yet this white hair of his becometh him,
And thou wouldst say: 'He fascinateth hearts.'"

On hearing this Rúdába blushed, with cheeks
Red as pomegranate-blossoms, while her heart
Became fulfilled with fire for love of Zál:
She could not eat or rest in peace; a change
Came in her disposition and demeanour,
For passion had usurped the place of wisdom.

V. 154 How goodly were the teacher's words: "Deny
All talk of men when there are women by;
The heart of woman is the Dív's abode,
If thou suggestest she will find the road."

Rúdába had five Turkman waiting-maids,
Five faithful slaves, all girls of prudent minds;
To them she said: "I have a secret for you,
Since all of you are in my confidence,
Attend upon me, and dispel my cares;
Know then, all five of you, and understand,
And luck go with you all your years, that I—

I am in love, and like a raging sea
Whose billows surge to heaven! Mine ardent heart
Is full of love for Zál, and in my sleep
I cannot tear my thoughts from him. His love
Possesseth me, heart, mind, and wits; I muse
Upon his features day and night; and now
Means must be found to free me from my woe.
None knoweth of my secret but yourselves,
For ye are good and love me."
Then the slaves
Thought in amaze: "The princess doth amiss!"
Rose at her like so many Áhrimans
And said: "O crown of ladies in the world!
O daughter eminent among the mighty,
Admired from Hindústán to Chín, and like
A shining signet in the women's bower!
No cypress in the garden equalleth
Thy height; thy cheeks outshine the Pleiades.
Thy portrait hath been sent out to Kannúj,
To Mai, and to the monarch of the West.
Hath modesty departed from thine eyes
And all consideration for thy sire
That thou shouldst long to clasp upon thy bosom
One whose own father hath rejected him—
One fostered on a mountain by a fowl— V. 155
A spectacle for all the folk? No mother
Excepting his hath borne an agèd babe.
Such offspring is ignoble. Strange indeed
For two such coral lips and musky hair
To seek a dotard! Why, all folk love thee;
Thy portrait is in all their palaces;
Thy stature, face, and hair are such that Sol
Would come from his fourth heaven to be thy spouse!"
Rúdába heard, her heart flared up like fire
Before a blast of air. She shrieked at them,

With frowns that shut her eyes, exclaiming: "Bah!
Ye strive in vain: it booteth not to hear.
If to some star I lost my heart, could I
Find any satisfaction in the moon?
Clay-eaters do not gaze upon the rose
Although the rose is better than the clay.
If vinegar will cure a body's liver,
Then honey will but make the anguish worse.
I want not Cæsar or Faghfúr of Chín,
Or any of the princelings of Írán:
Zál, son of Sám, is tall enough for me
And lion-like in shoulder, neck, and arm;
For whether people call him old or young
To me he giveth peace of soul and mind.
Talk not of other men, be his my heart,
Bit as it is by love of one whom I
Have never seen! It chooseth by report.
I do not love his face and hair but him;
'Tis for his merits that I seek his love."
The slaves, on hearing her distracted voice,
And having learned her secret, cried: "Thy slaves
V. 156 Are we and serve thee with devoted hearts.
Command us! Naught but good will come of it."
One said: "O Cypress-stem! let none else know.
A hundred thousand of us for thy life!
May all Creation's wisdom be thine aid!
Should there be need to study grammarye,
And stitch up eyes with artifice and spell,
Then will we fly like an enchanter's bird,
Or run along like deer to give thee aid,
So we may bring this king to thee our Moon,
And lay him at thy feet."
Rúdába smiled,
Turned safflower cheeks toward the slave and said:—
"If thou canst compass this thou wilt have planted

A tall tree bearing rubies day by day
Which wisdom in its breast will bear away."

§ 9

How Rúdába's Damsels went to see Zál

The slaves arose and went, remediless
Themselves they sought a remedy for her.
So donning raiment of brocade of Rúm,
And twisting roses in their hair, they went,
The five of them, toward the river-side,
Like jocund spring—all colour and perfume.
'Twas Farwardín, the first month of the year,
And Zál's encampment was beside the stream;
The damsels were upon the farther bank.
Their talk was all of Zál. They gathered roses
Along the river-side. Their cheeks were like
A rosary, and roses filled their laps;
But still they gathered roaming here and there.
When they came opposite the royal tent
Zál, spying them from his high throne, inquired:—
"Who are these flower-worshippers?"
One said:— V. 157
"The Beauty of Kábulistán hath sent
Forth from the palace of bright-souled Mihráb
Her waiting-maidens to the rosary."
Zál's heart beat fast, and being love-distraught
He walked attended by a single slave
Beside the stream. Upon the further bank
He saw the girls, drew himself up and bade
The Turkman slave-boy bring the bow; then looked
For game and lighted on a water-fowl.
The ruddy Turkman slave-boy strung the bow
And laid it in the paladin's left hand,
Who flushed the fowl and shot it as it rose.

Blood dyed the water. Zál said: "Go across
And fetch yon crippled bird."
The gallant Turkman
Crossed in a boat. The slave-girls questioned him
About the paladin: "This lion-limbed
And elephantine-bodied warrior—
Who is he? Of what people is he king?
What foe could counter him? We never saw
A finer cavalier or better shot."
The pretty slave-boy bit his lip and said:—
"Speak not so of the king. The son of Sám
Is monarch of Nímrúz, and other kings
Call him 'Dastán.' The sky revolveth not
O'er cavalier like him, nor will time see
His peer."
The damsels laughed and answered thus
The moon-faced boy: "Say not such things because
V. 158 Mihráb hath now a Moon within his palace,
Who is a whole head taller than thy king,
A teak in stature, ivory in hue,
Crowned with a crown of musk, a thing divine.
Her eyes are pensive and her eyebrows arched;
Their column is a silvern reed. Her mouth
Is narrow as the heart of one forlorn,
Her tresses' ends are coiled like ankle-rings,
Her witching eyes are full of dreamy light,
Her cheeks are tulip-like in hue, her locks
Like musk; her soul is breathing through her lips.
A matchless Moon is she! We from Kábul
Approach the monarch of Zábul in state,
And 'tis our policy to introduce
Our lady's ruby lips to those of Zál,
Which is but well and seemly, for she is
Of equal rank."
On hearing this the slave-boy

Flushed ruby-like. "The Sun should wed the Moon,"
He said. "Whene'er the world would make a match
The hearts of all concerned find room for love,
And when the world would cause a severance
It parteth mate from mate without a word.
Love's bond is hidden but its rupture seen,
And both are common. Still the bachelor
Enjoyeth peace at home, and since he hath
No daughter, will not hear reproachful words.
Once said the male hawk to his brooding mate:—
'If hen-birds only from these eggs thou bring
Thou makest of the sire a sexless thing.'"

Now when the laughing slave-boy had returned V. 159
Zál asked: "What was it that they said to thee
To make thee laugh and show thy silvern teeth?"

He told the paladin, whose heart grew young
With joy. He bade the moon-faced youth: "Return
And say thus to yon damsels: 'Stay awhile
Among the roses; ye perchance may take
Some gems as well as blossoms from the garden,
So go not till ye hear from me.'"

He took
Gold, jewelry, and drachms, with five rich pieces
Of gold brocade and bade his slaves: "Convey them
To yonder girls, tell none and be not seen."

They took the treasures with an ardent message
And gave them to the damsels in Zál's name.
Then said one damsel to the moon-faced page:—
"A matter never can be kept concealed
Unless it be confined to only two;
Three are no casket, four are all the world.
So say to him, shrewd, trusty boy: 'If thou
Hast secret things to say tell us in person.'"

Rúdába's damsels said to one another:—
"The Lion hath been taken in the toils.

The wishes of Rúdába and of Zál
Have been fulfilled, and matters promise well."
The black-eyed youth, who brought the monarch's gifts
And acted for him, went and told his chief
In secret what those charming damsels said.
V. 160 Zál went. Those rosy Idols of Taráz
Drew near and did obeisance. He inquired
About that Cypress-stem, her mien and looks,
Her speech, her wisdom, and her rede, to see
If she were worthy of him. "Speak," he said,
"Without attempting to prevaricate.
If ye speak truth it will advantage you,
But if I think that ye impose upon me
An elephant shall trample you to death."
With cheeks that had become like sandarac
The slave-girls kissed the ground before the chief,
And one of them—the youngest of the troop,
A girl of tenderness and ready speech,
Spake thus to Zál: "Among the mighty none
Hath e'er been born of woman in this world
Who could compare with Sám in looks and stature,
In purity, in courage, sense, and knowledge;
Or yet with thee, thou valiant cavalier,
Of lofty bearing and of lion-limbs!
Or with Rúdába in her loveliness,
A silvern Cypress, coloured and perfumed,
Compact from head to foot of rose and jasmine,
While over it Canopus of Yaman
Is shining. One would say: 'Her face distilleth
Wine, and her locks are scents.' Insidious lassos
Fall from her head, that cupola of silver,
O'er cheeks of roses to the very ground.
Her head is all a-twine with ambergris
And musk, her person all a-shine with jewels.

Her locks and ringlets are like musky mail
Where 'there is link on link' as one might say.
Thou wilt not see in Chín so fair an Idol:
The moon and Pleiades bow down to her."
The chief on fire rejoined in sugared tones:—
"Say, if thou knowest, how I may approach her. V. 161
I love her, heart and soul, and long to see
Her face."
She answered: "We, if thou shalt bid us,
Will haste back to the palace of our Cypress,
And then beguile her, telling all we can
About the chief of paladins, his prudence,
His looks, his converse, and his ardent soul,
And 'tis an honest work. We will ensnare
Her musky head and bring her lips to Zál's.
The paladin, a lasso in his hand,
May haply stroll toward our stately home
And fling the noose around a pinnacle.
The Lion will rejoice to hunt the Lamb.
Then gaze thy fill on her. Our talk shall be
The earnest of far more felicity."

§ 10

How the Damsels returned to Rúdába

The girls departed, and Zál thought the night
A year. Meanwhile they reached the palace-gate,
Each with two sprays of roses, where the porter,
On catching sight of them, prepared to chide,
And spake with sternness, hardening his heart:—
"A nice time this to be beyond the gates!
I marvel at your gadding so about."
The Idols, when they found a word to say,
Flew out at him in their embarrassment:—

"This day is just like any other one:
There is no foul dív in the rosary.
'Tis spring. We gather roses in the garden,
And spikes of hyacinth upon the ground.
Moon-faced Rúdába bade, and so we went
Hence after roses out of love for her;
Then wherefore speak to us in such a tone
For plucking them?"

V. 162 "But this is not the time,"
He said, "for pranks like these; for bear in mind
That Zál the chieftain now is at Kábul:
The land is covered with his tents and troops.
Do ye not see Mihráb at early dawn
Go from his palace-gate and mount his steed?
Why, every day he goeth to and fro
Now he and Zál have come to be such friends,
And if he saw you carrying your roses
Would have you down upon the ground forthwith.
Quit not the Haram more, and would to God
That nothing great or small may come of this."

They went within and told the Moon in private:—
"We ne'er saw Sun like this with ruddy cheeks
And hair all white."

Rúdába's heart inflamed
In expectation of beholding Zál.
They laid his jewels and dínárs before her,
While she minutely questioned them: "How found ye
The son of Sám? Doth he deserve his fame?"

The five, encouraged, chattered on and said:—
"Zál is the finest horseman, with such mien
And Grace—a lofty cypress of a man.
Imperial Grace and dignity are his.
What fragrance, colour, stature, limbs, he hath!
How slim a waist and what an open chest!
His eyes are twin narcissi water-blue,

His lips like coral and his cheeks like blood.
His hand and forearm are like lion's paws.
A shrewd man he, with an archmage's heart
And royal Grace! while as for his white hair
It is a blemish—but no cause for shame.
This chief of paladins hath downy cheeks,
Like cercis-bloom through silver habergeon,
Such as to make one cry: 'Be ever thus: V. 163
No change can make thee dearer than thou art.'
We told him he should see thee; he was hopeful
When we departed. Now devise a scheme
To entertain him. Tell us what to tell him."
She answered: "Once ye told a different tale!
This Zál, who was the nursling of a bird,
Was so white-headed and so wizened! Now
His cheek is like the cercis-bloom, and he
Is tall and handsome, and a paladin!
And ye have bragged about my face to him
And asked for payment for your gossiping."
She spake with smiles and blushes on her cheeks,
As 'twere pomegranate-blooms, then bade one damsel:—
"Be off with you at dawn. Take him good news,
Hear what he hath to say and say to him:—
'Thy wish is granted; be in readiness;
Come and behold thy Moon in all her charms.'"
The waiting-maid departed, gave the message,
And came back to the Cypress of Taraz.
"Devise some means to compass it," she said,
"For God hath granted thee thy whole desire,
And may the ending be a happy one!"
Rúdába soon made ready, while her kin
Suspected naught. She had her own pavilion
Like jocund spring and decked with great men's portraits.
The servants draped it with brocade of Chín,

Set golden trays about as ornaments,
Then mingled wine with musk and ambergris
And scattered emeralds and carnelians.
Here were narcissus, violet, cercis-bloom
And rose, there lily and the jasmine-spray.
The goblets were compact of gold and turquoise,
The viands saturate with clear rose-water;
V. 164 Thus from the chamber of the sun-faced one
Rose fragrant odours wafting to the sun.

§ 11

How Zál went to Rúdába

At dusk they locked the gate and took the key,
And then a damsel went to Zál and said:—
"All is prepared, so come."
Thereat the chief,
All wooer-like, set out toward the palace.
Meanwhile black-eyed and rosy-cheeked Rúdába—
A cypress over which the full moon shone—
Went to the roof, and, when the son of Sám
The cavalier appeared, that high-born maid
Unlocked her coral lips and cried to him:—
"Thou art well come, O youth of noble birth!
The Maker's blessing be on thee, the arch
Of circling heaven be underneath thy feet,
And may my maid be blithe of heart and glad,
For, top to toe, thou art as she described thee.
To foot it thus from thy pavilion
Must irk thy royal feet."
He heard the voice
And saw upon the wall a sun-cheeked damsel,
Whose beauty set the roof a-gleam like gems,
Whose blushes set the ground a-flush like rubies.

He thus made answer: "O thou moon-faced one!
My blessing and the Grace of heaven be thine.
How many nights with eyes up-turned to Spica
Have I entreated Him who ruleth all,
To let me privily behold thy face!
Now thou dost make me happy with thy voice,
Thy tender words and gentleness. Oh! find
Some means to let me look on thee! For why
Shouldst thou be on the roof and I below?"
The fairy-faced one heard the chieftain's words V. 165
And doffed her scarlet wimple instantly.
Then from her lofty cypress-form she loosed
A lasso, such as none could plait, of musk:
Coil within coil it was, and snake on snake;
Strand over strand it lay upon her neck.
She loosed her tresses o'er the battlements
And when they straightened out they reached the ground.
Then spake Rúdába from the wall above:—
"O paladin! O child of warrior-race!
Now speed thee quickly and gird up thy loins,
Exert thy lion-breast and royal hands.
Seize these black tresses which hang down beside me
All dedicate to thee."
Zál gazed on her
In marvel at her hair and face. She heard
Him kiss that musky lasso oft. He said:—
"This is not well; may no sun shine when I
Shall lay a wanton hand upon my Life
And put a spearpoint to this wounded heart."
He took a lasso from his servant, coiled
And lightly flung it in his breathless haste.
The noose caught and he mounted. Fairy-face
Advanced to welcome him, she clasped his hand,
And both intoxicate with love descended,

V. 166 Hand clasped in hand, to her pavilion
Gold-arabesqued—a meeting-place for kings,
A Paradise adorned—a blaze of light.
Slave-girls attended on the Houri there,
While Zál in rapt astonishment beheld
Her face, her hair, her loveliness and grace,
Her bracelets, torque, and earrings: her brocade
And jewels were like gardens in the spring;
Her cheeks were like twin tulips in a garth;
Her crispy love-locks twisted curl on curl.
Zál sat in royal grace by that fair Moon,
His dagger in his belt and on his head
A ruby coronet. Rúdába looked
And looked with stolen glances at him still;
Looked at that form, that neck, that grace, that height,
Which used to make rocks brambles 'neath his mace,
And at those cheeks whose lustre fired her soul.
The more she gazed the more her heart inflamed:
They kissed and clung intoxicate with love.
What lion hunteth not the onager?
Thus spake the chieftain to the moon-faced maid:—
"O silver-bosomed Cypress, musk-perfumed!
The Sháh will ne'er consent, and Sám will wring
His hands and storm, but still by God I swear
That I will never break my troth to thee.
Nay I will first hold soul and body cheap
And wear a shroud. I will seek God and pray Him,
With all the instancy of devotees,
To wash all opposition, wrath, and vengeance
V. 167 From both their hearts, and if He hearkeneth
Thou shalt become my wife before the world."
Rúdába answered: "I too swear by Him—
The God of Faith and right—that none but Zál
Shall be my lord; the Maker is my witness."

Their love waxed ever as the moments sped,
For wisdom was afar and passion near.
So fared they till the day began to break
And drum-call sounded. Zál farewelled his Moon,
Embracing her as warp and woof embrace.
Both wept and both adjured the rising sun:—
"O glory of the world! one moment more!
Thou needst not rise so soon."
Then from aloft
Zál dropped his lasso and descending straight
Went from the palace of his lovely mate.

§ 12

How Zál consulted the Archimages in the Matter of Rúdába

The warriors, when bright Sol rose o'er the hills,
Went to the levee of the paladin,
And then dispersed while Zál bade call the sages.
They came—the ministers, archmages, heroes
And glorious chieftains, men both wise and ardent—
Well pleased at being summoned. Zál, all smiles
And yearning, offered first his praise to God,
Then roused the archimages to attention
By thus addressing them: "Let all our hearts
Regard with fear and hope the righteous Judge,
Who is the Lord of circling sun and moon, V. 168
And showeth souls the way of righteousness.
To give Him all the praise that we can give
We must bow down before Him night and day.
By Him the jocund world abideth fast,
By Him is justice done in heaven and earth.
He bringeth summer, spring, and autumn-tide
With fruit to fill the branches of the vines;

Youth hath from Him its time of scent and bloom,
Age hath from Him its time of saddened looks.
None can transgress His will and ordinance:
Without Him not an ant can walk the earth.
He bringeth increase to the world by pairs,
And not by one; there is no One but God,
Who hath not any partner, mate, or peer,
But all His creatures hath He made in pairs.
This was His scheme—earth and its good for man;
But save for pairing we had never known
Its possibilities. Again, we never
See youth unmated stable in the Faith,
And thirdly, men though of a mighty stock
Unmated lose their vigour. What can show
More goodly than a chief of paladins,
Whose soul is gladdened by his progeny?
He at life's close will have a New Year's Day
In children who will keep his memory thus:—
'This is the son of Zál the son of Sám.'
Thus crown and throne are graced; the father's time
Being over fortune resteth with the son.
All these apply to mine own case, and are
The roses and narcissi of my garden.
V. 169 My heart is lost, my wisdom fled! Declare
The remedy for this. I have not spoken
Before I suffered both in brain and wits.
The palace of Mihráb—I love it all!
His land is heaven to me forwhy my heart
Rejoiceth in the daughter of Síndukht.
What say ye now? Will Sám too be rejoiced?
And will Sháh Minúchihr, if he shall hear,
Regard it merely as a youthful error?
All—great and small—in marrying but obey
The laws of Faith and custom. No wise man
Will bar what honour and religion sanction.

What do the prescient archimages say?
What are the sages' views?"
They held their peace
Because Zahhák was grandsire to Mihráb,
And Minúchihr detested both. None dared
To answer, none had heard of antidote
And bane combined. Their silence grieved the chief,
Who tried another plan: "I know," said he,
"That ye will blame the course that I adopt,
But every one who chooseth for himself
Is certain to incur no lack of blame.
If ye can show me what to do, and how
I may undo this coil, ye shall be treated
As subjects ne'er were yet, my goodness, kindness,
And uprightness shall keep you from all ill."
The archimages, well disposed toward him,
Considered and replied: "We are thy slaves, V. 170
And we are much amazed. But who will be
The better or the worse on this account?
Although Mihráb is not of equal rank
Yet is he mighty, brave, and rich, albeit
Sprung from the Dragon's stock—the Arabs' king.
Write thou to Sám as thy shrewd mind suggesteth,
Who hast more wisdom, thoughtfulness, and wits
Than we, and he may write the Sháh a letter
Explaining his own views, and Minúchihr
Will be advised by Sám the cavalier
And every obstacle will disappear."

§ 13

How Zál wrote to Sám to Explain the Case

The chieftain bade a scribe to come, poured forth
His heart and wrote a letter of good cheer,

And first he praised the Maker and the Judge,
"The Source of joy and might, the Lord of Venus,
Of Sol and Mars, of being and not being.
We all of us are slaves and God is One.
May He bless Sám the son of Narímán—
The lord of mace, of scimitar, and helm,
Whose black steed boundeth in the dust of fight,
Who glutteth vultures when he maketh war,
Who raiseth tempests on the battle-field,
Who sheddeth gouts of blood from murky clouds,
V. 171 Who handleth golden belts and diadems
And setteth kings upon their thrones of gold.
His bravery achieveth feat on feat
And they exalt his name. There liveth not,
Nor ever will, a cavalier so brave.
His thrall am I and love him heart and soul.
He saw how I was born, and ills have come
Since then upon me from the rolling sky.
My father wore luxurious furs and silks;
Me the Símurgh bare to a mount in Ind.
Fain was I that the bird should bring me prey
And number me among its little ones.
My skin was scorched by blast, mine eyes were stopped
With dust. They used to call me son of Sám
Though he was on a throne, I in a nest,
Since God ordained and made this way for me.
None scapeth His ordainment though one fly
Among the clouds, gnaw spearheads, rend the hides
Of lions with his shouting, yea although
His teeth are anvils he is still God's slave.
A thing hath happened which I cannot tell
To every one, and I am broken-hearted,
Howbeit a sire, though fierce and dragon-like,
Should hearken to the secrets of his child.
My tears are for the daughter of Mihráb,

I am as if consumed in raging fire,
The stars are my companions in the night,
My breast is like a sea, I lose my wits
So that my people weep; yet though sore troubled
I will not draw a breath but at thy word.
What doth the chief of paladins command? V. 172
Oh! free my mind from this distress and grief!
The archimages have advised me thus:—
'Let not the chieftain keep his Jewel hidden
But act with loyalty.' My sire perchance
Will second me herein that I may make
The daughter of Mihráb my lawful wife.
My father will remember that when God
Restored me to him out of Mount Alburz
He pledged his word in presence of his men:—
'I will not frustrate one wish of thy heart.'
Now this it is whereon my heart is set."
A horseman left Kábul at lightning-speed
To go to Sám and took a second horse,
For Zál directed: "Should one roadster founder
Stay not to breathe but lightly mount the other
And hurry on to Sám."
The messenger
Went, like the wind, upon a steed of steel.
When he was drawing near the Kargasárs,
Sám, who was hunting on a range of hills,
Beheld him from afar and told his comrades:—
"There cometh from Kábul a messenger
Upon a white steed of Zábulistán,
Sent doubtlessly by Zál, so let us learn
His news."
The man approaching kissed the ground,
With many thanks to God. Sám welcomed him
And took the letter, while the man discharged
His errands. Sám undid and read the letter V. 173

While coming from the mountains, paled and halted
In wonder not expecting or commending
Zál's conduct. "Yet," he thought, "'tis natural:
One nurtured by a bird would hanker thus."
When he returned he pondered long and deeply,
And said: "If I shall say, 'This is not well,
Oppose me not, incline to wisdom's ways,'
Both God and man will blame my breach of faith.
If I say, 'Yes,' and 'Thy desire is good:
Do as thou wilt,' what will their offspring be—
This nursling of the fowl and that dív's child?"
He laid him down in grief but could not rest.
The harder any servant's task, the more
His heart is heavy and his suffering sore,
The greater peace and comfort shall he know
Within when God Almighty willeth so.

§ 14

How Sám consulted the Archmages in the Matter of Zál

Sám when he woke asked the astrologers:—
"How will this end, for these two elements,
Like fire and water, are opposed completely?
Such surely on the Judgment Day will be
The warfare of Zahhák and Farídún.
Consult the stars, vouchsafe me your advice,
And put your pen-point to a lucky sign."
V. 174 They spent the day in searching, and then came
To Sám with smiles, for opposites combined
In his behalf, and an astrologer
Said: "Hero of the golden belt! we bring
Good news about the daughter of Mihráb
And Zál, for they will be a glorious pair,
Whose son will prove a mighty Elephant,

Will gird his loins with valour, overcome
The world, will set the Sháh's throne on the clouds,
Cut from the ground the feet of evil doers
And leave them not a lurking-place on earth,
Spare no Sagsárs,[1] spare not Mázandarán,
But make the earth clean with his massive mace.
Through him Túrán shall suffer greater woe,
Through him Írán shall gain unbounded weal,
Through him the aching head shall rest, and he
Shall shut the door of war, the path of mischief.
The Íránians shall have hope in him, through him
The paladin shall have good news and joy.
The charger that he urgeth in the fight
Shall trample on the face of warrior-pards.
The realm in his days shall be fortunate,
The age accept his name among the kings,
While Rúm, Ind, and the country of Írán
Shall grave it on their signets."

Sám gave ear
And smiled as they congratulated him.
He gave them gold and silver past all count
Since peace had come in time of fear. He called
The messenger, conversed with him and said:—
"Speak gently unto Zál and say: 'Thy wish
Hath nothing in its favour, but since I
Have pledged my word I must not seek a pretext
For breaking it. Lo! I shall quit the field V. 175
To-morrow for Írán to ascertain
The Sháh's commands, and how God shall dispose him.'"

He gave a largess to the messenger
And said to him: "Arise and tarry not."

They bound a thousand of the Kargasárs
And dragged them off afoot in shame and woe.

[1] The name of a wild tribe, "the Dog-heads."

Toward dawn the horsemen's shouts rose o'er the plain,
Rose too the sound of drums and clarions
About the entrance of the tent-enclosure,
And Sám marched to Írán by Dahistán.
The messenger returned to Zál in triumph
With omens of success. When he arrived
He told Sám's answer. Zál was well content
And offered praises to Almighty God
For this great mercy and his blissful fate.
He lavished on the poor drachms and dínárs
And showed especial kindness to his kindred,
Invoking blessings on the chieftain Sám
For having sent a gentle answer back.
He could not rest by day or sleep by night,
He drank no wine, desired no minstrelsy;
His heart was always yearning for his bride;
He could not talk of any one beside.

§ 15

How Sindukht heard of the Case of Rúdába

A dame of honied speech was go-between
And bore the lovers' greetings to and fro.
Zál called this woman, told about his sire,
And said to her: "Go to Rúdába. Say:
V. 176 'O Beauty kind and young! when matters come
To grievous straits we quickly find a key
For their enlargement. Now the messenger
Hath come from Sám rejoicing with good news.
Sám hummed and hawed but in the end consented.'"
Zál sent his father's letter by the woman,
Who hurried with the good news to Rúdába.

That fay-faced damsel showered drachms upon her,
Placed her upon a gold-embroidered seat
And for her news gave her a change of raiment;
Then brought an Indian turban woven so finely
That warp and woof were not distinguishable,
With patterns wrought thereon in gold and rubies,
So that the gold was hidden by the gems.
This, and a costly finger-ring to match,
As bright as Jupiter, she sent to Zál,
With many greetings, many messages.
Síndukht observed the woman in the hall
And cried: "Whence art thou? Speak! Dissemble not!
Thou passest in and out from time to time
Without regard to me. I much suspect thee.
Wilt thou not say if thou art string or bow?"
With face like sandarac she kissed the ground V. 177
And answered thus: "A needy woman I,
Who have to get my living as I can;
I visit houses of the gentlefolk
Who purchase clothes of me and jewelry.
Rúdába wished to buy rich gems and trinkets;
I brought to her a gold adorned tiara
And hoop of royal gems."
Síndukht said: "Show them
And quench my wrath."
"I left them with Rúdába,"
The woman answered, "and am fetching more."
"Show me the purchase-money," said Síndukht,
"And set my heart at rest."
The woman answered:—
"The moon-faced lady told me she would pay
To-morrow. Wait until I have the money."
Perceiving that she lied Síndukht used force,
Searched up her sleeves and found her knavery.

Síndukht discovering Rúdába's ring
And costly stuffs was very wroth, and catching
The woman by the tresses flung her down
V. 178 Upon her face, and in a burst of rage
Haled her in shameful plight along the ground,
Then let her fall, and bound and spurned and smote her.
The queen returned in dudgeon to the palace,
O'erwhelmed with disappointment, pain, and grief,
Shut herself in and was as one bemused.
She sent to call her daughter and the while
Kept buffeting her face, and from her eyes—
Those wet narcissi—bathed her burning cheeks;
Then to Rúdába: "O thou noble Moon!
Why choosest thou the ditch and not the throne?
In what respect can I have failed to teach thee
Propriety in public and in private?
My pretty! wherefore hast thou wronged me so?
Tell mother all thy secrets—who despatched
This dame to thee and why. What is all this?
Who is the man for whom this splendid turban
And finger-ring are meant? In that great treasure—
The Arabian crown—much good and ill was left us.
It had a name. Wilt fling it to the winds?
May mother never bear a child like mine!"
Rúdába looked away and hung her head
In overwhelming shame before her mother,
And tears of love descending graced her cheeks.
"O most wise mother!" thus she made reply,
"Love hunteth down my soul, but I had wrought
No good or ill hadst thou not borne me first.
The chieftain of Zábul is at Kábul,
And love of him so fireth me, and things
Have come to such a pass within my heart
That, if in others' presence or alone,
I weep and only live to see his face.

One hair of his is worth the world to me.
Know too that he hath seen and sat beside me, V. 179
And that we hand in hand have plighted troth.
We did but see each other—nothing more—
And lo! a fire sprang up betwixt us twain.
A messenger was sent to mighty Sám
And he hath given his valiant son an answer.
Though vexed at first he grew amenable
And gave large presents to the messenger.
By means of her whose hair thou didst pluck out,
And whom thou didst fling down and hale along
Upon the face, I have read all his letter:
This stuff was my reply."
Síndukht was lost
In wonder, glad that Zál should wed Rúdába,
But said: "This is no trifle. Zál is peerless
Among the chiefs for valour, he is great,
Son of the paladin of paladins,
With all the virtues, and a single fault
Which dwarfeth them—the Sháh will be displeased
And send the dust up sunward from Kábul.
He wisheth not that any of our race
Should e'er mount saddle."
Then, to make it seem
That she had been mistaken, she released
The woman and made much of her, and said:—
"Act ever thus, discreet and clever dame!
Shut fast thy lips. God grant they never prove
A chink for speech. Now hide this in the dust."
She saw her daughter's secret bent was such
That she would listen to advice from none,
And laid her down in tears and in chagrin;
Thou wouldst have said that she had burst her skin.

§ 16

How Mihráb was made Aware of his Daughter's Case

V. 180 Mihráb, much gratified by Zál's attentions,
Returning found Síndukht upon her couch
Pale and distressed; he asked her: "What hath happened?
Speak! Wherefore are thy rosy lips thus faded?"
She said: "I have been musing for a while
About these goodly treasures and this wealth,
These Arab steeds caparisoned, this palace
So noble and its pleasure-grounds, the friends
Who cheer our hearts, these servants of my lord,
Our favour and our stature cypress-tall,
Our fame, our knowledge, and our policy.
In time our pride and glory must abate;
We yield them to the foe; our toil is wind;
A narrow bier is ours at last. We plant
A tree whose antidote is bane to us,
We water it laboriously and hang
Thereon our crown and wealth, but when it mounteth
Sunward and giveth shade its lusty head
Descendeth to the dust. With this before us
I know not where we ever shall find rest."
Mihráb replied: "Thou tellest an old tale:
It is the fashion of this Wayside Inn.
One is abased, another flourisheth,
One cometh in, another goeth out;
Canst thou see one whom heaven hunteth not?
Fret as we will our woes remain; we cannot
Contend against the All-just Judge."
She answered:—
V. 181 "The wise would take a very different view

Of what I said. Now can I hide from thee
A secret such as this and these grave doings?
A blessèd wise archmage once told his child
The parable of the tree which I adopted
In hope my lord would understand the meaning."
She hung her head and bent her cypress-form,
Her eyes dropped dew upon her rosy cheeks.
"O full of wisdom," she went on to say,
"The sky must not revolve above us thus.
Know that the son of Sám hath striven to snare
Rúdába and misled her ardent heart.
Now 'tis for us to find a remedy.
I have exhorted her without avail;
Her heart I see is troubled, her face wan."
Thereat Mihráb sprang up and seized his sword,
His cheek grew livid and his body shook
With rage; his heart was full, he groaned and cried:—
"Her blood shall flow for this."
Síndukht sprang too,
Clasped him about the waist, and cried: "Now hear
Thy handmaid speak one word, then do what heart
And wisdom counsel thee."
He shook her off
And bellowed like a maddened elephant:—
"I should have cut her head off at her birth.
I left her grandsire's way and let her live;
Now she hath wrought on me this devilry.
The son who walketh not his father's path
Is but a bastard in a brave man's eyes.
Thus said the leopard grown keen-clawed for strife:
'I glory in the conflict, and I wis V. 182
My sire inherited the taste from his.
Life must be risked when honour is in sight;
Why strivest thou to stay me from the fight?'
If Sám and Minúchihr shall get a handle

Against us smoke will go up from Kábul,
Seedtime and harvest cease throughout the land."
She said: "O marchlord! do not speak so wildly.
Sám knoweth all: be not so greatly moved.
He left the Kargasárs for this: all know it."
Mihráb replied: "Fair dame! deceive me not.
Could one imagine wind obeying dust?
I care not I so thou canst keep us scathless.
A better son-in-law than noble Zál
There cannot be as all know, great and small.
Who is there from Ahwáz to Kandahár
That wisheth not to be affined to Sám?"
She said: "Great prince! ne'er may I be enforced
To use deceit with thee; thy harm is mine;
I share thy sorrows. What I said is true
And it was on my mind. I had at first
Myself the same misgiving, which is why
Thou sawst me lying down absorbed in grief;
But if this is to be 'tis not so strange
As to occasion this anxiety.
Sarv of Yaman pleased Farídún; prince Zál
Is not unmindful of that precedent.
By mingling fire with water, air with earth
Earth's dark face is made bright."
V. 183 She brought Sám's answer,
And said: "Rejoice! Thou hast thy wish. When strangers
Affine with thee thy foes grow black of face."
Though vengeful still and greatly moved Mihráb
Gave ear, then bade her: "Rouse and bring Rúdába."
Síndukht, in terror lest that lion-man
Should lay her daughter dead upon the dust,
Replied: "First promise to restore her to me
Unscathed, and that Kábulistán shall still
Possess this Rosary like Paradise."

The chieftain promised, but he said: "Now mark!
The Sháh will meditate revenge for this."
Síndukht did reverence, bending to the ground;
Then with her lips all smiles and face that showed
The dawn beneath the night went to her daughter
With this good news: "The warrior-leopard's claws
Have spared the wilful onager. Now hasten!
Take from thy face thine ornaments and go
Before thy father, weeping bitterly."
Rúdába answered: "What are ornaments?
What are these worthless trinkets to my wealth?
My soul is wedded to the son of Sám;
Why hide what is so plain?"
Then went she in
Before her father, like a rising sun,
And overwhelmed in gold and jewelry.
Her father called on God in mute amaze. V. 184
She was a Paradise adorned and fair,
Like shining Sol in jocund spring. He said:—
"O witless one! would virtuous folk approve
That Áhriman should have a fairy-bride?
May neither crown nor finger-ring be thine.
If but a serpent-charmer from Kahtán
Turned Magian we should slay him with an arrow."
Whenas Rúdába heard her father's words
Her heart grew full, her face like fenugreek.
She let her dark eyelashes droop and veil
Her melancholy eyes and scarcely breathed,
Her father all the while with furious heart
And full of menace roaring like a pard.
With blood returning to her pallid cheeks
His love-sick daughter went back to her chamber,
Where with her mother who had gained the day
She prayed Almighty God to be their stay.

§ 17

How Minúchihr heard of the Case of Zál and Rúdába

News of the friendship of Mihráb and Zál
And of that noble ill-matched pair of lovers
Reached Minúchihr. The matter was discussed
Before him by the archmages. Said the Sháh:—
"A dismal time will come on us hereby.
Did Farídún purge this world of Zahhák
That at Kábul Mihráb—his seed—might flourish?
V. 185 This love of Zál's must not through our neglect
Restore the drooping plant to its old vigour.
If from the daughter of Mihráb, and Zál,
The son of Sám, a sharp Sword should be drawn,
On one side he will be an alien,
And how shall antidote agree with bane?
While if he favoureth the mother's side
His head will be possessed by evil projects,
He will fulfil Írán with strife and travail
In hope to win the crown and treasure back.
What is your rede? Strive to advise me well."
Then all the archimages blessed the Sháh,
They hailed him as the king of the Pure Faith,
And said: "Thou art more wise than we and hast
More power to act. Let wisdom be thy guide,
And wisdom's quarry is the Dragon's heart."
The Sháh, desirous to conclude the matter,
Sent for Naudar, with lieges and great men,
And bade him: "Go to Sám the cavalier,
Ask: 'What hath been thy fortune in the war?'
And having seen him say: 'Come hither first,
And journey home from us.'"
Naudar set forth,
And valiant Sám, informed of his approach

Went with the paladins to welcome him
With mighty elephants and kettledrums.
Anon they met and interchanged their greetings. V. 186
The hero Sám rejoiced to see the prince,
Who gave his father's message. Sám replied:—
"I will obey and joy to look on him."
For that day they remained the guests of Sám,
The sight of whom rejoiced the company;
They spread the board, they took the cup in hand,
And first they drank the health of Minúchihr,
Then of Naudar, and then of Sám and all
The chieftains, not forgetting any province.
The livelong night was spent in revelry,
But with the sunrise rose the din of tymbals;
The speedy dromedaries spread their wings[1]
And toward the palace of Sháh Minúchihr
They went as bidden. When he heard thereof
He had the palace of the Sháhs prepared.
Then from Sárí and from Ámul rose din,
As when a fierce sea heaveth, for the spearmen
Marched in their mail with heavy darts, a host
That reached from range to range, with shield on shield,
Whose red and yellow blent, with tymbals, pipes,
Gongs, Arab horses, elephants, and treasures.
On such a fashion marched that armament
With flags and kettledrums on welcome bent.

§ 18

How Sám came to Minúchihr

Sám reached the court, alit and was received
In audience by the Sháh, at sight of whom
He kissed the ground, and then approached the presence;

[1] Metaphorically, of course.

While Minúchihr, encrowned with sparkling gems,
V. 187 Rose from his ivory throne and made Sám sit
Beside him, showed the chieftain all observance
And questioned him at large and anxiously
About the Kargasárs, about his troops,
About the fierce dívs of Mázandarán.
The chief told all and said: "Live happy ever,
O Sháh! Ne'er may foe's malice touch thy life.
I marched upon that land of valiant dívs,
And such dívs too, like lions in the fight,
More swift than Arab horses and out-daring
The warriors of Írán! The fierce Sagsárs—
Pards in the fray—concerned at mine approach,
Sent up the battle-cry within their cities,
And all turned out to fight—a mighty host,
From mountain unto mountain naught but men,
So that the bright day vanished in the dust.
All eager for the fray they came upon me,
Came with a reckless rush! A panic fell
Upon my troops. 'How shall I bear,' I thought,
'This anguish?" and I saw not; for the brunt
Had fallen then on me. I roared against them,
I whirled a mace that weighed three hundred mans[1]
And urged mine iron steed. I came among them
And brained them till the foe was panic-stricken.
The grandson of the valiant worldlord Salm,
As 'twere a wolf, was foremost of them all.
The youth was named Karkwí, a lofty Cypress,
V. 188 Descended through his mother from Zahhák.
The heads of nobles were but dust to him.
His army thronged like locusts or like ants
And hid dale, plain, and mountain. When the dust
Rose from that great host, and my troops turned pale,
I reared the mace whereof one blow sufficeth

[1] A Persian measure of weight varying greatly in different localities.

And led the army on. I raised a shout
That made earth seem a millstone to the foe,
While all my host was heartened and resolved
To battle on. Karkwí, who heard my voice,
And blows down-crashing from mine iron mace,
Came like a monstrous elephant against me
To battle, carrying a mighty lasso,
And sought to catch me in its noose, but I
Was ware and moved me from destruction's path.
I took a royal bow and poplar arrows
With points of steel, and urging on my charger
To eagle's speed I showered shafts like fire
And deemed his helm pegged to his anvil head
Until I saw him coming mid the dust,
Like some mad elephant, with Indian sword
In hand. Methought, O Sháh! that e'en the mountains
Would cry to him for quarter! He pressed on,
And I held back to tempt him to come near;
Then, when he closed with me, reached from my grey,
Seized on the girdle of that mighty man
And like a lion wrenched him from his saddle;
Then like a maddened elephant I dashed him
Upon the ground so that his bones were shivered.
Their prince o'erthrown his soldiers fled the fight;
The vales and hills, the deserts and the mountains, V 189
Were crowded everywhere, while of the fallen
Upon the field we reckoned up ten thousand
Of horse and foot. Troops, citizens, and horsemen
Were verily three hundred thousand strong;
But weighed against thy fortune what are foes
Confronted by a servant of thy throne?"

The Sháh, on hearing what his chieftain said,
Raised to the moon his glorious diadem,
Bade hold a festival and saw with joy

The world freed from his foes. The night passed quickly
In revelry and praises of the chieftain.
At dawn the Sháh held audience. Sám drew near
And having done obeisance sought to speak
About Mihráb and Zál, but was prevented
By Minúchihr, who said with angry looks:—
"Depart with chosen chiefs, burn Hindústán,
The palace of Mihráb, and all Kábul.
Let not Mihráb escape; he is a remnant
Left of the Dragon's seed, and filleth earth
V. 190 With turmoil. As for his allies and kindred,
Smite off their heads, and purify the world
Of all the kith and kindred of Zahhák."
Sám dared not speak, so wrathful was the Sháh,
But kissed the throne, then gently pressed his face
Against the famous signet and replied:—
"My conduct shall acquit the Sháh of vengeance."
Then with his host he sought his own abode
On steeds that went like wind along the road.

§ 19

How Sám went to War against Mihráb

Mihráb and Zál had news of what had passed
Between the Sháh and Sám, Kábul was moved,
And cries rose from the palace of Mihráb.
Now when Síndukht, Mihráb, and e'en Rúdába
Despaired of saving either life or goods,
Zál left Kábul, exclaiming as he went
With drooping mien yet resolute withal:
"The Dragon grim whose breath would burn the world
Must take my head off ere he touch Kábul."
In great concern he hasted on his journey,
With much to think about and much to say.

News reached brave Sám: "The Lion's Whelp hath
come."
The troops bestirred themselves and got in readiness
The flag of Farídún. They beat the tymbals,
And chief and host went out to welcome Zál
With elephants whose backs were draped with banners V. 191
Of yellow, red, and violet. Zál, on seeing
His father's face, alighted and approached
Afoot, as did the chiefs of both the hosts,
And brave Zál kissed the ground. Sám spent a while
In converse with his son, who then remounted
His chestnut Arab, like a hill of gold,
While all the chiefs approached him in concern.
"Thy father is displeased with thee," they told him;
"Make thine excuse and be not obstinate."
He said: "I fear not, for man's end is dust.
My sire if sane will not unsay his words,
And if at first he speaketh angrily
Will after weep for shame."
They reached Sám's court
With much good cheer. He lighted and gave audience
To Zál, who kissed the ground before his sire
With ruffled feathers,[1] offering praise while tears
Fell from his eyes and washed his rosy cheeks.
"Glad be the paladin's shrewd heart," he said,
"And may his spirit be the slave of justice.
Thy falchion scorcheth adamant, earth weepeth
When thou art fighting. Where thy charger pranceth
The lagging soldiers haste, and verily
Where heaven hath felt the storm-blast of thy mace
It dareth not array its host. All earth
Is verdant with thy justice, and the spirit V. 192
Of wisdom is a seedling of thy stock.
All joy in thy just dealing; earth and time

[1] Zál is regarded metaphorically as half bird. *Cf.* pp. 302, 304.

Receive it at thy hands. So do not I;
I have no share though thine acknowledged kinsman.
I am the dust-fed nursling of a bird
And know no feud with any, and no fault
To give occasion to an enemy
Save this, that Sám the hero is my sire
And mine accomplishment beneath such birth.
Or ever I was born thou didst expose me
Upon the mountains, harrowing my mother,
And giving to the flames a thriving child.
I saw no cradle and no breast of milk,
I had no memory of any kindred,
For thou didst cast me out, deprive my heart
Of peace and tenderness, and strive against
The Maker, for who maketh white and black?
Now since the Maker hath provided for me,
And looked upon me with a Master's eye,
Skill, manhood, and a hero's sword are mine
And one friend too, himself the crown of chiefs,
The brave, wise, prudent monarch of Kábul.
I sojourned at Kábul by thy command
And mindful of thy counsel and thy pledge.
Thou saidst: 'I ne'er will vex thee, but will bring
The tree that thou hast planted into fruit,'
Yet bringest this gift from Mázandarán,
And hastest from the Kargasárs to further
The ruin of my home: such is thy justice!
V. 193 Behold, I stand before thee and expose
My body to thy wrath. Saw me asunder,
But utter not a word against Kábul.
Do as thou wilt; the power is all thine own,
But mischief to Kábul is done to me."

The chief attended to Zál's words, then bowed
His head and answered:—"'Tis all true, and I
Have dealt with thee unjustly from the first

And given foes occasion to rejoice.
What thou hast asked me is thy heart's desire
And in thy trouble thou couldst find no rest;
Yet be not rash, let me despatch the business.
I will indite a letter to the Sháh
And send it by thy hand, my loving son!
The worldlord will not seek to do thee harm
When he shall see thy prowess and thy looks,
And I have wooed his heart and soul to justice.
If he shall aid us thou wilt be contented,
Because the lion always hath the power
To gain its ends, and everywhere alike
Can seize upon the quarry."
Thereupon
Zál kissed the ground with many a benison.

§ 20

How Zál went on a Mission to Minúchihr

Sám wrote at large and set forth every plea. V. 194
The letter opened with the praise of God,
Who is established in His seat for ever:—
"From Him are good and evil, life and death:
We all of us are slaves and God is One.
The process of the sky is over all
That He—the Lord of Saturn, Sun, and Moon—
Hath willed. His blessing be upon the Sháh—
In fight an antidote-consuming bane,
In feast a moon that lighteneth the world—
Who brandisheth the mace, who stormeth cities,
Who giveth unto each his meed of joy,
Who marcheth with the flag of Farídún
To war, and slayeth haughty warrior-leopards.
The lofty mountain shattered by thy mace
Becometh dust upon thy proud steed's hoofs,

While thy pure heart and stainless Faith constrain
Both wolf and sheep to water at thy cistern.
A slave am I whose race is run, a slave
Who hath attained to sixty years twice told.
My head is strewn with camphor-dust—a crown
That sun and moon have given me. I girt
My warrior-loins and slaved. I fought the warlocks.
None e'er saw[1] horseman rein his steed, fell chiefs,
Or wield a mace like me. My mighty mace
Eclipsed the warriors of Mázandarán.
Did naught beside exalt me over all—
There was a dragon haunting the Kashaf
And making earth afoam. It reached from city
To city and from hill to hill, the hearts
Of all were filled with panic: men kept watch
V. 195 Both night and day. That dragon cleared the sky
Of flying fowl and earth of beast of prey.
It scorched the vulture's feathers with its blast,
Set earth a-blazing where its venom fell,
Dragged from the water gruesome crocodiles,
And swiftly flying eagles from the air.
Men and four-footed beasts ceased from the land;
The whole world gave it room. So seeing that none
Dared to lay hand upon it, in God's strength
I banished terror from my heart, girt up
My loins in His exalted name, and rode
Mine elephantine steed. My saddle bore
Mine ox-head mace, upon mine arm I carried
My bow, and at my neck my shield. I went
Forth like a savage crocodile. My hand
Was keen, keen too the dragon's breath, and all
Farewelled me when they saw me wield my mace.
I came. The dragon seemed a lofty mountain
And trailed upon the ground its hairs like lassos.

[1] Reading with C.

Its tongue was like a tree-trunk charred, its jaws
Were open and were lying in my path.
Its eyes were like two cisterns full of blood.
It bellowed when it saw me and came on
In fury, seeming all afire, O Sháh!
Within. The world 'gan swim before mine eyes,
A black reek went up to the murky clouds,
Earth's surface shook beneath the bellowing,
The venom seemed to be a sea of Chín.
Then like a gallant warrior I roared
Against that dragon, as a lion roareth,
And tarried not, but fitted to my bow
A poplar arrow tipped with adamant
And shot it at the dragon's jaws, to pin
The tongue against the throat; the tongue lolled pinned;
The dragon was astound. Again I shot,
Again I pierced the mouth; the creature writhed.
I shot a third shaft right adown its jaws;
Its heart's blood spouted seething. When it closed
And pressed me hard I took mine ox-head mace V. 196
And in the strength of God, the Lord of all,
Urged on mine elephantine steed and smote
The dragon's head: thou wouldst have said that heaven
Rained mountains down thereon. I smashed the skull,
As it had been a mighty elephant's,
And venom poured forth like the river Nile.
So struck I that the dragon rose no more
While earth was levelled to the hills with brains.
Kashaf was flowing like a stream of gall
And all was peace. The mountain-tops were thronged
With folk who called down blessings on my head,
Because that dragon was a fearful bane.
On this account men called me 'One blow' Sám,
And all threw jewels o'er me. I departed
With all my shining body bare of mail;

My charger's armour dropped from him in pieces;
I sickened with the venom many days.
There was no harvest in those parts for years
Nor aught except the ashes of burnt thorns.
To tell my conflict with the dívs would make
The letter tedious, but in that and elsewhere
I trampled underfoot the heads of chieftains,
And wheresoe'er I rode my wind-foot charger
I cleared that region of the rending lion.
And now this many a year my saddle's back
Hath been my throne, my charger been mine earth.
My massive mace hath brought beneath thy sway
Mázandarán and all the Kargasárs;
I ne'er have asked for field or fell but sought
To make thee both victorious and happy.
V. 197 My neck and mace-blows are not what they were,
My breast and loins are bent; I used to throw
A lasso sixty cubits long, but now
Am bent by time and have resigned my duties
To Zál, as worthy of my mace and girdle.
Like me he will destroy thy foes and make
My heart glad with his prowess. He hath come
To ask the Sháh to grant his secret longing,
One excellent in God's sight, apart from Whom
There is no excellence. We have not moved
Therein as yet but wait the great king's will,
For slaves must not presume. My lord the Sháh,
The guardian of the world, hath surely heard
How once and publicly I promised Zál,
When I was bringing him from Mount Alburz,
Not to refuse him aught, and he hath come,
Besmeared with blood and dust, and bones in bits,
With his request. He said: ''Twere better far
To hang Ámul[1] than fall upon Kábul.'

[1] Minúchihr's capital.

But when a fowl-fed outcast on the mountains
Seeth in Kábulistán so bright a Moon—
A Cypress slim crowned with a rosary—
It is no wonder if he goeth mad,
Nor ought the Sháh to visit it upon him.
All pity him, his pangs of love are such!
His many undeserved afflictions borne
Evoked the promise that the Sháh hath heard,
And I have sent him with a heavy heart.
When he shall come before thy lofty throne
Do that which is most consonant with greatness;
There is not any need to teach thee wisdom.
Him and him only have I in the world
To share my sorrows or to succour me. V. 198
From Sám the son of Narímán be blessings
A thousand fold upon the king of kings
And on the lords."

When all things were prepared
Zál took the letter hastily, arose,
Went forth and mounted mid the blare of trumpets.
A troop of warriors went with him to court
At speed. Thus from Zábulistán[1] went he
While "One blow" Sám enjoyed his rosary.

§ 21

How Mihráb was Wroth with Síndukht

When these events[2] were bruited at Kábul
Mihráb in fury called Síndukht and vented
His rage against Rúdába on his wife.
He said: "The only course for me, since I
Must yield before the monarch of the world,

[1] So C. and P. V. apparently by oversight reads Kábulistán.

[2] *I.e.* the Sháh's wrath and his instructions to Sám to destroy Kábul.

Is to take thee with thy polluted child
And slay you shamefully and publicly.
Thereat perchance the Sháh will be appeased
And earth grow peaceful. Who within Kábul
Would dare to strive with Sám or feel his mace?"
Síndukht sank down before him and considered.
Then having hit on an expedient,
For she was shrewd and subtle, came before
The sunlike king with folded arms and said:—
V. 199 "Hear but one word from me, then do thy will.
If thou hast wealth to purchase life bestow it,
And know thou that this night is big with fate.
Yet though night seemeth long 'twill pass, and earth
Be like a signet-ring of Badakhshán."
Mihráb replied: "No old wives' tales to warriors!
Say what thou know'st and use all means for life,
Or else array thee in the robe of blood."
She said: "There is no need of that, great king!
But I must go to Sám to draw this sword
And to appeal to him in fitting terms,
For wisdom is the cook when speech is raw.
To labour for our lives is my part, thine
To find the presents and entrust to me
Thy hoarded wealth."
"Here is the key," he said,
"One must not always grieve at spending treasure.
Prepare slaves, horses, thrones, and casques to go.
We yet may save our country from the flames
To shine though faded now."
Síndukht replied:—
"If thou desirest life hold treasure cheap.
While I avert the danger thou must use
No harshness toward my child. My greatest care
Here is her life; give me a pledge for that.

I care not for myself; all my concern
And travail are for her."
She took his pledge,
Then boldly faced the danger, clad herself
All in brocade of gold with pearls and jewels
About her head, and from the treasury took
Three hundred thousand pieces as a largess.
They brought forth thirty steeds of Arab stock V. 200
Or Persian with their silvern equipage;
And sixty slaves with golden torques, each bearing
A golden goblet brimmed with camphor, musk,
Gold, turquoises, and jewels of all kinds;
One hundred female camels with red hair,
One hundred baggage-mules; a crown of jewels
Fit for a king, with armlets, torques, and earrings;
A throne of gold like heaven, all inlaid
With divers sorts of gems, the width thereof
Was twenty royal cubits and the height
The stature of a noble horseman; lastly
Four mighty Indian elephants to bring
Bales full of wearing-stuffs and carpeting.

§ 22

How Sám comforted Sindukht

The treasures having been despatched she mounted
In warrior-guise, swift as a lightning-flash,
Assumed a Rúman helm and rode a steed
As swift as wind, approached Sám's court unknown
And bade the officers announce her thus:—
"An envoy from Kábul hath come to seek
The mighty chief, the hero of Zábul,

Charged with a message from Mihráb to Sám,
The winner of the world."
The chamberlain
Went to tell Sám, who granted audience.
Síndukht dismounted, hasted to the chief
V. 201 And kissed the ground, with praises of the Sháh
And of the chief of paladins. The largess,
The slaves, the horses, and the elephants
Stretched from the gate two miles. She offered all
To Sám, who sat there dazed, like one bemused,
With folded arms and drooping head. He thought:—
"Come female envoys from so rich a country?
If I accept the Sháh will be displeased;
If I decline then Zál will be chagrined
And flap his wings about like the Símurgh."
He raised his head and said: "As for these goods,
These slaves and elephants caparisoned,
Go give them to Zál's treasurer as presents
Sent by the Beauty of Kábulistán."
Then fairy-faced Síndukht essayed to speak,
Rejoicing that her offerings were accepted
And all had ended well. Three of her handmaids,
With idol-faces, tall as cypresses
And fair as jasmine, bearing each a goblet
Which brimmed with pearls and rubies, poured them out
In one promiscuous shower before the chieftain.
This done and strangers gone she said to Sám:—
"Thy counsel maketh old folk young. Thou teachest
V. 202 The mighty wisdom, who through thee illume
The world. Thou hast sealed up the hand of ill
And opened with thy mace the way of God.
Mihráb, if any, was to blame, and he
Is weeping blood. What have our people done
That thou must raze Kábul? They only live

To do thy hest—slaves of the very dust
Upon thy feet. Fear Him who hath created
Both mind and might, bright Venus and the Sun.
He would not countenance such acts from thee:
Gird not thy loins for bloodshed."

Sám replied:—

"Come tell me what I ask and palter not.
Art thou the slave or consort of Mihráb,
Whose daughter Zál hath seen? Tell me that I
May judge her worthiness, her mind and temper,
Her face, hair, stature, looks, and understanding—
Whatever thou hast noted tell me all."

Síndukht replied to him: "O paladin,
The chief of paladins, the warriors' stay!
First swear an oath whereat the land shall quake
That thou wilt never injure me or mine.
I have a palace, wealth, and mighty kindred.
First reassure me and I will reply
In hope to win thy favour, and will send V. 203
Our hoarded treasures to Zábul."

Sám grasped
Her hand and took the oath, on hearing which,
And marking that his speech and pledge were frank,
She kissed the ground, then rose and told him all:
"My race is from Zahhák, O paladin!
Spouse to Mihráb, that ardent warrior,
Am I, and mother of moon-faced Rúdába,
Of her o'er whom Zál poureth out his soul.
We and our kin before all-holy God
Bless all night long the Sháh, and thee, and Zál.
I come to know thy will, and how thou holdest
Us in Kábul. If we be bad by race
And sinners all unfit for rule, behold!
I stand before thee sorrowing. Slay thou
Who should be slain and bind who should be bound,

But as for all the guiltless of Kábul
Burn not their hearts nor turn their days to darkness."
The paladin on hearing saw in her
A woman of counsel and of ardent soul,
With cheeks like spring, in height a cypress-tree,
With reed-like waist and pheasant's gait. He said:—
"My pledge shall hold although it cost my life.
Live safely and rejoicing at Kábul
With all thy kindred. I assent that Zál
Shall wed Rúdába. Though our race is other
Than yours, yet ye deserve the crown and throne;
The world so waggeth and no shame to us;
We cannot strive against the Almighty Maker,
Who doth whate'er He willeth in such wise
That we are ever crying out: 'Ah me!'
V. 204 One is exalted and another humbled,
And while one fareth well another quaketh.
The heart of one is furnished by his increase,
Another's minished by his poverty,
But after all the end of both is dust—
The element that slayeth every race.
I will exert myself on thy behalf
Because of thine appeal and bitter cry,
And have already written to the Sháh
A letter with the plaint of one in pain,
And Zál hath gone with it. Hath gone! nay rather
Hath flown! He saw no saddle when he mounted,
And then his roadster's hoofs saw not the ground!
The Sháh will smile and give a gracious answer,
For this bird's fosterling is out of heart;
He standeth in the mire made by his tears,
And if his sweetheart is as fond as he is
Their skins will never hold them. Prithee now
Let me behold the Dragon's child, just once,

On thine own terms. The sight may weigh with me
If both her looks and locks commend themselves."
She answered: "If the paladin will gladden
His slave, let him vouchsafe to visit her:
Her head will reach high heaven. If to Kábul
We bring a king like thee, we will present
Our lives as offerings."
She saw his smiles
And that all hate was rooted from his heart
As he replied: "Be not concerned; this matter
Will shortly turn out to thy wish."
Síndukht
Then asking leave withdrew, and went away
In full content, her cheeks like gems for joy.
She sent a lusty courier like wind V. 205
To tell Mihráb: "Be easy in thy mind,
Rejoice and make thee ready for a guest.
I follow quickly."
Next day, when the sun
Shot up and heads awoke from drowsiness,
Saluted as the Moon of noble dames,
Síndukht proceeded to the court of Sám,
Did him obeisance, spake with him at large,
And asked permission to go home rejoicing
To tell Mihráb about the new-made league,
And get all ready to receive their guest.
Sám said: "Depart and tell him everything."
They chose choice gifts for her and for Mihráb,
And for Rúdába too—that lovesome maid.
Sám gave Síndukht withal all that was his
Within Kábul of palaces and gardens,
Of tilth, milch cattle, carpets and apparel,
Then took her hand, re-swore his oath and said:—
"Be happy at Kábul, and fear no foe."

With favouring stars the pale Moon's face again
Grew bright, and she went homeward with her train.

§ 23

How Zál came to Minúchihr with Sám's Letter

Now hearken how Zál fared with Minúchihr—
V. 206 That favourite of fortune. News arrived:—
"Zál, son of Sám the cavalier, hath come."
The nobles went to welcome him. On reaching
The court he had an audience and did homage,
Remaining with his face upon the ground.
The kind Sháh's heart was won; he bade to purge
Zál's face of dust and sprinkle him with musk,
And, when the well-beloved approached the throne,
Inquired: "How didst thou fare mid wind and dust
On thy hard journey, child of paladins?"
Zál answered: "Through thy Grace 'twas more than well;
"Thou turnest every trouble to delight."
The Sháh then took Sám's letter, read and smiled.
"Thou hast increased an ancient grief of mine,"
He said, "yet for thy father's touching letter,
Which ancient Sám hath written in his trouble,
Although the matter hath much grieved my heart,
I am resolved to think of it no more,
And will perform and carry out thy wish,
Since that is all to thee; but tarry here
While I deliberate on thine affairs."
The cooks brought in a service all of gold
Whereat the king of kings sat down with Zál,
And ordered all the chieftains to partake
The feast. The eating done, they served the wine
Within another throne-room, and that over

Zál mounted on his charger with gold trappings,
And so departing passed the livelong night
With much to think and talk about. At dawn
He came with girded loins to Minúchihr
Of glorious Grace, who gave him salutation V. 207
And praised him privily when he had gone.

The Sháh commanded that the archimages,
The nobles, wise men, and astrologers,
Should meet at his high throne and read the stars.
They met and laboured for three days and then
Announced: "We have perused the circling sky,
And this is what the stars prognosticate:—
'No stagnant pool is here. There will arise
From Sám's son and the daughter of Mihráb
A hero full of prowess and fair fame.
His life will be prolonged for centuries;
He will have strength, renown, and Grace, pluck, brains,
And thews, and not a peer in fight or feast.
Where'er his charger's coat shall run with sweat
The liver of his foemen shall run dry.
The eagle will not soar above his helm;
Naught will he reck of chiefs and men of name.
He will be tall in stature, great in might,
Will take the lion with his twisted lasso,
Will roast whole onagers upon the fire,
Will make the air weep with his scimitar,
Will be the belted servant of the Sháhs
And shelter of the horsemen of Írán.'"

Then said the exalted Sháh: "Beware that ye
Disclose to none what ye have told to me."

[1] Reading with C.

§ 24

How the Archmages questioned Zál

V. 208 The Sháh called Zál to prove him by hard questions.
The shrewd archmages and the men of lore
Sat in full conclave, and examined him
On many matters veiled in mystery.
One asked that man of insight, wit, and knowledge:—
"What are the dozen cypresses erect
In all their bravery and loveliness,
Each one of them with thirty boughs bedeckt—
In Persia never more and never less?"
The second said: "O noble youth! explain—
What are those two steeds moving rapidly:
As crystal bright is this one of the twain
And that one sable as a pitchy sea;
They gallop at their utmost speed and strain
Each one to catch the other, but in vain?"
The third said thus: "What are the thirty men
Who ride before their king in order meet
And seem but twenty-nine to thee, but when
Thou countest them their number is complete?"
The fourth inquired: "What is the meadow-land,
Where streams abound and herbage groweth strong,
To which a fierce man cometh, in whose hand
There is a scythe, a sharp one and a long:
He cutteth all the grass both green and dry,
And if thou criest heareth not thy cry?"
"What are those cypresses—a lofty pair—
Like reeds above a sea whose waters heave,"
Another asked, "and what bird nesteth there
On this at morning, and on that at eve?
The bird departeth and the leaves turn pale,
The bird arriveth and they musk exhale.

In all their verdure both are never seen V. 209
Together, but one sere, the other green."
The sixth said: "On a mountain I descried
A city that was strongly fortified.
The citizens, those men exceeding wise,
Preferred thereto a thornbrake on the waste;
And there as monarchs or as subjects placed
A town with buildings lifted to the skies.
The memory of the city now hath gone,
'Tis not accounted of by any one;
But some day suddenly the earth will quake,
The country vanish from the sight of men,
Remembrance of the city will awake,
And long regret possess the citizen.
Now look behind the veil, explore the words,
And if thou canst the secret sense unfold,
Declare it here in presence of the lords,
And make the purest musk from grimy mould."

§ 25

How Zál answered the Archmages

Zál for a while remained absorbed in thought,
Then shook his plumage, spread his wings, and answered:—
"First as to those twelve cypresses which rear
Themselves, with thirty boughs upon each tree:
They are the twelve new moons of every year,
Like new-made monarchs, throned in majesty.
Upon the thirtieth day its course is done
For each; thus our revolving periods run.
Thou speakest of two chargers, black and white,
Which like Ázargashasp go flashing by:
These too are periods, and in their flight
Pursue each other unremittingly.

The two that pass along are night and day,
The pulses of the sky are reckoned so;
They never catch each other as they go,
But follow as a hound pursueth prey.
V. 210 Again, thou askest of the thirty men
That ride before their king in order meet,
And seem to thee as twenty-nine, but when
Thou countest them their number is complete.
They are the phases of the moon; one night
A phase from time to time eludeth sight.
Unsheathe we now the hidden sense expressed
By two tall cypresses, a bird and nest.
The darker limb of heaven is opposed
With Aries to Libra in the height;
Thence till the reign of Pisces hath been closed
The ascendant limb is that of gloom and night.
Each lofty cypress-tree denoteth one
Of these two limbs which cause our smiles and tears,
The bird which flieth 'twixt them is the sun—
Occasion to the world of hopes and fears.[1]
Again, the city built upon the mount
Is our long home, the scene of our account.
This Wayside Inn is meant by Thornbrake town,
At once our pleasure, treasure, pain and woe:
It reckoneth each breath drawn here below
And both exalteth us and casteth down.

[1] Putting aside modern astronomical notions the idea seems somewhat as follows: the sky, as represented by the Signs of the Zodiac, is divided into a lighter and a darker portion or "limb"; the lighter, Spring and Summer, being represented by the Signs from Aries to Virgo; and the darker, Autumn and Winter, by those from Libra to Pisces. The "limbs" are alternately more or less in evidence, while the sun is continually journeying from one "limb" to the other. The double alternation of light and darkness is thus accounted for; that of the lighter and darker seasons of the year by the movements of the sky, and that of day and night by the movement of the sun. The former rules man's destiny, the latter chiefly influences his daily life.

A storm ariseth, earth's foundations quake,
Extorting from the world a bitter cry;
We leave our toils behind us in the brake
And seek the city that is built on high.
Where we have toiled another hath the gain,
But not for ever: he will not remain.
'Twas always so; to look for change is vain.
If our provision be an honoured name
Our souls will be on that account held dear,
But if we do the deeds of greed and shame V. 211
That will, when we have breathed our last, appear.
Albeit we have raised to Saturn here
Our mansion we shall have a shroud instead,
No more. The dust and bricks close o'er our head
And all is consternation, awe, and fear.
As for the meadow-land, and him whose keen
Scythe is a terror both to green and dry,
Who cutteth all alike, both dry and green,
And if thou criest heareth not thy cry—
Time is the mower; we are like the swath;
The grandsire and the grandson are the same
To him, not making young or old his aim,
But chasing each that cometh in his path.
The use and process of the world are so:
No mother's son is born unless for death.
By this door we arrive, by that we go,
And time meanwhile accounteth every breath."

§ 26

How Zál displayed his Accomplishment before Minúchihr

When Zál had thus expounded all the riddles
The company both wondered and rejoiced,
While Minúchihr, glad-hearted, cried: "Well done!"
He had forthwith a banquet-hall prepared,

As 'twere the moon at full, and there they quaffed
Wine till the night fell, and the revellers' heads
Became bemused. Then at the portal rose
Shouts for the steeds, and glorious in their cups
The warriors grasped hands and went their ways.
Now when the sunshine struck the mountain-tops
V 212 And when the chiefs awoke, Zál, ready-girt
And lion-like, approached the royal presence
For leave to hie him home, and thus he said:—
"My gracious lord! I long to see Sám's face.
Since I have kissed the footings of thy throne
Of ivory thy Grace and crown illume
My heart."
The Sháh said: "Youthful warrior!
Thou must bestow upon us still one day.
Thou yearnest for the daughter of Mihráb
And not for Sám."
He bade to carry gongs
With Indian bells and clarions to the ground,
And all the warriors went forth rejoicing
With lances, maces, and artillery.
They took their bows and poplar shafts and let
A mark stand for the foe. They wheeled and showed
Their horsemanship with mace, sword, shaft, and lance,
While from a height the Sháh, seen or unseen
By them, observed their skill, but never saw
Or heard of horsemanship like Zál's. There stood
Upon the ground an ancient tree. Zál took
His bow, urged on his steed, and raised his name
By striking that tall tree and piercing it
Full in the centre with the royal shaft.
Then certain of the javelin-men took bucklers
And exercised with double-headed darts.
Zál bade his Turkman slave bring shields of hide,
Drew himself up and urged his steed along,

Then dropped his bow, took his own javelin
And made new sport. He struck and pierced three shields
And flung them to one side in high disdain.
The Sháh said to the chiefs: "What mighty man V. 213
Will challenge him to prove his weight in combat?
He hath knocked dust out of two-headed darts
And arrows."
Then the warriors donned their mail
With wrathful hearts and curses on their tongues.
They pricked forth to the combat bearing spears
With heads of tempered steel. Zál urged his steed,
Made the dust fly, and, when the battle joined,
Selected from the rest a cavalier
Of fame and high estate at whom he charged.
The warrior turned and fled. Zál, leopard-like,
Emerging from the dust, seized on his belt
And took him from his saddle with such ease
That both the Sháh and army were astound,
The chiefs exclaiming: "None will see his peer."
The Sháh said: "May he ever be thus ardent.
The mother of the man that dareth him
To battle will wear mourning for her son.
The lionesses bear not one so brave,
So brave . . . he must be classed with crocodiles!
And Sám is blessed indeed to leave the world
Such a memorial."
He praised the youth,
As did the famous warriors. Then they went,
With girded loins and casques upon their heads,
Toward the palace where the Sháh prepared
A robe of honour that astonished all
The chieftains, with a precious crown and throne
Of gold, with armlets, torques, and golden girdles,
Rich robes, slaves, steeds, and other things of worth,
And gave the whole to Zál, who kissed the earth.

§ 27

Minúchihr's Answer to Sám's Letter

V. 214 The Sháh then wrote a very gracious letter
To Sám: "Renowned and valiant paladin,
In all emprise victorious like a lion,
And peerless in the sight of turning heaven
For feast, for fight, for counsel and for favour!
That glorious son of thine—brave Zál—at whom
The lion is aghast in battle-tide,
The brave accomplished warrior and horseman
Of lasting fame, hath come, and I, on learning
Thy wishes and his longings, granted him
All his desires, and count upon his having
A long and glorious life. Should leopard-hunters
Have other issue than the strong-clawed lion?"
Exalted o'er the rest and in high favour
Zál sent to Sám to say: "I left the Sháh
With all that I could wish—a royal robe
Of honour, crowns, torques, armlets, and a throne
Of ivory, and am coming with all speed,
My loving, glorious sire!"
Sám gladdened so
That his hoar head grew young. He hurried off
A horseman to Kábul to tell Mihráb
V. 215 The kindness of the Sháh which had produced
Such joy, and added: "After Zál's return
We will set out to pay thee our respects."
The messenger sped forth. Mihráb on hearing
So joyed to make Kábul's Sun his affine
That through his joy the dead returned to life
And agèd heads grew young. They summoned minstrels,
And one had said that all poured out their souls.

With smiling lips and joyful heart he called
High-born Síndukht and beaming said to her:—
"My consort, whose advice is prosperous!
Thy counsel hath illumed our gloomy dwelling.
Thou hast laid hand upon a sprout whereto
The monarchs of the world will do obeisance.
Since thou hast ordered matters from the first
Thine be it also to accomplish them.
My treasury is all at thy disposal
For what is needed—throne, or crown, or wealth."
Síndukht on this withdrew and gave her daughter
The news, and joyful hopes of seeing Zál.
She said: "Thy choice of partner is most fit,
And men and women, howsoever strict,
Will see good cause to let their strictures cease.
Thou hast sped quickly to thy heart's desire."
Rúdába answered: "Consort of the king!
Thou meritest the praise of every one.
I make the dust upon thy feet my pillow,
And order my religion by thy teaching.
May eyes of Áhrimans be far from thee,
And be thy heart and soul the house of feasting."
Síndukht on hearing this bedecked the palace,
Arrayed the hall like jocund Paradise, V. 216
Mixed wine and musk and ambergris and spread
Gold-broidered carpets, some inwoven with emeralds
And others patterned out in lustrous pearls;
Each several pearl was like a water-drop.
She placed a golden throne within the hall,
So do they use in Chín. The tracery
Was all of gems with carvings interspersed,
The feet were jewelled: 'twas a royal throne
And very splendid. She arrayed Rúdába
Like Paradise, wrote on her many a charm
And seated her, allowing none to enter

Within that chamber arabesqued with gold.[1]
Kábulistán was dight in festal trim,
All colour, scent, and wealth. They housed the backs
Of the elephants with rich brocade of Rúm
And seated on them minstrels wearing crowns.
All was prepared for welcoming the guests
And all the slaves were summoned to strew musk
And spicery, to put down furs and silks,
To fling down gold and musk, and sprinkle round
Wine and rose-water on the dusty ground.

§ 28

How Zál came to Sám

Zál sped like bird on wing or ship at sea
And all that heard of his approach went out
To welcome him with joy. The palace rang
With shouts: "Zál hath succeeded and returned."
Sám met him joyfully and held him close
V. 217 Embraced. When Zál had disengaged himself
He kissed the ground and told his news. Anon
Sám, seated on his splendid throne with Zál,
Blithe-hearted and in great content, began
To tell about the matter of Síndukht,
And kept his countenance: "A woman named
Síndukht brought me a message from Kábul,
And made me promise not to be her foe.
I granted all that she was pleased to ask—
First that the future monarch of Zábul
Shall have the Beauty of Kábul to wife,
And next that we will go and be her guests
To heal all sores. Now she hath sent to say:—

[1] Where she had once entertained Zál.

'All things are ready, scented and adorned.'
What answer shall we send high-born Mihráb?"
Then Zál blushed ruby-red from head to foot
With sudden joy, and said: "O paladin!
If it seem good to thee send on the troops
And let us follow and discuss the matter."
Sám smiled at Zál, aware of his desire,
For he could talk of nothing but Rúdába,
And got no sleep at nights for thinking of her.
Sám bade to sound the gongs and Indian bells
And have prepared the royal tent-enclosure.
He sent a cameleer, a valiant man,
To advertise the lion-like Mihráb:—
"The chieftain is upon his way with Zál
And elephants and troops escorting them."
He went with speed and told Mihráb, who joyed; V. 218
His cheeks grew ruddy as the cercis-bloom.
He sounded trumpets, mounted kettledrums,
And furnished forth his army like the eye
Of chanticleer. Huge elephants and minstrels
Made earth a Paradise from end to end.
What with the many flags of painted silk
Of divers colours, sound of pipes and harps,
The blast of trumpets and the din of gongs,
One would have said: "It is a festival,
The Resurrection or the Last Great Day."
Thus went Mihráb till he encountered Sám,
He then dismounted and approached on foot.
That paladin of paladins embraced him
And asked if all were well. Mihráb began
To compliment both Sám and Zál, then like
The new moon rising o'er the mountain-tops
He mounted his fleet steed and set a crown
Of gold and jewels on the head of Zál.
Conversing of the past they reached Kábul.

What with the clang of Indian bells, the sounds
Of lyre and harp and pipe, one would have said:—
"The roofs and doors make music. Times are changed!"
The horses' manes and forelocks ran with saffron
And musk. Then with three hundred female slaves
With girded loins, each with a cup of gold
Which brimmed with musk and gems, Síndukht approached,
And all blessed Sám and showered forth the jewels.
Each person present on that happy day
V. 219 Had treasure to the full. Sám smiled and asked:—
"How long wilt thou conceal Rúdába thus?"
Síndukht replied: "If thou wouldst see the Sun
What is my fee?"
Sám answered: "What thou wilt:
My treasures, crown, throne, country—all are thine."
They sought the chamber arabesqued with gold,
Where all was jocund Spring, and Sám, entranced,
Struck dumb, and dazzled, viewed the moon-faced maid.
At last he said to Zál: "Thou lucky youth!
God greatly helped thee when this glorious Sun
Set her affections on thy face. Thy Choice
Is choice indeed!"
By Sám's desire Mihráb
Approached to execute the legal contract.
They placed the happy couple on one throne
And scattered emeralds and carnelians.
Her coronet was wrought of gold and his
Of royal gems. Mihráb produced and read
The inventory of his daughter's dowry
Till one had cried: "'Tis more than ear can hear."
Sám was confounded when he realised
The treasures, and invoked the name of God.
Then hall and city revelled for a week,
The palace was a Paradise in raptures,

And neither Zál nor coral-lipped Rúdába V. 220
Slept for a sennight either day or night;
Then going to the palace from the hall
They spent three weeks in joy, while all the nobles
With armlets on stood ranked outside. One month
Elapsed and Sám departed to Sístán.
Zál spent a happy week in getting ready
Steeds, howdahs, litters; for Rúdába's use
A curtained couch. Síndukht, Mihráb, and all
Their kin set off first for Sístán, glad-hearted,
With minds at ease and lips all praise to God,
Who giveth good, and there arrived triumphant,
Illuminating earth with joy and laughter.
Sám had a feast prepared. Three days were spent
In revelling, then while Síndukht remained
Mihráb returned attended to Kábul,
While Sám gave up the realm to Zál and led
His army westward 'gainst the Kargasárs,
With flaunting flag and favouring auguries.
"I go," said he, "because those fields are mine,
Though not men's hearts and eyes. I have the patent
From Minúchihr. 'Have and enjoy,' he said.
I fear me that the miscreants will rebel, V. 221
The dívs above all of Mázandarán.
I give to thee, O Zál! this state, this realm,
And glorious crown."
Sám of the single blow
Departed, leaving Zál upon the throne,
A happy husband holding festivals,
And when Rúdába sat beside her spouse
He placed a crown of gold upon her brows.

§ 29

The Story of the Birth of Rustam

Ere long the noble Cypress was in bearing,
Delightsome Spring grew sere, her heart was sad,
She wept blood for the burden that she bore.
Gone was her cercis-bloom, her cheeks were saffron.
Síndukht said unto her: "Life of thy mother!
Why hast thou grown so wan?"
Rúdába answered:—
"By night and day I cry for help. I lie
Sleepless and withered like a living corpse.
My time hath come but not deliverance."
Until that came she lacked both rest and sleep.
One would have said: "Her skin is stuffed with stones
Or iron." Now one day she swooned, and shrieks
Rose from the halls of Zál. Síndukht bewailed,
V. 222 Plucked out her raven tresses musk-perfumed
And tore her face. Then one announced to Zál:—
"The leaves have withered on thy lofty Cypress,"
And he with tearful cheeks and stricken heart
Approached the couch whereon Rúdába lay.
The female slaves were tearing out their hair
Unveiled with tearful faces. Then occurred
A thought to Zál which eased him of his anguish—
The plume of the Símurgh.[1] He smiling told
Síndukht, then brought a censer, kindled fire
And burnt some of the plume. The air grew dark
And that imperious bird swooped down—a Cloud
Whose drops were pearls . . . pearls, say I, rather peace.
Zál did obeisance long and praised her much.
She thus addressed him: "Wherefore is this grief,
This moisture in the mighty Lion's eye?

[1] *Cf.* pp. 235, 246.

From this moon-faced and silver-bosomed Cypress
Will come a noble babe. The mighty lion
Will kiss the dust upon his feet. No cloud
Will dare to pass above him. When he shouteth
The pard will split its skin and gnaw its paws.
The warriors that see his whizzing mace,
His chest, his arms and neck, will hear his voice
With quaking hearts, steel-eaters though they be
And gallant fighters; for this child will prove
In counsels and in rede a weighty Sám,
In height a cypress-tree, in wrath a lion,
In strength an elephant, and fillip bricks
Two miles. His birth will not be natural, V. 223
So willeth He who giveth good. Bring thou
A blue-steel dagger, seek a cunning man,
Bemuse the lady first with wine to ease
Her pain and fear, then let him ply his craft
And take the Lion from its lair by piercing
Her waist while all unconscious, thus imbruing
Her side in blood, and then stitch up the gash.
Put trouble, care, and fear aside, and bruise
With milk and musk a herb that I will show thee
And dry them in the shade. Dress and anoint
Rúdába's wound and watch her come to life.
Rub o'er the wound my plume, its gracious shade
Will prove a blessing. Let this gladden thee.
Then go before the Lord who hath bestowed
This royal Tree which ever blossometh
Good fortune. Be not troubled for this matter,
Because thy fertile Bough will yield thee fruit."
She spake, and plucking from her wing a plume
Dropped it and flew aloft. Zál picked it up
And did, O marvel! as the bird had said,
While every one looked on amazedly
With wounded spirit and with bloodshot eyes.

Síndukht wept tears of blood in torrents, asking:—
"How shall the infant come forth through the side?"
There came an archimage, one deft of hand,
Who made the moon-faced dame bemused with wine,
V. 224 Then pierced her side while she was all unconscious,
And having turned the infant's head aright
Delivered her uninjured. None had seen
A thing so strange. The babe was like a lion,
A hero tall and fair to look upon.
Both men and women wondered at him, none
Had heard of such an elephantine child.
A day and night the mother lay asleep,
Bemused, unconscious. They the while sewed up
The wound and eased the anguish with the dressing.
When she awoke and whispered to Síndukht
They showered gold and jewels over her
And praised the Almighty. Then they brought the babe
To her, extolling him as heavenly.
The first day thou hadst called him twelve months old—
A very heap of lilies mixed with tulips.
The lofty Cypress smiled upon the babe,
Perceived in him the Grace of king of kings,
And, "I am magnified," she said, "and grief
Is over."
So they named the infant "Rustam."[1]
They made of silk a herolet the size
Of that unsuckled Lion, stuffing it
With sable's hair and limning Sol and Venus
Upon the cheeks, with dragons on the arms,
And on the hands a lion's claws. Beneath
The arm there was a spear, mace in one hand
And bridle in the other. They set the puppet
V. 225 Upon a chestnut horse with great attendance.

[1] The word in the Persian may also mean "Je suis délivrée" (Mohl), or "I bear fruit," lit., "There is fruit to me."

This done they sent on first a cameleer
Apace, showered drachms on those who were in charge,
And took the puppet mace in hand to Sám.
  In all the country round they held high revel,
The desert was supplied with pipe and wine.
Inside Kábul Mihráb enjoyed the tidings
And showered dínárs upon the mendicants,
While in Zábul the revellers sat together
Without distinction as to high and low,
But mixed like warp and woof.
  They brought the puppet
To Sám the cavalier, who looked thereon,
Grew glad and well content. That hero's hair
Stood up on end. "This silken thing," said he,
"Is just like me. If he is half this size
His head will touch the sky, his skirt the ground."
  He called the messenger and poured drachms o'er
    him
Until the heap was level with his head.
The drums beat in the court for joy, Sám decked
The champaign like the eye of chanticleer
And bade adorn the land of the Sagsárs
And all Mázandarán. He had wine brought, V. 226
Called minstrels and showered drachms on mendicants.
  A week passed and the famous chieftain wrote
A letter like the meads of Paradise
To Zál. He offered praises first to God
That matters had turned out so happily,
Praised Zál the lord of mace and scimitar,
Then coming to the effigy of silk,
Which had a hero's neck and Grace of kings,
Enjoined: "So cherish him that not a breath
May hurt him. I have prayed by day and night
In secret to Almighty God to show me
A son born of thy seed and of my type.

Now that the backs of both of us are straightened
We only need to pray that we may live."
Came like a rushing wind the messenger
To Zál of ardent and exulting heart,
Told him of Sám's delight and gave the letter.
As soon as Zál had heard those pleasant words,
Which caused the clear-brained hero added joy,
He raised his neck to touch the azure sky.
Thus went the world with Zál and showed its purpose.
Ten nurses suckled Rustam, for from milk
Are strength and constitution. Being weaned
He lived on bread and flesh. He ate as much
As five, and people turned from such repasts.
V. 227 When Rustam had attained the height of eight [1]
And grown a noble Cypress or bright Star—
A Star whereat the world was all agaze—
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis valiant Sám indeed
In stature, wisdom, countenance, and rede."

§ 30

How Sám came to see Rustam

Sám heard: "The son of Zál is like a lion,
None ever saw a child so fierce and stalwart."
His heart was stirred in him, and he resolved
Himself to see the boy. He left in charge
The captain of the host and went with escort,
Drawn by his love, toward Zábulistán.
Then earth grew ebon, for Zál heard the news,
Bound on the drums and went with brave Mihráb
To welcome Sám. When Zál had dropped the ball
Shouts of departure rose on every side.

[1] Firdausí does not specify the measure. Mohl translates "huit *palmes*."

The mass of men stretched out from hill to hill,
With buckler after buckler red and yellow.
Then trumpeted the elephant and neighed
The Arab steed, five miles that din resounded.
They had one mighty elephant caparisoned
And furnished with a golden throne, whereon
The son of Zál sat with his cypress-form,
And what a neck and shoulders! crowned and girt,
With bow and shafts in hand, and shield before him.
Sám saw and ranked his troops upon each side. V. 228
Mihráb and Sám dismounted, and the elders
Fell prostrate, calling blessings down on Sám,
Whose face bloomed like a rose. With gladdened heart
He smiled to see the child so strongly built—
A lion's whelp upon an elephant.
He had them brought just as they were, surveyed
The boy thus crowned and throned, and blessed him, saying:—
"Live long and happily, thou matchless Lion."
Then Rustam kissed Sám's throne and, wonderful
To tell! saluted him in this new fashion:—
"Great paladin! rejoice. I am thine offshoot:
Be thou my root. The slave of Sám am I,
But am not one for banquet, dream, and ease,
I would have steed and saddle, mail and helm,
Despatch my compliments by bolt and arrow,
And by God's bidding trample on foes' heads.
My face is like to thine, so be my courage."
He lighted. Sám the chieftain grasped his hand
And kissed his head and eyes. Meanwhile the tymbals
And elephants were still. Then full of glee
And talk they all betook them to the palace V. 229
And revelled merrily on golden seats,
Thus resting for a month with harp and song.
Upon the throne there sat victorious Sám,

An eagle's feather drooping from his crown,
Flanked by his son and Rustam mace in hand,
On whom the grandsire gazed amazedly,
Invoked o'er him the name of God and thought:—
"With such a neck and arms, such thews and shoulders,
Such reed-like waist, such ample chest and breast,
Such thighs like those of mighty dromedaries,
Such lion's heart and lion-tiger might,
Such goodly features, neck, and Grace, he hath
No peer on earth," then said to Zál: "Although
Thou question back a hundred generations,
No one would know of babe delivered thus.
How could they do the thing successfully?
A thousand times may that Símurgh be blest
To whom God showed the way. Now let us revel
And put to flight with wine the soul of care,
For this world is a caravanserai,
Old guests depart and new ones take their places."
They put the wine about and grew bemused,
They drank the chieftain's health, then that of Zál.
Mihráb kept quaffing till he thought himself
The one man of the world. "I do not care
For Zál or Sám," he said, "Sháh, crown, or Grace.
I, Rustam, and my steed Shabdíz, and sword . . .
No cloud will dare to overshadow us.
I will revive the customs of Zahhák,
And make the dust beneath my feet pure musk.
V. 230 And now to find him arms."
He spake in jest,
And Zál and Sám were merry at his words.
Sám, when the month was o'er, one day at dawn
Returned to his own throne. He said to Zál:—
"My son! be just and loyal to the Sháhs,
Preferring wisdom over wealth, refraining
Thy hands from evil all thy years, and seeking

God's way from day to day. Know that in public
And private also 'tis the one thing needful
Because the world will not abide with any.
Observe my rede and walk in righteous ways.
My heart forebodeth that my time hath come."
He bade his children both farewell and said:—
"Forget not mine advice."
Then in the palace
The bells rang out, and on the elephants
The clarions blared, as with his gentle tongue
And kindly heart Sám journeyed toward the west.
His children bore him company three stages
With minds instructed and with tearful cheeks,
Then Sám went on while Zál marched to Sístán
And there in lion Rustam's company V. 231
Spent day and night in bout and revelry.

§ 31.

How Rustam slew the White Elephant

It came to pass that as they spent a day
In revel in a garden with their friends,
While harp-strings ran the gamut of sweet sounds
And all the chiefs were one in merriment,
They quaffed red wine from crystal cups until
Their heads were dazed, and then Zál bade his son:—
"My child of sun-like Grace! make ready robes
Of honour for thy warriors, and steeds
For those of high degree."
So Rustam gave
Gold, many Arab steeds caparisoned
And other gifts, and all went richer home.
Zál, as his wont was, sought the bower, while Rustam
Reeled to his chamber, laid him down and slept.

Shouts rose outside his door: "The chief's white elephant
Hath broken loose, and folk are in its danger!"
He heard, and urged by hardihood ran forth,
Snatched up Sám's mace and made toward the street.
The keepers of the gate opposed him, saying:—
"We fear the chieftain, 'tis a darksome night,
V. 232 The elephant is loose! Who can approve
Thy going forth?"
Wroth at the speaker's words
The matchless Rustam smote him on the nape:
His head rolled from him. Rustam turned toward
The others but they fled the paladin,
Who boldly went up to the gate and smashed
The chains and bolts with blows that well befitted
One of such noble name, went forth like wind
With shouldered mace excitedly, approached
The mighty beast and roared out like the sea.
He looked and saw a Mountain bellowing,
The ground beneath it like a boiling pot,
Saw his own nobles fleeing in dismay,
Like sheep that spy a wolf, roared like a lion
And went courageously against the beast,
Which seeing him charged at him like a mountain
And reared its trunk to strike, but Rustam dealt it
A mace-blow on the head; the mountain-form
Stooped; Mount Bístún shook to its core and tumbled
At one blow vile and strengthless. Thus it fell,
That bellowing elephant, while matchless Rustam
Went lightly to his place again and slept.
Now when the sun ascended from the east,
Bright as the cheeks of those who ravish hearts,
Zál heard of Rustam's deeds, how he had knocked
The dust out of the roaring elephant,
Had with a single mace-blow broken its neck

And cast its body to the ground. He cried:—
"Woe for that mighty elephant, which used
To bellow like the dark blue sea! How often
Hath that strong beast charged and o'erthrown a host, V. 233
Yet conquer howsoe'er it might in battle
My son hath bested it!"
He summoned Rustam,
Kissed him upon his head and hands and neck,
And said: "O lion's whelp! thy claws have grown
And thou art brave indeed! Youth as thou art
Thou hast no peer in stature, Grace, and valour;
So ere thy spreading fame shall thwart thine action
Take vengeance for the blood of Narímán.
Speed forth to Mount Sipand where thou wilt see
A cloud-capt stronghold four leagues square, whereover
The eagle hath not soared. 'Tis full of herbage
And water, gold and money, men and beasts.
Both trees and husbandmen abound there; none
Hath seen a place like that. The All-Provider
Hath furnished workmen of all sorts, and fruit-trees.
There is but one approach; 'tis through a gate
As high as heaven, and Narímán, who bore
The ball from all the chiefs, approached the stronghold
By order of Sháh Farídún and held
The road. The siege went on both night and day
With stratagems and spells above a year,
Until the foe hurled down a rock and earth
Possessed the paladin no more. The host
Retreated to the Sháh. When Sám was told:— V. 234
'The valiant Lion hath had fight enough,'
He wailed with growing grief, and having mourned
A week in anguish called the host together.
He marched against that hold with troops that covered
The waste and desert, and for months and years
Beleaguered it in vain. None issued forth

And none went in, but though the gate was shut
So long the foe lacked not a stalk of hay,
And Sám forewent his vengeance in despair.
Now is the time, my son! for artifice.
Go with a caravan in merry pin,
So that the watchmen may not find thee out,
And when thou occupiest Mount Sipand
Destroy those evil-doers, root and stem.
Since thou art yet unknown thou mayst succeed."
Then Rustam answered: "I will do thy bidding
And soon provide a physic for the ache."
Said Zál to him: "My prudent son! give ear.
Don camel-drivers' clothes and from the plain
Fetch camels to make up a caravan.
Disguise thyself and carry naught but salt,
For that is precious there. The folk know nothing
Of greater value. Though the castle towereth
Above its gate they have no salt to eat,
So all will run to greet thee when they see
Loads of it coming unexpectedly."

§ 32

How Rustam went to Mount Sipand

Then Rustam made him ready for the fray,
V. 235 Concealed his mace within a load of salt
And took some wise and valiant men withal.
He hid the arms within the camels' loads
And merry at the artifice sped on
To Mount Sipand. When he arrived the watchman
Saw him and hastened to the castellan.
"A caravan," he said, "with many drivers
Hath come, and if my lord doth ask their business,
To me it seemeth that they carry salt."

The chief sent one in haste to learn their loading,
Who went like dust to Rustam and inquired:—
"O master of the caravan! inform me
What merchandise is hidden in thy packs,
That I may go and tell the castellan
And take his orders."
Rustam answered him:—
"Go to the noble castellan and say:
'They carry salt.'"
The messenger returned
And said: "They carry salt alone, my lord!"
The chief rose, glad and smiling, bade his men
Unbar the gate and let the strangers in.
So battle-loving Rustam with his folk
Approached the gate whence people hurried out
To welcome him. He kissed the ground before
The chieftain, paid him many compliments,
Gave him much salt and spake fair words all round. V. 236
The chieftain said to Rustam: "Live for ever.
Be as the sun and as the shining moon.
I both accept and thank thee, worthy youth!"
Young Rustam entered the bázár and took
His caravan. The people flocked about him;
One gave a robe, another gold and silver,
And chaffered with him unsuspectingly.
At night brave Rustam and his warriors,
Armed for the fray, made for the castellan,
Who strove against them, but the Matchless one
Struck him a mace-blow on the head, and buried
His head and crown in dust. The tidings spread,
The people hastened to oppose the foe,
Night gloomed, blades flashed, and earth was like the ruby.
What with the mellay and the waves of blood
One would have said: "A sunset sky hath fallen."

The peerless Rustam with his lasso, mace,
And sword destroyed the gallant foe; and when
The sun unveiled itself, and held the world
From earth to Pleiades, of all the garrison
Not one remained alive that was not wounded.
The brave Íránians entered every nook
And slaughtered all they found. The matchless Rustam
Saw in the citadel where room was scant
A building of hard stone with iron doors,
And having with his mace-blows shattered them
V. 237 He entered and beheld a lofty vault
Full of dínárs. Astonied at the sight
He bit his lip; then to his chiefs he said:—
"Who ever would have thought of such a thing?
Good sooth no gold remaineth in the mines,
Or any pearl or jewel in the sea;
They lie out-spread within this treasury."

§ 33

How Rustam wrote a Letter announcing his Victory to Zál

Then Rustam wrote his sire a full report
Of what had passed: "First blessing be on Him,
Who is the Lord of serpent, ant, and sun,
Of Venus, Mars, and Sol, and heaven above.
May He bless Zál, the hero of Zábul,
The peerless paladin, the warriors' shelter,
The Íránians' stay, who setteth up on high
The flag of Káwa, who enthroneth Sháhs,
Who taketh thrones, him whose commandment reacheth
To sun and moon.
I came to Mount Sipand
By thy behest, and what a mount was there!
'Twas like the sky. When I had reached its foot

There came a greeting from the castellan,
And though I did according to his bidding
All things turned out as I would have them be.
At night-time with my famous men of war V. 238
I gave scant respite to the garrison,
Who have been slain or maimed or have escaped
By throwing all their fighting-gear away.
There are in sooth five hundred thousand loads
Of silver ingots and of standard gold.
Of raiment, tapestries, and movables
No one could tell the total though he counted
For days and months. What would the paladin?
May his steps prosper, may his mind be bright."
The messenger came like a blast and gave
The letter to the paladin. That chieftain
Read and exclaimed: "Praise to those noble ones."
Thou wouldst have said: "The news will make him young."
He wrote a full reply, first praising God
And then proceeding thus: "I have perused
That tale of triumph and poured out my soul
In joy. Such fights become thee well, my son!
Who though a boy hast played the man, illumed
The soul of Narímán and burned his foes.
To carry off the spoil I have sent camels
By thousands. Having read this mount with speed;
Thine absence grieveth me. Pack all the best,
Then fire the hold in vengeance."
Rustam read
The letter well content, then chose the choicest V. 239
Among the signet-rings, swords, casques, and belts,
As well as pearls and jewels fit for kings,
And figured pieces of brocade of Chín,
And sent them to his sire. The caravan
Set forth while he set fire to Mount Sipand,

Whose reek rose skyward, then he turned away
Light-hearted and went home like rushing wind.
When Zál had heard: "The world-illuming chieftain
Hath come," the folk prepared to welcome him
And decorated all the streets and quarters.
Arose the din of brazen clarions,
Of cymbals, trumpets, and of Indian bells
As eager Rustam fared toward Zál's palace
And coming bowed to earth before his mother,
Who blessed his face and kissed his chest and shoulders,
While Zál the chief embraced his son and bade
A scattering of largess to be made.

§ 34

The Letter of Zál to Sám

The famous chief sent the good news to Sám,
With many gifts to him and every one.
Whenas the letter came to Sám his cheeks
Bloomed like a rose in his exceeding joy.
He made a feast like jocund spring, bestowed
V. 240 Upon the messenger a robe and steed,
And talked of Rustam much. He wrote to Zál:—
"It is not wonderful that lions' whelps
Prove brave. A clever archimage may take
One ere it suck and bring it up with men,
Yet will he fear it when its teeth have grown,
For though it never saw its mother's dugs
'Twill throw back to the instincts of its sire.
No wonder then that Rustam should inherit
Zál's prowess, and that Lions seek his aid
In times of enterprise."
He sealed the letter
And gave it to the messenger, who went

To Zál therewith clad in his robe of honour.
The paladin rejoiced at what that youth
Of tender years had done, and all the world
From earth to Aries had hopes in him.
Now will I speak once more of Minúchihr,
The kindly Sháh, who when his end drew near
Gave to his son these counsels: lend thine ear.

§ 35

Minúchihr's last Counsels to his Son

Now Minúchihr, twice sixty years being sped,
Prepared to pass, because the astrologers
Informed him that the royal Grace would fade:—
"Thy time for passing to the other world V. 241
Hath come, God grant thee a good place with Him.
Consider what behoveth to be done
And let not death surprise thee, so make ready
For yielding up thy body to the clay."
When he had heard the wise men's words he changed
The fashion of his court, told the archmages
And chiefs the secrets of his heart, then gave
Naudar much counsel, saying thus: "This throne
Is but a jest, a breath, no lasting thing
To set the heart upon. In six score years
Now passed I girt my loins for stress and travail
And used to find much pleasure and content
In labour at the bidding of the Sháh.
I girt me with the Grace of Farídún,
And by his counsels every loss proved gain.
I took on Salm and on the brutal Túr[1]
Due vengeance for my grandsire—great Íraj—

[1] Reading with C.

I cleansed the world of its iniquities
And built me many a city, many a fortress;
Yet thou mightst say that I had never seen
The world, such am I! and my tale of years
Is blank. A tree whose leaves and fruit are bitter,
Should it not rather die than still live on?
Now after I have borne such pain and travail
I leave the throne of kingship and the treasure
To thee. As Farídún once gave to me,
So give I thee, the crown worn by the Sháhs.
V. 242 Hard are the enterprises that confront thee,
Thou must be sometimes wolf and sometimes sheep.
The offspring of Pashang will be thy bane,
And from Túrán will be thy straitening.
When any question shall arise, my son!
Seek aid from Zál and Sám and this new Tree
Now burgeoning, sprung from the root of Zál.
He will tread down Túrán and take upon him
To avenge thee."
While he spake he wept. Naudar
Bewailed him bitterly, and thus the Sháh,
Free from disease, unvexed by any pains,
Closed with a last cold sigh his eyes and faded.
So passed that famous Sháh, well graced in all,
Whose tale is left as his memorial.

VIII

NAUDAR

HE REIGNED FOR SEVEN YEARS

ARGUMENT

Naudar rules oppressively and the people revolt, but Sám succeeds in restoring order. Pashang, the king of Túrán, however, takes the opportunity of the death of Minúchihr to send an army to invade Írán under the command of his son Afrásiyáb. The Íránians are defeated, and Naudar, with many of his chiefs, is taken prisoner. Afrásiyáb kills Naudar and assumes the crown of Írán. Ighríras, the brother of Afrásiyáb, traitorously releases the Íránian prisoners, the Íránians under Káran and Zál obtain independent successes over the Túránians, and Afrásiyáb puts his brother Ighríras to death.

NOTE

In this reign the connection between the Sháhnáma and the Vedas temporarily seems to be severed, and we are unable to trace the names of the principal heroes further back than the Zandavasta, where most of them are to be found. The story of the reign is one of disaster for Írán; and the ancient feud, originating in the murder of Íraj, receives a new impetus through the execution of Ighríras by his brother Afrásiyáb. We are accordingly here introduced to the royal line of Túrán, of which we have heard nothing since the slaying of Túr by Minúchihr, and to its collateral branch, the heroic family of Wísa, which plays such an important part in this and future reigns, and corresponds on the Túránian side to the family of Sám on the Íránian.[1] The most important personality is that of Afrásiyáb—

[1] We learn from the Bundahish that Wísa and Pashang, Afrásiyáb's father, were brothers. WPT, i. 135.

the protagonist of the Túránian race, and the arch-enemy of Írán, through the reigns of successive Sháhs. He is the second in the trinity of evil spirits which, according to Zoroastrian belief, was created by Áhriman to vex the Íránian race, the first being Zahhák, and the third apparently Alexander the Great.[1] In the part of the extant Zandavasta known as the Zamyád Yast, which has been termed "an abridged Sháhnáma,"[2] Afrásiyáb, or Frangrasyan, as he is there called, is described as making several attempts to seize the kingly Glory or Grace which was the peculiar possession of the Sháhs, and which Zahhák himself sought in vain. Afrásiyáb, however, is recorded to have been once successful, not, as one might suppose, on the occasion in the present reign, but in that of Kai Káús, when the latter was taken prisoner by the king of Hámávarán.[3] In the Bundahish we find indications that Afrásiyáb was originally, like Zahhák, a water-stealing fiend; but he cannot be traced further back than the Zandavasta, and his depredations are confined to stealing away the rivers of Írán.[4] It is recognised in the Zandavasta that there are good men in all countries, in those of the elder sons of Farídún—Túrán and Rúm—as well as in that of his youngest-born—Írán.[5] We have an instance of this in the case of Ighríras—the brother of Afrásiyáb—who being originally a good spirit or demi-god is naturally supposed to favour the Íránians at the cost of his own countrymen, and is held up as a sort of martyr in the poem. In the Zandavasta the murder of Ighríras is looked upon as one of the motives for vengeance on Afrásiyáb,[6] while in the Bundahish we read: "When Frásíy*áv* made Mánúsk*íhar*, with the Íránians, captive in the mountain-range of Padashkhvár, *and* scattered ruin *and* want among them, Aghrér*ad* begged a favour of God, and he obtained the benefit that the army and champions of the Íránians were saved by him from that distress. Frásíy*áv* slew Aghrér*ad* for that fault."[7] The story in the Sháhnáma is told not of Minúchihr but of Naudar. The mountain-range is that to the south of the Caspian.

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[1] DZA, i. xlviii.

[2] *Id.* ii. 286.

[3] The reign of Kai Káús will appear in Vol. II. of this translation, where see Part II.

[4] WPT, i. 82, 84.

[5] DZA, ii. 226.

[6] DZA, ii. 114.

[7] WPT, i. 135.

§ 1

How Naudar succeeded to the Throne

The mourning over, Sháh Naudar exalted V. 243
His royal crown o'er Saturn and gave audience
Upon the throne of Minúchihr, bestowing
Drachms and dínárs upon the troops. The nobles
Did reverence with their faces in the dust,
And said: "We are the bondslaves of the Sháh,
Our eyes and hearts are full of love for thee."
But matters changed, the monarch proved unjust,
Laments went up on all sides, and men's heads
Were whitened by the Sháh. He blotted out
The customs of his sire and grew severe
To chief and archimage, spurned gracious ways
And was enslaved to pelf. The peasants rose, V. 244
Bold spirits claimed the realm, and tumults followed.
The unjust Sháh in terror wrote to Sám,
Then at Sagsár within Mázandarán,
And first invoked the Maker of the world,
The Lord of Venus, Mars, and Sol, who made
Both ant and elephant: "Naught is beyond
His power, or too minute for His regard.
Now may the Master of the sun and moon
Have mercy on the soul of Minúchihr,
The Sháh, through whom the glorious crown grew bright,
My predecessor on so great a throne;
And may as many blessings light on Sám,
The hero, as the clouds shed drops of rain;
May that redoubted glorious chief be sound
In heart and mind, and sorrowless in soul.
The paladin of earth should know, I ween,

All matters close or open. Minúchihr,
Before he closed his eyes, spake much of Sám,
And I too have a warm supporter in him,
Who—paladin and favourite—watched over
My father's realm, illuming throne and crown.
Now things have reached this pass that save thou takest
Thy vengeful mace the throne will be abolished."
Whenas the letter came Sám sighed. At cockcrow
The sound of tymbals rose within the court,
And from the Kargasárs he marched a host
Such that the green sea had been lost therein.
V. 245 The magnates in Írán went out to meet
The approaching troops, dismounted when near Sám,
And spake with him at large of all the actions
Done by Naudar, and how he was unjust
And left his father's footsteps recklessly.
"He hath made earth a desert," they protested,
"His fortune that was wakeful is asleep.
He walketh not in wisdom's way, the Grace
Of God hath left him. How would it be if Sám
With his shrewd mind were seated on the throne?
His fortune would regenerate the world,
The country and its throne would both be his.
We all would serve him and would pledge our lives
For fealty to him."
But Sám replied:—
"Would God approve? Naudar hath royal blood
And sitteth belted on the royal seat.
Could I lay hands upon the realm and crown?
Impossible! One should not hear such words.
Would any chief dare say this publicly?
If but a daughter of Sháh Minúchihr
Sat crowned upon the golden throne the dust
Would be my couch whence I should joy to gaze

Upon her. If Naudar hath left the way
Trod by his sire it hath not been for long,
The iron is not so rust-eaten yet V. 246
As to be hard to furbish. I will bring
The Grace back and make all desire his love.
The dust of Minúchihr shall be my throne,
The print of his son's horseshoe be my crown.
We will speak much with him, and by our counsel
Bring him good fortune. Ye! repent yourselves
Of what hath passed and tender fresh allegiance.
Unless Almighty God and Sháh Naudar
Shall pardon you, the Sháh's wrath is your portion
On earth, and fire your dwelling-place hereafter."
The chiefs repented and made fealty
Afresh; that prosperous-footed paladin
Made earth grow young throughout. When Sám had reached
The presence of the Sháh he kissed the ground.
The Sháh descended from the throne, embraced
His captain, seating him upon the throne
With greetings and unbounded compliments.
They feasted for a week with harp and wine, V. 247
All offered their excuses to Naudar,
And bare themselves as subjects. From each province
Came tax and tribute out of fear of Sám,
The swift of wrath. Naudar sat on the throne
In splendour and in undisturbed repose,
Till in the presence the chief paladin
Arose and asked permission to depart,
Threw wide the door of counsel to the Sháh
And told again the goodly histories
Of glorious Farídún and Sháh Húshang
And Minúchihr, the lustre of the throne,
And how they ruled earth justly and gave alms
And would not countenance iniquity.

Sám brought the monarch's wayward heart to reason,
Warmed the chiefs' hearts toward him, rendering
All justice and injustice at his hands
Acceptable, and having said his say
Both to the nobles and their sovereign
Went with a robe of honour from Naudar,
With crown and throne and signet-ring and slaves,
With steeds whose furniture was wrought of gold
And two gold goblets all a-brim with rubies.
V. 248 So matters stayed awhile, but heaven above
Revolved not o'er Naudar in peace and love.

§ 2

How Pashang heard of the Death of Minúchihr

News of Sháh Minúchihr's decease, and how
Things fared ill with Naudar, came to Túrán,
Whose folk held commune with the malcontents.
Pashang, the Turkman ruler, also heard
And contemplated war. He spake at large
About his sire Zádsham, talked big of Túr,
The throne of Minúchihr, his troops, his warriors,
His princes and his realm, then summoned all
The captains and grandees, as Ighríras,
Bármán, and Garsíwaz, that raging Lion
Kulbád, and generals like skilful Wísa,
The leader of the host. He also called
His son Afrásiyáb, who came in haste,
To whom he said concerning Salm and Túr :—
" We may not hide revenge beneath our skirt,
For all whose brains are level in their heads
Knowhow the Íránians have entreated us,
And always girded up their loins for ill.
Now is the time for action and revenge,

The time to wash the blood-tears from our cheeks.
What say ye now? What answer do ye make?
Advise me well."

His words inspired Afrásiyáb
With zeal, he bragged before his sire with loins V. 249
Girt up and vengeance in his heart: "To fight
With Lions is my work, I match myself
Against Naudar, and if Zádsham had warred
He had not left the world in such ill plight,
But had become the master of Írán.
Now whatsoe'er my grandsire left undone
Of vengeance-seeking, fight, and stratagem,
Is left for my sharp sword to execute.
The time of turmoil is the time for me."

Pashang grew keen for battle as he marked
The lofty stature of Afrásiyáb,
His elephantine might, his breast and arms
So lion-like, his shadow stretching miles,
His tongue a trenchant scimitar, his heart
An ocean and his hand a raining cloud.
Pashang commanded him to draw the sword
Of war, and lead an army to Írán.

A chief whose son is worthy of his name
May raise his own head to the orb of day,
For afterwards, when he hath passed away,
The son will keep alive the father's fame.
Afrásiyáb, high-wrought and full of vengeance,
Went forth and opening the treasury
Abundantly equipped his warriors;
But when all things were ready, Ighríras
The counsellor, heart-musing, sought his sire,
For thinking is the business of the heart,
And spake on this wise: "Mine experienced father,
The highest of the Turkman race in valour!
Although Írán hath now no Minúchihr, V. 250

Sám, son of Narímán, is general;
There are besides Kishwád, the brave Káran,
And other men of name among the folk.
Thou know'st what Salm and valiant Túr endured
Through that old wolf and sworder Minúchihr,
And yet Zádsham, my grandsire and our king,
Whose helmet touched the circle of the moon,
Ne'er spake a word of such a war, or read
The book of vengeance in the time of peace.
'Tis better for us to restrain ourselves,
Because this madness will confound the realm."

Pashang said: "That brave crocodile, Afrásiyáb,
Is as a lion on a hunting-day,
An elephant of war in battle-tide.
Call him a bastard that would not avenge
His grandsire's wrongs. Depart forthwith and counsel
Afrásiyáb in matters great and small.
So when the crumple-skirted clouds are gone,
When rains have drenched the wastes, when hill and plain
Give pasture for the steeds, when herbage riseth
Above our warriors' necks and all the world
Is green with corn, then camp upon the plain;
Midst rose and verdure bear a gladsome heart,
And lead the whole host onward to Ámul;
Tread Dahistán beneath the horses' hoofs,
Speed and incarnadine the streams with blood.
Thence Minúchihr departed to the war
To take revenge on Túr, thence did his powers
Advance against us like a murky cloud,
And by that token it is your turn now
To send the dust up from their nobles' heads.
The refuge of the army of Írán
Was Minúchihr, and he adorned the throne.
V 251 Why fear the Íránians now that he is gone?

They are not worth a pinch of dust. I fear not
Naudar, who is but young and raw. Káran
Will be your foe, and one more warrior—
Garshásp. May ye so treat them on the field
As to rejoice our fathers' souls, and burn
Our foemen's hearts."
The prince said: "Blood shall run
Along in streams ere my revenge is done."

§ 3

How Afrásiyáb came to the Land of Írán

When herbage made the plain like painted silk
The warriors of Túrán girt up their loins;
An army marched forth from Túrán and Chín
With mace-men from the Western lands—a host
Without a middle or an end; withal
The fortune of Naudar was young no longer.
As these approached Jíhún he heard the news
And drew forth to the plain toward Dahistán.
Káran, who loved the fray, was general,
Behind him came Naudar, the king of kings,
And all the world was filled with bruit of warfare.
The host approaching Dahistán concealed
The sun in dust. They pitched the camp-enclosure
Of Sháh Naudar before the hold. Brief respite V. 252
Was theirs, because Afrásiyáb, who then
Was in Irmán, sent thirty thousand warriors,
With Shamásás and Khazarwán as leaders,
Toward Zábul to take revenge on Zál,
For "Sám," they heard, "is dead, and Zál is busied
About the obsequies."
Afrásiyáb
Was pleased, perceived that fortune was awake,
Marched forth to Dahistán, and pitched against it.

Who knoweth how to reckon up his host?
Go count a thousand o'er four hundred times.
Thou wouldst have said: "The sands and uplands seethe,
The wilderness is naught but ants and locusts."
With Sháh Naudar were seven score thousand men,
And certès they were warlike cavaliers.
Afrásiyáb surveyed them and despatched
By night a cameleer to bear Pashang
A letter: "The expected good hath come,
Naudar's whole host is as a quarry to us,
And Sám is dead. I feared none in Írán
But him. His death alloweth our revenge.
Zál is engaged upon the obsequies
And hath not foot or feather for the fight.
By this time Shamásás is in Nímrúz
Enthroned and crowned. Prompt action well advised
Is best for us; occasions will not wait."
V. 253 The camel spread its wings and went apace
Toward Pashang, that king of sunlight grace.

§ 4

How Bármán and Kubád fought together and how Kubád was slain

The van appeared in front of Dahistán
As morn rose o'er the hills. The armies camped
Two leagues apart in warlike pomp. A Turkman,
By name Bármán—one who bade sleepers wake—
Approached, spied out the whole Íránian host
And viewed the camp-enclosure of Naudar,
Returned, reported to his chief, and said:—
"How long must all our prowess be concealed?

Now if the king permit I will engage
Our foemen like a lion. They shall see
My skill and know no hero but myself."
"But if in this," said prudent Ighríras,
"Some misadventure should befall Bármán,
Our marchlords would be cowed, our folk discouraged.
Nay, choose we rather one of small account,
For whom we need not bite our nails and lips."
Then lowered Afrásiyáb, ashamed to hear
Such words, and frowning spake thus to Bármán:—
"Put on thine armour and string up thy bow;
It will not come to using teeth and nails."
Bármán pricked forth and shouted to Káran:—
"In all the army of the famed Naudar
Hast thou a man who will contend with me?"
Káran looked round upon his mighty men
For one to volunteer, but none responded
Save valiant old Kubád. The prudent chief
Was grieved and troubled when his brother spake,
And wept for wrath, and there was room for it V. 254
With that great host, that, with so many young
To fight, one old man only volunteered.
Vexed to the heart about Kubád, Káran
Addressed him thus in presence of the chiefs:—
"At thine age thou shouldst not contend with one
Fresh, ardent, young, and daring, like Bármán,
Who hath a lion's heart, and head sun-high.
Thou art an honoured chieftain, and the centre
Of counsel to our Sháh. If thy white locks
Grow red with blood our bravest will despair."
Mark his reply in presence of the troops:—
"The rolling sky hath given me enough.
Know, brother! that the body is for death;
My head and neck were meant to wear a helm.

My heart hath been in anguish from the time
Of blesséd Minúchihr until this day.
No mortal passeth into heaven alive,
Man is death's quarry; one the scimitar
Destroyeth mid the mellay, and the vulture
And lion tear his corpse; another's life
Is ended on his bed. Beyond all question
We must depart, and if I quit the world
My tall and lusty brother is still safe.
Make me a royal charnel in your love,
Give musk, rose-water, camphor for my head,
My body to the place of endless sleep.
This do, live peacefully, and trust in God."

V. 255 This said, he grasped his spear and sallied forth
Like some fierce elephant. Bármán exclaimed:—
"Now hath fate put thy head within my reach.
Well hadst thou held aloof, for time itself
Would have thy life."
"The sky," Kubád replied,
"Gave me my share long since, and he whose hour
Hath come will have to die where'er he be:
That time is not ill-timed at any time."
He spake and urged his sable steed, denying
His ardent heart all rest. The two contended
From dawn till shadows lengthened. In the end
The victory was Bármán's, who as he rode
Hurled at Kubád a dart which struck his hip
And pierced his belt. That ancient lion-heart
Fell headlong and so passed. Then with cheeks flushed
With pride and satisfaction came Bármán
Before Afrásiyáb, who gave him gifts
Unprecedented as from king to liege.
Káran the battle-lover, when Kubád
Was slain, drew out his army and attacked.

The two hosts seemed as 'twere two seas of Chín,
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth shaketh."
Then Káran
The warrior rushed forth and Garsíwaz,
Huge as an elephant, confronted him.
The chargers neighed, the sun and shining moon
Were hidden by the dust-clouds of the host,
Swords diamond-bright and spear-heads steeped in gore V. 256
Shone mid the dust—dust like a rainy cloud
Wherethrough vermilion droppeth from the sun,
A cloud whose marrow thrilled with tymbal-din,
While liquid crimson drenched the falchions' souls.
Where'er Káran urged on his steed the steel
Flashed like Ázargashasp, and thou hadst said:—
"His Diamond sheddeth Coral." Nay, shed souls.
Afrásiyáb beheld and led his troops
Against Káran, and with insatiate hearts
They fought till night rose o'er the hills, and then
Káran withdrew the host to Dahistán.
With heart distracted by his brother's death
He came to the pavilion of Naudar,
Who on beholding him let tears down fall
From weary eyelids that had seen no sleep,
And said: "Since Sám the horseman died my soul
Hath not grieved thus. Live thou for evermore,
And sunlike be the spirit of Kubád.
A day of joy and then a day of grief,
Such is the wont and fashion of the world!
No fostering will rescue us from death;
Earth's only cradle is the sepulchre."
"I have resigned to death," Káran replied,
"My doughty body even from my birth.
'Twas Farídún that put my helmet on
That I might tread the earth to avenge Íraj,
And hitherto I have not loosed my girdle, V. 257

Nor laid aside the sword of steel. My brother—
That sage—is dead. I too shall die in harness;
But be of cheer, Afrásiyáb to-day
Was straitened, and he called up his reserves.
He saw me with mine ox-head mace and eagerly
Attacked me; eye to eye I fronted him.
He used some magic and my keen eyes lost
Their vision, night came on and all was dark,
Mine arm was tired of striking. Thou hadst said:—
'The End hath come.' The sky was overcast,
And we were forced to quit the battlefield
Because the troops were spent and it was dark."
The opposing hosts reposed a while, and when
The morrow dawned began the strife again.

§ 5

How Afrásiyáb fought with Naudar the second Time

The Íránians drew up for battle royal,
And what with thundering drum and blaring trumpet
Thou wouldst have said: "The earth is tottering."
Afrásiyáb, when he beheld, arrayed
His army opposite. "The sun hath set,"
Thou wouldst have said, earth was so dark with dust
Of horsemen. Mid the war-cries none could tell
A mountain from a plain, host grappled host
And blood ran like a river where Káran
V. 258 Sought for the fray, and where Afrásiyáb
Towered till Naudar approached and challenged him.
They strove together, spear confused with spear;
No serpents ever writhed together so;
How could kings battle thus?
They fought till night
And then Afrásiyáb was conqueror,

For more were stricken on the Íránian side
And still the foemen's battle was unbroken.
The Íránians turned their faces helplessly,
Abandoning their camp upon the waste.
Naudar was grieved that fortune should besmirch
His crown with dust, and when the tymbals ceased
He sent for Tús, who came with Gustaham,
All sighs and grief. "What pain is in my heart!"
He cried, recalling what his dying sire
Foretold: "An army from Túrán and Chín
Will come against Írán, grieve thee and bring
Disaster on thy troops."
"The words are now
Fulfilled," he said, "the arrogant have triumphed;
But who e'er read in tales of famous men
Of any that led forth such Turkman hosts?
Go ye to Párs to fetch the women-folk
And bear them through the passes to Alburz.
Take unperceived the road to Ispahán,
Else ye will break our soldiers' hearts, inflicting V. 59
A second wound. Some haply of the seed
Of Farídún may scape of all our troops.
I know not if I shall behold you more
Because to-night we make our last attempt.
Have scouts out night and day to watch events;
If they give evil tidings of the host
And say: 'The Glory of the king of kings
Is dimmed,' grieve not too much at heart; high heaven,
Since it had being, hath been ever thus.
Time bringeth this to dust while that enjoyeth
A royal crown. Death, whether violent
Or natural, is one—a throb then peace."
Naudar with tears of blood embraced his sons.
The royal pair proceeded to depart,
But he remained and with a heavy heart.

§ 6

How Naudar fought with Afrásiyáb the third Time

The host reposed two days, but when the sun
Rose on the third the Sháh was forced to fight.
Then like a foaming sea Afrásiyáb;
Dashed at the army of Naudar, the war-cry
Rose from the camp-enclosures mid the din
Of trump and Indian bell, the tymbals sounded
Before the Sháh's tent, and the warriors donned
Their iron helmets. None had thought of sleep
Within the camp of great Afrásiyáb;
V. 260 All night they had made ready, sharpening
The swords and double-headed darts. The earth
Was filled by armoured men with heavy maces.
Káran was marshal of the central host
Whereto the Sháh and he were towers of strength.
The Sháh's left wing the hero Talímán
Claimed for himself, and bold Shápúr the right.
From morning till the sun had left the dome,
Hills, plains, and wastes were indistinguishable;
Thou wouldst have said: "The sword's heart is enlarged
And earth is groaning underneath the steeds."
But while the javelins put the earth in shade
Defeat drew ever nearer to Naudar,
And as his fortunes sank the Turkmans' rose.
Upon the side where bold Shápúr was stationed
The ranks were broken and the troops dispersed,
But he maintained his post till he was slain.
The Íránians' fortune turned away its head,
And many another chieftain of the host
Was killed or wounded on the battlefield.

Now when the monarch and Káran perceived
The stars averse, they fled before the foe
To Dahistán, and there maintained themselves,
Cut off from all outside it. Night and day
They fought in the approaches. Passed a while.
Now since Naudar had refuged in the hold,
Where horsemen could not act, Afrásiyáb
Made ready and despatched a force by night, V. 261
Bethought him of the chieftain Kurúkhán,
Of Wísa's race, and bade him lead them forth
Along the desert-route to Párs, for there
The Íránians' homes were situate, and men
In trouble make for home. Káran heard this
And, moved with jealousy and grieved at heart,
Went in as 'twere a leopard to Naudar
And said: "Behold how base Afrásiyáb
Is dealing with the monarch of Írán!
He hath despatched a countless host of troops
Against our warriors' women. Should he get them
Disaster will befall our men of name
And we shall hide our faces in disgrace;
So Kurúkhán must be attacked forthwith,
And by the leave of the victorious Sháh
I will pursue with speed. Thou hast a river,
Provisions, and right zealous warriors.
Stay thou; be not concerned. Thou canst defend
Thyself with ease, so play the lion's part,
For monarchs should be brave."
Naudar replied :—
"Not so, the host hath none like thee to lead them.
'Twas for our homes that Tús and Gustaham
Went forth at beat of drum, and they will reach
The women in good time, such is their speed,
And take the needful steps."
The mighty men

Went to the sleeping-chamber of the Sháh
V. 262 Where presently they sat and called for wine
To purge their hearts of sorrow for a while.
When Sháh Naudar was well bemused he went
Behind his curtains, meditating vengeance,
And those brave chiefs—the Íránian cavaliers—
Departed in disorder from the court
To assemble at the quarters of Káran,
With eyes like winter-clouds; with much debate,
They all agreed: "We must set out for Párs
Forthwith or else our wives and little ones
Will all be broken-hearted slaves, all captured
Without a struggle, and who then will wield
The spear upon the plain or rest in peace?"
Now when these three—Shídúsh, Kishwád, Káran—
Had taken counsel for the whole emprise,
And half the night had passed, they made them ready
To sally forth. At dawn with heavy hearts
They reached what men in those days called "White Castle."[1]
There found they Guzhdaham the castellan
Together with his watchful warriors
Beleaguered by Bármán, who held the road
With troops and elephants and valiant chiefs,
And erst had wrung the heart of brave Káran
Who, eager to avenge his brother's blood,
Assumed his mail, prepared his men for action,
V. 263 And made for Párs. The brave Bármán was ware
And like a lion met him on the way.
Now when Káran saw mid the dust of fight
That man of blood he grappled with his foe,
All lion-like, not giving time for ruse,
But closed at once, invoking God for succour,
And pierced the Turkman's girdle with a javelin

[1] See introductory note to the previous reign.

Through mail and buckle. From his charger's back
Bármán fell headlong, the bright orb of day
Turned dark to him, his army's heart was broken,
His soldiers fled. Káran the chieftain then
Went on toward Párs with all his valiant men.

§ 7

How Naudar was taken by Afrásiyáb

Naudar, on hearing that Káran had gone,
Sped after him, all instant to escape
The evil day, lest heaven should trample him.
Afrásiyáb gat tidings that Naudar
Had sought the waste, collected troops, and followed
As 'twere a lion. Drawing near he found
The foemen ready for a running fight,
And as he marched mused how to take the head
That wore the crown. They fought all night till noonday,
And earth was dark with warriors' dust. At length
The Sháh was taken with twelve hundred nobles;
Thou wouldst have said: "Their place on earth is void."
Strive as they might to flee they were ensnared
Within the net of bale. Afrásiyáb V. 264
Put into bonds the captured host and Sháh.
Though thou shouldst sit in conclave with the sky
Yet will its revolutions grind thee down.
It giveth majesty and throne and crown,
It giveth too despair and misery.
It playeth friend and foe, and proffereth thee,
At times a kernel and at times a shell;
It is a conjurer that knoweth well
The sleights of every form of jugglery.

Although thy head may touch the clouds, it must
Have in the end its place amid the dust.
Afrásiyáb gave orders: "Search," he said,
"The caves, the hills, the waters, and the waste
That fierce Káran may not elude our troops."
But hearing that Káran had gone to save
The women he was furious. "Let Bármán,"
He bade, "speed forth and lion-like pursue
Káran, and bring him me a prisoner."
They told the monarch how Káran had served
Bármán, and brought him from his steed to dust;
Whereat Afrásiyáb was sorely grieved,
Food, rest, and sleep were bitterness to him,
And thus he spake to Wísa: "Let the death
Of this thy son steel thine own heart, for when
V. 265 The son of Káwa warreth leopards shrink
Before his spear. Go with a valiant host
Well furnished, and take vengeance for the lost." [1]

§ 8

How Wísa found his Son that had been slain

So Wísa, chief of the Túránian troops,
Departed with a noble, vengeful army,
And saw before he overtook Káran
His loved son lying slain, his banner rent,
His kettledrums o'erturned, his shroud of blood
Like tulips, and his face like sandarach;
While warriors and chieftains of Túrán
Were flung in numbers with him on the route.
The sight grieved Wísa so that thou hadst said:—
"His heart is rent by anguish," while his eyes
Wept scalding tears. He sped to catch Káran.

[1] Reading with P.

Thus like a torrent Wísa rushed along
And shed calamity throughout the world.
"He marcheth on in triumph gloriously,"
Such was the news that reached Káran, who sent
His Arab horsemen forward to Nímrúz
And followed them himself—the Sun of earth.
Now when from Párs he reached the waste, a dust-cloud
Appeared upon his left, and from the dust
The sable flag emerged, while from the van
The Turkman chief led on his host. Both armies
Arrayed their ranks; the warriors sought the fray.
Then from the centre Wísa shouted, saying:— V. 266
"Gone to the winds are crown and throne of greatness.
All from Kannúj up to Kábulistán,
Ghaznín too, and Zábulistán, are ours:
Our throne is graven on their palaces,
Where wilt thou refuge since the Sháh is taken?"
The other said: "Káran am I, and cast
My blanket on the waters.[1] Neither fear
Nor any idle rumour sent me forth.
I marched to fight thy son, and having taken
Revenge on him will take it now on thee,
And show thee how brave warriors fight."
They urged
Their chargers on, the clarions blared, dust rose
To left and right and moon and sky waxed dim.
Men grappled eagerly and showered blood.
Káran and Wísa met once in the mellay,
But Wísa turned away and fled the field V. 267
Where many a chief had fallen, yet Káran
Pursued not. Wísa, broken by misfortune,
Appeared before Afrásiyáb in pain
And weeping for his son that had been slain.

[1] *I.e.*, I court danger.

§ 9

How Shamásás and Khazarwán invaded Zábulistán

The expedition from Irmán went forth
Against Zábul, and Shamásás advanced
Toward Sístán in haste, while Khazarwán,
With thirty thousand famous men—good swordsmen—
Marched warily as far as the Hirmund
With glaive and mace, and fortune at its height.
Now Zál was at the burial-place erecting
In pain and grief a charnel for his father,
While brave Mihráb, whose mind was on the alert,
Was in the city, and despatched an envoy
To Shamásás. When this man reached the camp
He gave his master's greetings, saying thus:—
"For ever may the monarch of Túrán
Continue bright of heart and wear the crown.
Zahhák the Arab was mine ancestor,
And little do I love mine overlord,
But by alliance have I purchased life
Because I saw no other course. At present
I dwell within the palace, ruling all
Zábulistán. When Zál went whelmed with grief
To bury Sám my heart rejoiced, and I
Will never see his face again. I ask
The famous paladin for time to send
Afrásiyáb a prudent cameleer;
'Twill shorten matters if he know my mind.
V. 268 I will despatch him fitting gifts besides
The tribute, and if he saith 'Come,' will stand
Before his throne, resign to him my realm,
And joy in him. I will not vex the paladin,
But send him every kind of hoarded wealth."

Thus one hand held back Shamásás and one
Was stretched for help. He sent a messenger
And said: "Fly! Ply thy feathers and thy pinions,
Announce to Zál what thou hast seen, and say:—
'Pause not to rub thy head but come at once,
For of the Turkman host two paladins,
Like leopard's claws, advanced to fight with me;
But when they were approaching the Hirmund
I put their feet in fetters of dínárs.
Now if thou waitest to draw breath but once
Our foes will have their will.'"
The envoy came
To Zál, whose heart forthwith was all a-flame.

§ 10

How Zál came to help Mihráb

Zál hearing this had the gold trappings placed
Upon his steed, and faring night and day
Rejoined his troops. Whenas he saw Mihráb
Unmoved and full of knowledge and good counsel,
He thought: "What cause have we to fear this host,
For Khazarwán is but a pinch of dust
To me?"
Then to Mihráb: "O man of prudence,
Approved in all! now will I go by night V. 269
And lay a hand upon the foe for blood.
They shall be ware that I am back again,
Back with full heart and ready to avenge."
He marked the stations of the hostile chiefs,
Then drew his bow amain and shot three arrows
Of poplar, bough-like, arching through the sky
In three directions, and a clamour followed.

When it was day the soldiers gathered round
And marked the arrows, saying: "They are Zál's!
None other shooteth with such shafts as these."
Cried Shamásás: "O Khazarwán, thou Lion!
Hadst thou not been remiss in fight, not dallied
So with Mihráb, his army and his treasure,
Zál had not troubled thee."
Then Khazarwán:—
"He is but one, not Áhriman or iron.
Fear not, for I will grapple him anon."
Whenas the bright sun crossed the vault were heard
Drums on the plain, and in the city sounds
Of tymbals, clarions, gongs, and Indian bells.
Zál donned his mail apace, bestrode his charger
As swift as dust, while all his warriors mounted
With vengeful thoughts and frowns upon their brows.
He led the army forth upon the plain,
Equipped with elephants and camp-enclosures,
Where host encountered host and made the waste
As 'twere a darksome mountain with the dust.
Then Khazarwán with mace and buckler rushed
V. 270 To counter Zál, and smote his glittering breast
A blow that brake his famed cuirass. When Zál
Withdrew the warriors of Kábulistán
Retreated, but brave Zál armed him afresh.
His head was wroth, his blood was up, he brandished
His father's mace, while Khazarwán advanced
To challenge fight, a roaring Lion he,
Before the host. Zál had no sooner raised
The reek of fight than Khazarwán was on him
As quick as dust, while Zál in fury charged
His foe, and brandishing the ox-like mace
Smote Khazarwán upon the head and made
The ground as 'twere a leopard's back with blood;

Then flung him down, trod on him, passed along
And led the army forward to the plain,
Inviting Shamásás to come and fight,
But Shamásás came not; his blood was chilled.
Zál next descried Kulbád amid the dust
And shouldered his steel mace. Thereon Kulbád,
Observing Zál with mace and scimitar,
Endeavoured to escape his foeman's sight,
But Zál the cavalier strung up his bow
And lightly aimed at him a poplar arrow,
Struck full upon the girdle of Kulbád—
A girdle that was wrought of links of steel—
And pinned him to the pummel through the loins.
His troops' hearts burned for him while Shamásás
Despaired, his face paled when those chiefs were slain,
And he and all his army in full flight
Dispersed like sheep upon a stormy day,
Pressed by the soldiers of Zábulistán
And by Mihráb. The field was such with corpses
That thou hadst said: "The troops are cramped for room."
The Turkmans fled toward Afrásiyáb,
Their mail unfastened and their girdles snapped.
When Shamásás had reached the open plain V. 271
Káran, the son of Káwa, came in sight
Returning from pursuing Wísa's host,
Whose noblest he had slain so easily.
The armies met together, Shamásás
Met with Káran, the lover of the fray,
Who knowing his antagonists, and why
They were retreating from Zábulistán,
Bade trumpets sound and occupied the road.
Thus host encountered host. The paladin
Said to his troops: "Ye men of noble name
And ardent soul! go battle with your spears,

And may ye rob the foe of life."
With cries
Of maddened elephants they seized their spears,
Which made a reed-bed of the battlefield
And veiled the sun and moon. He lightly slew
Those Turkman troops and flung them on the track,
Fell on the wounded and the prisoners,
And sent their dust up to the shining sun,
While Shamásás with certain men of might
Fled and escaped the murky dust of fight.

§ 11

How Naudar was slain by Afrásiyáb

News of the death of those famed warriors
Came to the Turkman king; his heart was pained,
His cheeks were wet with his heart's blood. He said:—
"Naudar is in my prison, yet my friends
Are vilely slaughtered thus! What can I do
But shed his blood and give new cause for feud?"
He was enraged and cried: "Where is Naudar,
For Wísa calleth for revenge on him?
V. 272 Bring him," he told an executioner,
"That I may teach him war."
Naudar on hearing
Knew that his time was come. A clamorous throng
Departed, bound his arms firm as a rock,
And haled him bare both head and foot, fordone,
In shameful plight before the Crocodile.
Full of impatience great Afrásiyáb
Looked out for him, and seeing him approach
Reminded him of their ancestral feud,
Began with Salm and Túr, and washed away
From heart and eyes the reverence due to kings.

"Thou hast deserved whatever ill may come,"
He said, called fiercely for a scimitar,
Smote Sháh Naudar upon the neck and flung
In foul contempt the body in the dust.
Thus passed that Memory of Sháh Minúchihr
And left Írán bereft of throne and crown.
O man of knowledge shrewd exceedingly!
Don not the whole robe of thy greed, for throne
And crown have seen already many an one
Like thee, and thou mayst hear their history.
If thou hast gained the object of thy lust
And appetite hath ceased, so strong before,
Why shouldst thou ask this gloomy mournful dust
To make thee miserable any more?
They haled the other captives forth in shame,
And asking quarter. Virtuous Ighríras
Saw this and anxiously besought the king:—
"To slay so many noble warriors
And horsemen in cold blood—mere prisoners
Disarmed—is base, and base where we should look V. 273
For magnanimity. 'Twere worthier far
To spare their lives. Commit them bound to me
And I will prison them within a cavern,
Well guarded. Prison will restore their wits;
But shed not blood."
At Ighríras' request,
Perceiving his distress and earnestness,
The monarch spared their lives, and bade men take
The captives to Sarí in shameful bonds.
This done he marched from Dahistán to Rai,
Hid earth beneath his cavaliers and made
His chargers sweat, assumed the royal crown,
Bestowed a liberal largess of dínárs,
And played as monarch of Írán his part
With thoughts of war and vengeance in his heart.

§ 12

How Zál had Tidings of the Death of Naudar

This news reached Gustaham and Tús: "The Grace
Of kingship is obscured. They have struck off
Remorselessly with trenchant scimitar
The head that wore the crown, and all is over."
Men tore their faces and plucked out their hair,
A cry of mourning went up from Írán,
The great put dust and earth upon their heads,
All eyes wept tears of blood, all robes were rent.
Men turned their faces toward Zábul; their tongues
Spake of the Sháh, their souls yearned for the Sháh.
They went to Zál in mourning and in pain,
With blood-stained cheeks and dust upon their heads.
They cried: "O good and valiant Sháh Naudar!
O great just monarch, wearer of the crown,
V. 274 The guardian of Írán, the prop of nobles,
The head of kings and monarch of the world!
Thy head is seeking for a crown from dust
And earth is savouring of the blood of Sháhs.
The grasses on these fields and fells are hanging
Their heads in shame before the sun while we
Ask vengeance, mourning as it were a father,
In whom the stock of Farídún survived,
While earth was servant to his horse's shoe.
Now him and all that famous troop have they
Beheaded shamefully, despitefully;
But we will draw our swords of watered steel,
Will go to seek revenge and slay the foe:
So arm ye and revive the ancient feud.
The heaven is surely with us in our grief;
Its eyes rain tears of blood for very ruth.

Do ye too fill your eyes with tears like those
And strip your bodies of their dainty dress,
For in revenge for kings it is not well
That eyes should stint their tears or hearts their rage.'
The mournful multitude wept bitterly,
And burnt as though upon a raging fire,
While Zál rent all his raiment and sat down
With lamentable outcries in the dust.
He said: "My trenchant blade shall ne'er behold
Sheath till the Resurrection, my white charger
Shall be my throne, a spear mine only tree,
My place a stirrup and a dusky helm
The crown upon my head. There is no rest
Or slumber in this feud. No stream can match
The river of mine eyes. Oh! may the soul
Of great Naudar shine bright amid the mighty,
And may the Lord of earth bestow on you
A soul for Faith and duty. All of us
Are born to die; it is our lot whereto
We yield our necks."
Now when the captives heard:—
"The Iránians are upon the march for vengeance, V. 275
They send out cameleers on every side,
Have gathered countless troops and have renounced
Home and delights," they neither ate nor slept,
Such was their terror of Afrásiyáb.
A message from them came to Ighríras:—
"O man of mighty purpose, famous chief!
We are thy slaves in all, and by thy word
We live. Zál, as thou knowest, is at home
And acting with the monarch of Kábul.
Men like Barzín, Káran the warrior,
Kharrád, and that host-shatterer Kishwád,
Are men of might with hands that reach afar
And will not keep their clutches off Irán.

Now when these warriors wheel about us here
And brandish their sharp lances in his sight
The great Afrásiyáb will be enraged,
His heart will be inflamed against his captives,
And for his crown's sake he will bring to dust
The heads of all our blameless company.
If prudent Ighríras see fit to free us
We will disperse, praise him before the great
And make thanksgiving unto God for him."
Wise Ighríras replied: "Such skilleth not;
'Twere a foe's act; this human Áhriman
Would be incensed. I will not take other order
So that my brother may not turn upon me
In vengeance. If now Zál is keen for war
V. 276 And will advance to fight us at Sarí
I will deliver you to him, myself
Evacuate Ámul, forbear to fight
And bring to infamy my honoured head."
At this reply the nobles of Írán
Bent to the ground, and full of praise for him
Despatched a courier from Sarí with speed
To Zál, the son of Sám. The message ran:—
"Our God hath pitied us; wise Ighríras
Is now our friend. This is the pact between us:
If only two Íránian warriors
Shall come and offer fight that noble man,
Who walketh fortune's path, will quit Ámul
For Rai, and so some one of us may scape
The Dragon's clutch."
The courier reached Zábul
And made the glad news known to Zál, who called
The nobles, told them all, then said: "My friends,
Pards of the fray and winners of renown!
Who is the warrior of princely heart,
All black with courage, who will raise his neck

To touch the sun by undertaking this?"
Kishwád accepting struck his breast and said:—
"My hand is ready for an act so just."
The glorious Zál approved him, saying thus:—
"Live happily while months and years endure."
So from Zábul a troop of warriors
Intent on war set face toward Ámul.
When they had journeyed for a stage or two
The tidings came to Ighríras their friend,
Who blew the brazen trumpets, marched away V. 277
His troops and left the captives at Sarí.
When fortunate Kishwád arrived he found
The key to loose their bonds, provided steeds,
And from Ámul sped toward Zábul. When Zál
Was told: "Kishwád is coming back in triumph,"
He gave a largess to the mendicants,
The robe that he was wearing to the messenger,
And when Kishwád approached went out to meet him
In state, while weeping tears of joy for those
That had been captive in the Lion's clutch,
And then with dust upon his head wept tears
Of grief o'er famed Naudar. He took the loved ones
Within the city, gave them palaces,
And they became as when Naudar was king,
Possessed of crowns and thrones and diadems,
While Zál distributed his treasure-store
Until the army could desire no more.

§ 13

How Ighríras was slain by his Brother

When Ighríras went from Ámul to Rai
The king asked: "Wherefore hast thou acted thus?
Why hast thou mingled colocynth with honey?

Did I not bid thee: 'Slay these evil men;
It will be folly to imprison them?'
The warrior's head is not concerned with statecraft,
His fame is gained upon the battlefield;
Nor should the soldier tread the path of wisdom,
For wisdom never mingleth with revenge."
"Tears and compassion are not wholly needless,"
V. 278 He answered. "When thou hast the power to harm
Fear God and do it not, for crown and girdle
See many like thee but are no man's own
For ever."
Hearing this Afrásiyáb
Was silenced, for the one was full of fire,
The other wise; and how should wisdom fit
Dívs' heads? At his reply the chieftain raging,
Like elephant gone mad, drew forth his scimitar
And cut his brother down; that man of wisdom
And goodness passed away. Zál heard, and said:—
"Now shall the fortune of Afrásiyáb
Be darkened and his throne laid waste."
He blew
The trumpets, bound the tymbals on, arrayed
The army like the eye of chanticleer
And went toward Párs, in anger and revenge,
With troops that stretched from sea to sea, and darkened
The sun and moon with dust. Afrásiyáb,
On hearing Zál's design, marched forth his host
Toward Khár of Rai, drew up and took his stand.
The outposts were engaged both day and night;
Thou wouldst have said: "The world hath but one hue."
V. 279 Both hosts lost many a gallant man of mark.
'Twas thus until two sennights passed away,
And horse and foot were weary of the fray.

IX

ZAV, THE SON OF TAHMÁSP

HE REIGNED FIVE YEARS

ARGUMENT

After the execution of Naudar the throne remains for a while vacant, his sons Tús and Gustaham being considered unworthy to succeed. Zav, by the advice of Zál, is made Sháh. The war against Afrásiyáb continues, and the sufferings of both armies are aggravated by drought and consequent famine. Both sides become eager for peace, which is successfully negotiated, rain falls and Zav dies.

NOTE

Zav is described in the Sháhnáma as the son of Tahmásp and descended from the race of Farídún. In the Bundahish he is said to be the grandson of Naudar.[1] Zav is mentioned in the Zandavasta: "We worship the Fravashi (*i.e.* the immortal principle) of the holy Uzava, the son of Túmáspa."[2]

The passing over of Tús and Gustaham, the sons of Naudar, on the express ground of their unfitness, as not being possessed of the divine Grace of sovereignty, seems to find its justification in what we learn of their characters later on, at all events in the case of Tús, who is described as being hot-headed, revengeful, and a brave but unsuccessful general. Gustaham almost drops out of the poem and his place is taken by another hero of the same name, Gustaham the son of Gazhdaham—the castellan of the White Castle.

Tús is represented as always resentful of the slight put upon him; it induces him to oppose the accession of Kai Khusrau,

[1] WPT, i. 136.

[2] DZA, ii. 221.

and subsequently to make the unprovoked attack which results in the death of Farúd, that Sháh's brother.

In the terms of the treaty of peace between Zav and Afrásiyáb, which make the Jíhún the boundary between Írán and Túrán, we have the beginning of much geographical confusion in the Sháhnáma. The Aras was really meant.[1]

Drought and famine are frequent phenomena in the table-land of Írán.

§ 1

Zav is elected Sháh

One night as Zál sat speaking to his chiefs
And retinue about Afrásiyáb,
He said: "Although our paladins possess
Unsleeping fortune and enlightened minds
We need a Sháh, one of the royal race,
Skilled in the lore of eld. The host resembleth
A ship whereto the throne is wind and sail.
Oh! had but Tús and Gustaham the Grace. . . .
We lack not troops, but men, however noble,
That have not prudence, merit not the crown
And throne. We need a Sháh of puissant fortune,
A man of Grace through whose words wisdom shineth."
They found none of the seed of Farídún
But Zav, son of Tahmásp, with monarch's might
And hero's worth to grace the lofty throne.
Káran took with a gallant company
The joyful news to Zav: "In thee reviveth
V. 280 The crown of Farídún. Zál and the troops
Acclaim thee as the Sháh, O worthy one!"
On an auspicious day fair-fortuned Zav
Came and acceded to the lofty throne.
The mighty praised him, showering offerings;
Zál too did homage. Five years passed away

[1] See Introd. p. 71.

While Zav, a wise old man, sat on the throne
And judged and lavished till the world grew young.
He kept his soldiers back from evil ways,
Wrapped up himself in communings with God.
None dared to rob or slay, but after him
Men saw no lack of slaughter. There was a famine,
There was not dew or rain, the ground and herbs
Were parched, and bread was worth its weight in drachms.
The hosts had faced each other for five months,
Engaged in fierce encounters day by day
As fitteth chiefs and heroes, but that famine
Left them resourceless, wasted woof and warp,
And all confessed: "We are ourselves to blame,"
While wails and cries for help rose from both hosts.
At length an envoy came to Zav and said:—
"It is our own fault that this Wayside Inn
Affordeth naught but travail, care, and anguish.
Come let us share the earth and bless each other."
They gave up thoughts of war for famine pressed,
Agreed to drop the ancient feud, to share
The world according to just precedent[1] V. 281
And put all bygones out of memory.
The portion of Írán both near and far
'Twixt the Jíhún and marches of Túrán,
And so along toward Khutan and Chín,
Was given to the Turkmans as their kingdom,
While Zál abandoned all the nomad tribes.
Such was the sharing, such the Turkmans' bounds.
Then Zav led forth his host to go to Párs,
Old as he was he made earth young again;
While Zál departed for Zábulistán
And men received them both with open arms.
The roar of thunder filled the mountain-tops

[1] Probably referring to Faridún's settlement.

And earth recovered colour, scent, and beauty;
It was as 'twere a youthful bride, arrayed
In fountains, pleasances, and rivulets,
For fortune would be neither dark nor hard
If man had not the temper of a pard.

Zál called the chiefs and offered thanks to God,
Who had converted scarcity to plenty,
Men set up feasting-places everywhere
And banished feud and cursing from their hearts.
Thus for five years men knew not wrong or travail,
Yet verily the world grew sick of justice
And longed to be within the Lion's claws.

Now when he reached his sixth and eightieth year
That sun-like ruler's leaf began to sear,
The Íránians' fortune halted and the day
Of Zav, the righteous worldlord, passed away.

X

GARSHÁSP

HIS REIGN WAS NINE YEARS

ARGUMENT

On the death of Zav his son Garshásp succeeds to the throne, and Afrásiyáb seizes the opportunity to renew the war. Garshásp himself dies, and the Íránians being hard pressed appeal to Zál, who promises that his son Rustam shall come to their assistance. The poet then tells how Zál gave Sám's mace to Rustam, how the latter won his charger Rakhsh, and how Zál led the host against Afrásiyáb, and sent Rustam to fetch Kai Kubád from Mount Alburz to be Sháh in succession to Garshásp.

NOTE

In the summary in the Dínkard of the lost Kitradád Nask mention is made of Keresásp, who is placed between Kai Kubád and Kai Káús.[1] Keresásp appears there to be identical with the great hero, of whom an account has been given in the introductory note to Farídún, and if so apparently we must identify Garshásp, the tenth Sháh, with him as well. In the Sháhnáma, however, he is a mere *nominis umbra*, and Firdausí places him before Kai Kubád, the first Sháh of the Kaiánian dynasty, and makes him the son of the preceding Sháh Zav and the last of the Pishdádians. His personality had already, as we have seen in the note above referred to, become split up, and his reign is a blank so far as he is concerned.

The reader will note Rustam's reference to bishops acting as castellans.[2] In the wars between the Eastern Roman Empire and

[1] WPT, iv. 28. [2] p. 378.

the Sásánians, bishops and other ecclesiastics often took a very important part in the defence of besieged cities. Thus S. James, the Bishop of Edessa, took a leading part in several successful defences of Nisibis against Sapor II.[1] The fact of the church militant thus became impressed on the Eastern mind, and by an anachronism not uncommon with him, Firdausí transfers the usages of later times to earlier ages. The reader will note too the vision of the divine Grace of kingship which prepared Kai Kubád for his accession to the throne. It appeared again visibly in the shape of a ram before the accession of Ardshír Pápakán, the first Sháh of the Sásánian dynasty. When it quitted Yima it flew away in the shape of a bird.[2]

§ I

How Garshásp succeeded to the Throne and died, and how Afrásiyáb invaded Írán

V. 282 Zav had a puissant son by name Garshásp
Who sat upon the throne and donned the crown.
He ruled the world with majesty and Grace,
But tidings reached the Turkmans: "Zav hath gone
And left an empty throne."
Afrásiyáb
Sent up the war-cry, launched his ships and made
For Khár of Rai, but no one brought to him
A greeting from Pashang, whose head was filled
With hate, his heart with strife. All wild with grief
For Ighríras, of throne and crown he recked not,
Would never look upon Afrásiyáb
And let the shining sword grow dull with rust;
Albeit messengers were sent to him
Month after month, but he denied himself,
And said: "Whatever prince were on the throne
A friend like Ighríras would profit him,
But thou art one to shed a brother's blood
And flee before the nursling of a fowl.

[1] RSM, 155–164. [2] See introductory note to Jamshíd.

I sent thee forth to battle with the foe
And thou hast slain thy brother! I disown thee:
Thou shalt not look upon my face again."
Thus matters fared awhile; at length the tree
Of bale bore colocynth. 'Twas in the year
Wherein Garshásp the son of Zav departed
That evil showed itself, for tidings reached
All ears: "The throne of king of kings is void." V 283
There came a message to Afrásiyáb—
A stone flung by Pashang: "Cross the Jíhún
And tarry not until yon throne be filled."
Between Jíhún and plain of Sipanjáb
Afrásiyáb arrayed his armaments,
And thou hadst said: "Earth is a turning sky
Where Indian swords are shedding souls for rain."
So sped that splendid army forth to war.
"There is a claimant for the throne of might,"
Such tidings reached Írán. The throne was void,
The outlook dark. Anon the streets and quarters
Were all astir, cries rose from all the land
And men turned toward Zábul. The world was filled
With strife and folk spake bitterly to Zál:—
"Thy handling of the world hath been too lax.
Since thou hast held Sám's place as paladin
Our minds have not been joyful for a day.
When Zav departed and his son was Sháh
The hands of evil men were kept from ill.
Now seeing that Garshásp hath passed away
The world is Sháhless and the army chiefless.
A host hath crossed Jíhún, men cannot see
The sun for dust. If any shift thou knowest
Use it, because Afrásiyáb approacheth."
Zál answered: "Since I girt the belt of manhood
No rider like me hath bestridden steed, V. 284
None hath essayed to wield my sword and mace,

And horsemen showed their cruppers, not their reins,
When I appeared. I have fought night and day
And all my life have dreaded growing old.
At length my back is bent, I wield no more
A falchion of Kábul; yet God be praised
That from my root a glorious shoot hath sprung,
Whose head will reach the sky, and thou shalt see
It grow in valour, Rustam being now
A straight-stemmed Cypress whom the crown of greatness
Becometh well; but he must have a charger;
These Arab horses will not do for him.
I will seek out some elephantine steed,
Wherever there are herds, and say to Rustam:—
'Wilt thou consent, consent with all thy heart
To gird thy loins to execute revenge
Upon the offspring of Zádsham?'"

Írán
Was glad of heart and blithe of face as Zál
Sent camel-posts to every quarter, armed
His cavaliers, and said to Rustam thus:—
"Mine elephantine son, a whole head taller
Than other men! a work of toil is toward
To break thy slumbers, quiet, and delights.
Thou art not yet of age to fight, my son!
But what of that? This is no time for feasting.
Yet with the scent of milk upon thy lips,
And with thy heart all set on sports and pleasures,
How shall I send thee to the battlefield
Against the Lions and the mighty men?
Now for thine answer, and may majesty
And goodness be thy mates."

Then Rustam thus:—
"O noble prince, ambitious of renown!
V. 285 Good sooth thou hast forgotten how I showed

My courage publicly. The paladin
Hath surely heard of the fierce elephant,
And Mount Sipand, and I shall lose my fame
If now I tremble at Afrásiyáb.
This is the time for fight and not for flight.
The overthrow of Lions, the pursuit
Of war, renown, and battle, fashion heroes;
But 'tis not so with women; their concern
Is food and sleep."

Zál said: "O gallant youth,
The chief of princes and the warriors' stay!
My heart rejoiceth when I hear thee speak
Of that white elephant and Mount Sipand,
For truly since that fight was won with ease
Why fear I for thee now? Afrásiyáb
And his designs deprive me of my sleep,
Yet can I send thee to contend with one
Who is a gallant king and loveth battle?
Now is thy time for feasts and twanging harps,
For quaffing wine, and tales of warlike deeds;
'Tis not thy time for warfare, fame, and strife,
Or sending up the earth's dust to the moon."

He said: "I am not one for ease and revel.
'Twere base to pamper in luxuriousness
Such arms as these, and these long hands of mine.
What though the battlefield and fight be hard
God and victorious fortune are mine aids.
In battle thou shalt mark me how I go
Upon my ruddy charger through the blood,
And I will carry in my hand a cloud[1]
That is of watered hue but raineth gore,
While from the substance of it flasheth fire:
Its head shall bruise the brains of elephants,
My quiver when I clothe myself in mail

[1] *I.e.*, a mace of steel.

Shall shock the world, and all the fortresses
V. 286 That shall withstand mine iron mace's blows,
My breast and arms and neck, need never fear
An arbalist or catapult, or want
A bishop for their castellan. The rocks
Shall redden to their cores when I advance
My lance in fight. I need a steed hill-high
Caught by my lasso, up to weight like mine
In war, and not impatient of restraint.
I need a mace too like a mountain-crag,
For hosts will come against me from Túrán,
And when they come, though I should fight unaided,
Their blood shall rain upon the battlefield."
The paladin was moved, and thou hadst said,
"He will pour out his soul." He thus replied:—
"O tired of ease and revel! I will bring thee
The mace of Sám the cavalier, preserved
In memory of him, wherewith thou slewest
The elephant. Live ever, paladin!"
Zál ordered: "Bring the mace employed by Sám
In his campaign against Mázandarán
V. 287 To this famed paladin that he may take
Our foemen's breath away."
When Rustam saw it
He smiled with joy, called blessings down on Zál,
And said: "Thou art the chief of paladins;
But now, to bear my person, mace, and Grace,
I need a steed."
Zál mused at what he said
And oft invoked God's blessing on his head.

§ 2.

How Rustam caught Rakhsh

When Zál had gathered all his herds of horses,
And many from Kábul, the herdsmen drove them

Past Rustam, calling out the royal brands.
Whenever Rustam caught a steed he pressed
Its back until its belly reached the ground.
At length a herd of piebald steeds sped by,
Among them a grey mare short-legged and fleet,
With lion's chest and ears like two steel daggers,
Her breast and shoulder full and barrel fine.
Behind her came a colt as tall as she,
His buttocks and his breast as broad as hers,
Dark-eyed and tapering—a piebald bay
With belly hard and jet-black, hoofs of steel,
His whole form beautiful, and spotted roan
Like roses spread upon a ground of saffron.
He could discern the tiny emmet's foot
Upon black cloth at night two leagues away,
Had elephantine strength with camel's stature, V. 288
And pluck of lions bred on Mount Bístún.
Now Rustam gazing on the mare observed
That elephantine colt, and coiled his lasso
To catch it, but an ancient herdsman cried :—
"O chief! forbear to take another's charger."
"Whose?" Rustam asked. "The thighs have not been branded."
The herdsman answered: "Never mind his brand;
There are all kinds of rumours as to him.
We call him Rakhsh. He is a piebald bay,
As good as water and as bright as fire.
We call him 'Rustam's Rakhsh,' but know of none
To master him. He hath been fit to saddle
These three years. All the nobles have observed him,
But at the sight of noose and cavalier
The dam is like a lion. We cannot tell,
O chief of paladins! the reason why,
But as a prudent man forbear to fight
A Dragon such as this, for when the mare

Is in the fighting humour she will rend
The hearts of lions and the hides of pards."
The old man's sayings opened Rustam's eyes,
He cast his royal lasso and entangled
The piebald's head. Then like a furious elephant
The dam advanced as she would tear off Rustam's,
Who roared as savage lions roar and scared her,
Then with one buffet on the withers sent her
All trembling to the ground. She rose, sprang back,
Then turned and joined the herd, while mighty Rustam
Stood firm and drew the lasso tighter still,
And laid his hand upon the bay colt's back
V. 289 Which gave not; thou hadst said: "It is not felt."
The hero thought: "This is the mount for me;
Now I can act."
He mounted swift as wind,
The ruddy steed sped with him. He inquired:—
"What is this Dragon's price or who can tell it?"
"If thou art Rustam," said the herd, "redress
Írán upon his back. Its broad champaign
Shall be his price; then thou wilt right the world."
The hero's lips grew coral-like with smiles;
He said: "All good is God's."
Bent on revenge
He saddled ruddy Rakhsh, and giving him
The rein observed his courage, strength, and blood,
And that he could bear rider, arms, and mail.
The piebald grew so precious that at night
They burned wild rue to right and left of him
For fear of harm. "They practise sorcery,"
Thou wouldst have said. In fight no deer was swifter.
He was soft-mouthed, foam-scattering, light in hand,
With rounded buttocks, clever, and well paced.
The gallant rider and his new-found steed
Made Zál's heart joyful as the jocund spring.

He oped his treasury-door, gave out dínárs,
Nor recked of day or morrow. When he mounted
His elephant and dropped a ball the sound
Made by the cup was heard for miles around.

§ 3

How Zál led the Host against Afrásiyáb

There was a noise of drums and clarions,
Of mighty elephants and Indian gongs;
'Twas Resurrection in Zábulistán
And earth called loudly to the dead: "Arise!"
A host departed from Zábul like lions;
All hands were bathed in blood. In front came Rustam v. 290
As paladin, then veteran warriors.
The troops so spread o'er passes, plains, and dales
That ravens had not room to fly, while tymbals
Beat everywhere and tumult filled the world
As at that time of roses Zál led forth
The army from Zábul. Afrásiyáb
Thereat arose from banquet, rest, and slumber,
And marched toward Khár of Rai along the meadows
Among their streams and reeds. The Iránian host
Fared o'er the desert to the scene of war,
And when the armies were two leagues apart
Zál called the veterans, and thus harangued them:—
"Ye men of wisdom, well approven warriors!
We have arrayed us here an ample host
And with advantages; yet with no Sháh
Upon the throne our plants want rede, our toils
Lack purpose, and our troops a head. When Zav
Was on the throne new glory ever came,
And now we need a Sháh of royal seed

To gird him there. An archimage hath told me
Of valiant Kai Kubád of royal stature,
A future Sháh of Farídún's own line
In whom Grace, height, and lawful claims combine."

§ 4

How Rustam brought Kai Kubád from Mount Alburz

Then glorious Zál spake unto Rustam, saying:—
"Bestir thyself, take up thy mace, select
V. 291 The escort, go with speed to mount Alburz,
Do homage unto Kai Kubád, but stay not
With him, be back within two sennights, sleep not,
But late and early hurry on and tell him:—
'The soldiers long, and deck the throne, for thee.
We see none fitted for the royal crown,
O monarch, our defender! but thyself.'"
When Zál had spoken matchless Rustam swept
The ground with his eyelashes, joyfully
Got on the back of Rakhsh, and proudly rode
In quest of Kai Kubád. A Turkman outpost
Held the road strongly, but he charged the foe
As champion of the host with his brave troops,
Armed with the ox-head mace. He brandished it
And towering in his wrath struck out and raised
His battle-cry. The Turkmans' hearts all failed,
His arm laid many low. They strove with him,
But had to flee the battle in the end.
With broken hearts and tearful eyes they turned
Back to Afrásiyáb, and told him all.
He sorrowed at their case, called one Kulún,
A gallant Turkman warrior full of craft,
And said to him: "Choose horsemen from the host,

Go thou too to the palace of the king,
Be careful, prudent, and courageous,
And specially keep watch with diligence;
The Íránians are human Áhrimans V. 292
And fall on outposts unawares."
Kulún
Departed from the royal camp with guides
To bar the road against the noble foe,
With warriors and lusty elephants.
Now Rustam the elect and brave marched on
Toward the new Sháh, and when within a mile
Of mount Alburz perceived a splendid seat
With running water and abundant trees—
The home for youth. Upon a river's bank
Was set a throne besprinkled with rose-water
And purest musk. A young man like the moon
Was seated on the throne beneath the shade,
While many paladins with girded loins
Stood ranked as is the custom of the great,
And formed a court well fitted for a Sháh,
Like Paradise in form and hue. On seeing
The paladin approach they went to greet him
And said: "Pass not, O famous paladin!
We are the hosts and thou shalt be our guest.
Dismount that we may join in jollity,
And pledge thee, famous warrior! in wine."
But he replied: "Exalted, noble chiefs!
I must to mount Alburz upon affairs
Of moment, and not loiter in my task.
I have much work to do, the Íránian marches
Are full of foes, all households weep and mourn,
I must not revel while the throne is void."
They said: "If thou art hasting to Alburz
Be pleased to say of whom thou art in quest, V. 293
For we who revel here are cavaliers

From that blest land, and we will be thy guides
And make friends on the way."
He thus replied:—
"The Sháh is there, a holy man and noble.
His name is Kai Kubád, sprung from the seed
Of Farídún the just and prosperous.
Direct me to him if ye wot of him."
The leader said: "I wot of Kai Kubád.
If thou wilt enter and delight our hearts
I will direct thee and describe the man."
The peerless Rustam hearing this dismounted
Like wind, and hurried to the water's edge,
To where the folk were seated in the shade.
The youth sat down upon the throne of gold
And taking Rustam's hand within his own
Filled up and drained a goblet "To the Free!"
Then handed it to Rustam, saying thus:—
"Thou askest me, O famous warrior!
About Kubád, whence knowest thou his name?"
Said Rustam: "From the paladin I come
With joyful news. The chiefs have decked the throne
And called on Kai Kubád to be the Sháh.
My sire, the chief whom men call Zál, said thus:—
'Go with an escort unto mount Alburz,
Find valiant Kai Kubád and homage him,
V. 294 Yet tarry not, but say: "The warriors call thee
And have prepared the throne."' If thou hast tidings
Give them and speed him to the sovereign power."
The gallant stripling, smiling, answered: "I
Am Kai Kubád and sprung from Farídún,
I know my lineage from sire to sire."
When Rustam heard he bowed, rose from his seat
Of gold to do obeisance, and thus spake:—
"O ruler of the rulers of the world,
The shelter of the brave and stay of chiefs!

Now let Írán's throne wait upon thy will,
Great elephants be taken in thy toils.
Thy right seat is the throne of king of kings;
May Grace and glory be thine own! I bring
A greeting for the king of earth from Zál,
The chieftain and the valiant paladin.
If now the Sháh shall bid his slave to speak
I will acquit me of the chieftain's message."
Brave Kai Kubád rose from his seat, intent
Upon the speaker's words, while peerless Rustam
Discharged his embassage. With throbbing heart
The young prince said: "Bring me a cup of wine,"
And drank to Rustam's health, who likewise drained
A goblet to the monarch's life, and said:—
"Thou mindest me of glorious Farídún"
(For Rustam was rejoiced at seeing him),
"Not for an instant may the world lack thee,
The throne of kingship, or the royal crown."
The instruments struck up, great was the joy,
The grief was small, the ruddy wine went round
And flushed the youthful Sháh, who said to Rustam:— V. 295
"Mine ardent soul in sleep saw two white hawks
Approaching from Írán, and bringing with them
A crown bright as the sun. They came to me
With dainty and caressing airs and set it
Upon my head. I wakened full of hope
Because of that bright crown and those white hawks,
And made a court here such as kings would hold,
As thou perceivest, by the river-side.
Like those white hawks hath matchless Rustam come
With news that I shall wear the warriors' crown."
When Rustam heard thereof he said: "Thy dream
Had a prophetic source. Now let us rise
And journey to Írán and to the chiefs."
Then Kai Kubád rose swift as fire and mounted V. 296

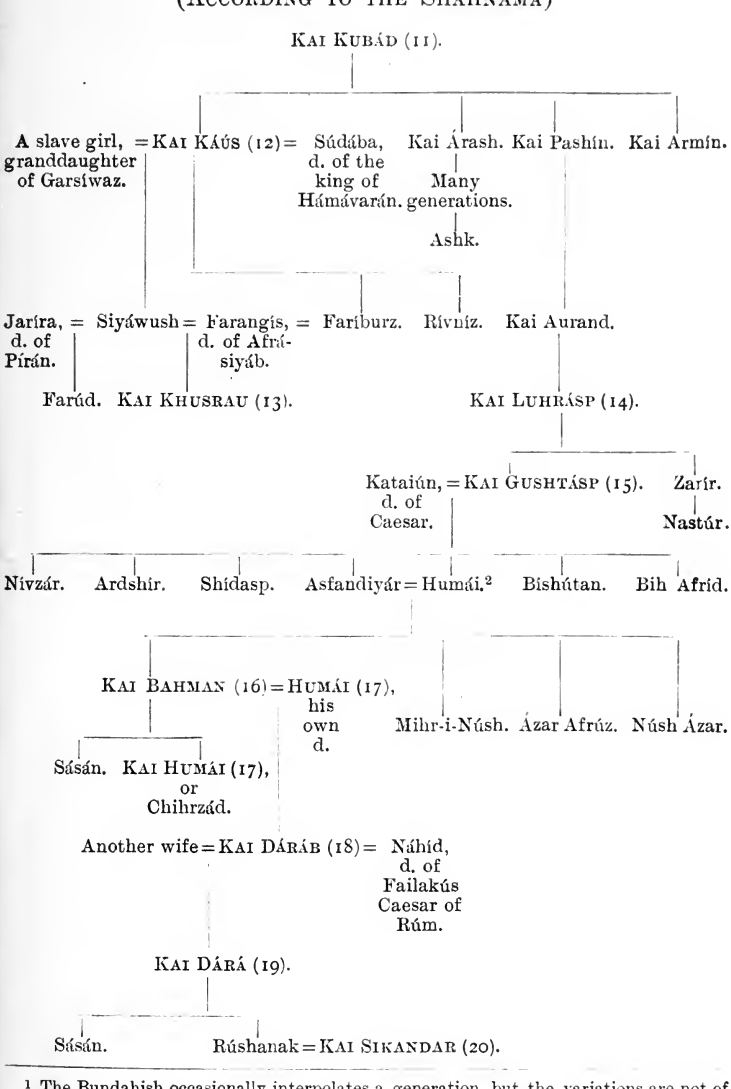
His steed, while Rustam girt his loins like wind
And journeyed proudly with him. Night and day
He travelled till he reached the Turkman outposts,
When bold Kulún, ware of his coming, marched
To meet and fight with him. The Sháh thereat
Was fain to put his battle in array,
But mighty Rustam said to him: "O Sháh!
'Tis not a fight for thee, they will not stand
Against my battleax and barded Rakhsh;
My heart and arm and mace are help enough;
I ask but God's protection. With a hand
Like mine and ruddy Rakhsh to carry me
Who will confront my mace and scimitar?"
He spake, spurred on and with a single blow
Threw one and hurled another at a third
Whose brains ran down his nostrils. Those strong hands
Unhorsed the foe and dashed them to the ground,
And in their fall brake heads and necks and backs.
Kulún beheld this dív escaped from bonds
With mace in hand and lasso at his saddle,
Charged him like wind and thrusting with his spear
Brake through some fastenings of his mail, but Rustam,
What while his foe was lost in wonderment,
Seized on the spear and wrenched it from Kulún,
Then roared like thunder from the mountain-tops,
Speared him and having raised him from his seat
Put down the spear's butt to the ground.[1] Kulún
Was like a spitted bird in sight of all.
The victor rode Rakhsh over him, and trod him
V. 297 To death. The Turkman horsemen turned to flee

[1] A similar story is told of a Lombard champion who with his great lance (contus) pierced and lifted from the saddle a Byzantine cavalier and bore him aloft wriggling on the weapon's point. (Oman, "A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages," p. 48.)

And left Kulún upon the field. His troops
Fled in dismay from Rustam. In an instant
Their fortune was o'erthrown. He passed the outposts
And hastened toward the hills. The paladin
Alighted at a place with grass and water
Till night had come and he had furnished robes
Fit for a paladin, a royal steed
And crown, then introduced the Sháh to Zál
Unnoticed. For a week they sat in conclave
But kept their movements secret. All agreed:—
"Kubád hath not his peer in all the world."
For seven days they revelled with Kubád,
Upon the eighth hung up the crown on high
And 'neath it decked the throne of ivory.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KAIÁNIANS[1]

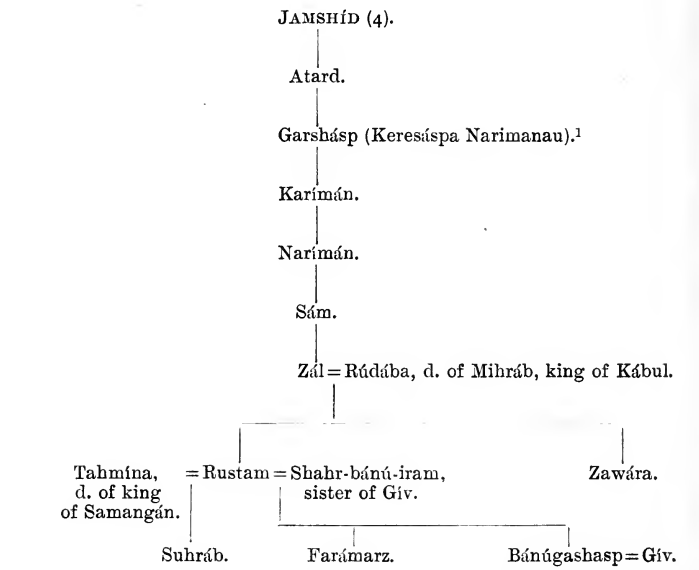
(According to the Sháhnáma)

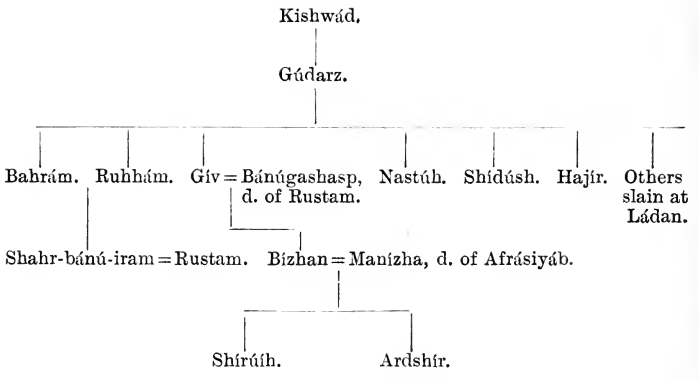


[1] The Bundahish occasionally interpolates a generation, but the variations are not of importance.

[2] Dakíkí is the authority for this marriage, and his account comes from older sources. Firdausí ignores the marriage, and his story is inconsistent with it.

GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF THE ÍRÁNIAN HEROES





[1] See vol. i. p. 172.

ARGUMENT

The poet continues and ends the story of the great feud between the descendants of Íraj and Túr. It is set out at large and ends with the triumph of the former.

He then tells of the coming of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), of his evangel, and of the religious wars that ensued, taking occasion in this connexion to rescue from oblivion the name of the poet Dakíkí.

He next narrates the extinction of the heroic race of Írán, and the circumstances that led to the conquests of Sikandar (Alexander the Great), with whose death the Kaiánian dynasty comes to an end.

NOTE

The word Kai, from which the adjective Kaiánian is derived, is found in the Vedas under the form of Kavi, where it means a seer or priest, and is especially applied to the priest who, by drinking the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant,[1] became inspired. In the Zandavasta Kai is used in two very different senses. In one of these, and particularly in the sacred hymns known as the Gáthas, it is synonymous with 'heretic,' in the other it forms a part of the names of a whole dynasty of Iránian heroes, who are known collectively as the Kávyans or Kaians. This two-fold use has been appealed to by Haug to support his theory that Zoroastrianism sprang from a schism among the Brahmins—a theory which has been much disputed.[2]

In the Sháhnáma also the word is used in two senses, as a general term for a great king or ruler, and as the distinctive title of the royal house of Kubád, the founder of the Kaiánian dynasty. This consists of ten Sháhs, who fall into two groups. The first contains three Sháhs—Kubád himself, his son Káús, and his great grandson

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[1] See vol. i. p. 8.

[2] For the above, see HEP, 289 *seq.*; DZA, i. xxx.

Khusrau. With the last of these the old epic cycle of the poem comes to an end, and up to this point the Kaiánian may be regarded as the complement of the Pishdádian dynasty. We are then introduced to the second group—the Sháhs of the house of Luhrásp—Luhrásp himself, Gushtásp, Bahman, Humái, Dáráb, Dárá, and Sikandar. Luhrásp, though of Kaian race, is represented as owing his accession to the throne to the nomination of Khusrau. With the accession of Luhrásp a new epic motive is introduced—a religious one—and the scene of action is shifted to Balkh. A very noticeable feature of this part of the poem is the prevalence of the termination 'asp,' the Persian word for 'horse,' in the names of the chief characters. Thus we have Luhrásp himself, his son Gushtásp, and the great minister Jámásp, while we know from other sources that the name of the father of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster) was Paurúshasp.[1] It is, however, still more remarkable to find that the reigning king of Túrán of the period is named Arjásp.[2] It looks as if the wars, admittedly religious, between Gushtásp and Arjásp were not waged between the Iránians and Túránians at all, though they came in time to be looked back upon as such, but were wars between the Iránians themselves due to the dissensions caused by the evangel of Zarduhsht.

Professor Duncker, who is concerned to antedate the Zandavasta as far as possible, is inclined to regard Luhrásp and Gushtásp as kings of an ancient dynasty flourishing at Balkh about 1000 B.C.[3] This of course is opposed to the old notion which sought to identify and to synchronise the chief characters and events of the Kaiánian dynasty with the accounts found in Greek authors of the so-called Median, and first Persian, empires.[4] So far as authentic history is concerned, however, it may be stated broadly that there is no common ground between the Sháhnáma and the works of ancient Greek writers till we reach the epoch of Sikandar—Alexander the Great—and even then the consensus is due to the fact that Firdausí derived his information from the modified version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes—a romantic legendary history of Alexander the Great—which he found ready to his hand among his other authorities. With regard to legend the case is different. The two main Greek versions of the youth of Cyrus the Great may be identified in the Sháhnáma, that of Herodotus in the account of the birth and bringing up of Kai Khusrau, and that of Ctesias in the account of

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[1] WPT, i. 141.

[2] An Arjásp appears among the chiefs of Afrásiyáb as early as the reign of Kai Káús. See p. 264.

[3] DHA, v. 48.

[4] See, for instance, MHP, i. 512 *seq.*

the early days of Ardshír Pápakán, the founder of the Sásánian dynasty.[1] This does not imply, as in the case of Sikandar, that Firdausí was in any way indebted to Greek sources, but that he and the Greek writers both availed themselves of the same cycle of legend at intervals many centuries apart. The same may be said of the charming story of Gushtásp in Rúm, which will appear in a later volume of this translation. A Greek version of the love-interest in this story is preserved for us in the *Deipnosophistæ* of Athenæus,[2] who quotes Chares of Mytilene—an official at the court of Alexander the Great—as his authority. Similarly in Humái, the seventeenth Sháh, we may have a reminiscence of Semiramis.

With regard to the Kaiánian dynasty in general we may say that in no other part of the poem is the epic subject-matter so abundant or of finer quality, nor in any part of this long dynasty superior to what is to be found in the reign of Kai Káús in this volume.

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[1] See NIN, 3; GKS, iii. 133; and for the accounts of Herodotus and Ctesias, DHA, v. 335 *seq.*

[2] Bk. xiii., ch. 35, ed. A. Meineke.

II
THE KAIAANIAN DYNASTY
XI
KAI KUBÁD
HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kai Kubád ascends the throne, and defeats the Túránians. Rustam in this his first campaign greatly distinguishes himself, and nearly takes Afrásiyáb prisoner. Pashang, the father of Afrásiyáb and ruler of Túrán, sues for peace and terms are arranged. Kai Kubád rewards Zál, Rustam, and others for their services, and makes Istakhr his capital. At the end of a long and glorious reign he dies after appointing his son Kai Káús as his successor.

NOTE

Kai Kubád is mentioned at least twice in the Zandavasta, where he appears under the name of Kaváta, or Kavi Kaváta, and the name of his son Kai Káús appears both there and in the Vedas. We have no accounts of Kai Kubád's ancestry in the poem beyond the vague statement that he was descended from Farídún.[1] He is described indeed as being brought by Rustam from Mount Alburz—the great mythical range which was supposed to encircle the earth. According to the Bundahish, Kai Kubád, like Dáráb after him, was exposed at birth and was found and adopted by Zav, the son of Tahmásp, the ninth Sháh.[2] The same authority describes him as reigning for fifteen years.[3]

§ 1

How Kai Kubád ascended the Throne and warred against Túrán

When Kai Kubád acceded to the throne, V. 298
And donned the jewelled crown, chiefs such as Zál,
Káran the warrior, Kishwád, Kharrád,

[1] For Kai Kubád's genealogy, see ZT, i. 407.
[2] WPT, i. 136. [3] *Id.* 150.

And valorous Barzín, flocked round and scattered
Gems over that new crown. They said: "O Sháh
Prepare to fight the Turkmans."
Hearing this
He went, reviewed his host, and on the morrow
Marched forth while shouts rose from his tent-enclosure.
Then Rustam armed and like an angry elephant
Sent up the dust, the troops arrayed their ranks,
And girt their loins for bloodshed. On one wing
Mihráb the master of Kábul was stationed,
Upon the other doughty Gustaham.
Káran the warrior was in the centre
With bold Kishwád the shatterer of hosts,
V. 299 While Rustam led the van with chiefs and heroes,
And Zál and Kai Kubád as their supports.
Here there was fire, there storm, while Káwa's standard
Amid the van made earth red, violet,
And yellow, and the seated world was like
A wave-tossed barque upon the sea of Chín.
The deserts and the dales were carpeted
By shields on shields, the falchions gleamed like lamps,
And all the world became a sea of pitch
Whereon a hundred thousand tapers burned.
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun hath lost its way
Frayed by the trumpets' blare and warriors' shouts!"
The hosts encountered, none knew van from rear.
V. 300 Káran o'erthrew ten warriors at each charge;
Now wheeling to the left, now to the right,
And seeking to wreak vengeance on all sides,
He made earth mountain-like with slain, astounding
The bravest Turkmans. Seeing Shamásás,
Who raised the war-cry lion-like, he charged,
Unsheathed his sword, smote his foe's head, and shouted:—
"The famed Káran am I," while Shamásás

Sank to the ground and perished in a breath.
The manner of this ancient sky is so,
At whiles like arrow and at whiles like bow!

§ 2

How Rustam fought with Afrásiyáb

When Rustam saw the doings of Káran,
And what war is, he went to Zál and said:—
"Tell me, O paladin of paladins!
Where doth malevolent Afrásiyáb V. 301
Stand in the fight? Describe his garb and banner.
I see a fluttering flag of violet.
Describe him that I may encounter him,
And so exalt my head among the chieftains.
To-day will I lay hold upon his girdle
And bring him hither haled upon his face."
Zál answered: "Hearken unto me, my son!
And run no risks to-day. He is a Dragon,
Whose breath is fire—a Cloud of bale in war.[1]
His flag and mail are black, his helm and brassards
Of iron flecked with gold, his plume is sable.
Avoid him, he is brave, his fortune sleepless."
"Be not concerned for me," was Rustam's answer.
"With God mine aid, heart, sword, and arm my ramparts, V. 302
Although he be a Dragon and a dív
Yet will I bring him by the belt, and thou
Shalt see me make him lifeless in the mellay,
So dealing that Pashang's troops shall bewail him."
That lion-youth—the shelter of the host—
Urged on his steed—Rakhsh of the brazen hoofs—
And shouting mid the trumpet-blare approached
The army of Túrán. Afrásiyáb
Beheld amazed the lad not fully grown
And asked: "Who is he, for I know him not—

[1] Cf. p. 53.

Yon Dragon broken loose in such a fashion?"
One said: "The son of Zál the son of Sám.
Dost thou not see him with his grandsire's mace?
He is a youth and eager for distinction."
Then like a vessel lifted by the waves
Afrásiyáb came forth while Rustam clipped
Rakhsh firmly, shouldering his massive mace,
But hung it to his saddle when he closed;
Then, having caught the monarch by the belt,
And dragged him from his poplar saddle, hoped
To carry him to Kai Kubád to tell
The story of this first day's fight; but through
The chieftain's weight and Rustam's grasp the girdle
Snapped, and the king came headlong to the ground,
Whereat his cavaliers surrounded him,
V. 303 While Rustam, when the chief escaped his clutch,
Gnawed at his hand's back in chagrin and cried:—
"Why did I take him not beneath the armpit
And simply make him handfast with his girdle?"
While from the elephants' backs the sound of bells
Rose, and the drums were heard for miles, men brought
The Sháh glad tidings: "Rustam," they reported,
"Brake through the centre of the Turkman host
And reached their general whose standard now
Hath disappeared, for Rustam seized his girdle
And flung him easily. The Turkmans yelled,
The valiant chiefs formed round their fallen king,
And bare him off. When vanquished thus he mounted
A fleet steed, fled toward the plain, and left
His host to save his life."
At this good news
The Sháh gave orders to his troops to fall
In mass like wind upon the enemy
And utterly o'erthrow them, fruit and root.
He rose himself like fire, and all his host
Heaved like a stormy sea. Zál and Mihráb,

The Lion, went forth keen and valorous;
The din of battle rose with falchion-flash
And thud of shaft, while heads grew dazed as axes V. 304
Crashed on gold helm and shield. Thou wouldst have said:—
"A cloud somewhence hath risen and is flecking
Yon oranges with magic cinnabar!"
Upon that day of battle sank and rose
Blood to the Fish and dust-clouds to the Moon,
While through the horse-hoofs on that spacious plain
One earth flew up to make another heaven![1]
Heroic Rustam in the fight that day
With dirk and lasso, mace and scimitar,
Clave into pieces, rent and brake and bound
The heads, breasts, feet, and hands of warriors,
For eight and fifty score of gallant chiefs
That Lion slaughtered in a single charge.
Zál gazing on his son illustrious
In Grace and might felt his heart throb with joy
To see such prowess, while the Turkmans pressed V. 305
Thus by the Magian host sought Dámaghán,
And thence fled toward Jíhún with stricken hearts,
With din and dudgeon, with their weapons broken
And girdles snapped—a trumpless, drumless mob.
The paladins that led the Íránian host
Turned from pursuing and drew near the Sháh,
All plunder-wearied, bringing band on band
Of captive Turkmans. When the troops were back
In camp again the mighty men approached
The monarch of the world, extolling him,
While Rustam also went before the Sháh,
Who seated him on one side of the throne
And famous Zál upon the other one.

[1] Literally, "The earth became six and the heaven eight." Firdausí is speaking of the Seven Climes, and of the heavens of the Seven Planets only, in this passage. Cf. vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

§ 3

How Afrásiyáb came to his Father

Upon the Turkman side Afrásiyáb
Fled to the river-bank and tarried there
For seven days, made ready on the eighth,
And gat him to his sire, all rage and grief;
His tongue was long although his hands were shortened.
"O famous king!" said he, "the fault was thine
In seeking war; the mighty men of old
Gave kings no precedent for breach of faith.
The offspring of Íraj polluteth still
The earth; that poison gnaweth yet; they come
Without a break to lord it o'er the world.
V. 306 Now 'tis Kubád; he hath assumed the crown
And flung the gates of vengeance wide again.
A cavalier of Sám's seed hath appeared,
By Zál named Rustam. Like a crocodile
Enraged he charged, and thou hadst said: "His breath
Will burn the world." He sped o'er hill and dale,
And plied mace, sword, and stirrup. All the air
Rang with his crashing mace. Life was not worth
A pinch of dust to me. He overthrew
Our host; none ever saw a sight so strange!
He spied my flag, put down his massive mace,
And snatched me from my poplar saddle so
That thou hadst said I was not one gnat's weight!
My girdle and my hauberk's fastening snapped,
I tumbled from his grasp beneath his feet.
No lion hath such strength, his feet touch earth,
His head is in the clouds. My cavaliers
Came up and saved me from that Mountain's clutches.
Thou know'st how kingly are my heart and hand,
My prowess, deeds, and enterprise, yet I
Am but a fibre in his grasp. Such worship

Perturbeth me. I saw a monstrous form
With lion's claws. My wits and senses fled.
Hill, cave, and level road were one to him
When his mad Elephant was put to speed.
A thousand maces in good sooth and more
Fell on his famous helm: thou wouldst have said:—
'They fashioned him of iron, brought him up
On stones and brass!' What is a sea or mountain, V 307
Fierce lion or mad elephant to him?
He pricketh forth as on a hunting-day,
And battle is his pastime. Had such might
Been Sám's no Turkman chief would now survive.
We can but sue for peace, because thy troops
Give way before him. I, an atheling,
Thine army's stay and thine own help in need,
Have no strength left to fight with him. Go to,
Take counsel and make peace. They gave the land,
Assigned of old by Farídún to Túr,
To me; and that apportionment was just.[1]
Revive not ancient feuds for, if we pass
The boundary and prosecute the war,
We shall but make the world strait to ourselves.
Thou know'st that sight is better than report,
For hearsay's belly is an empty one.
To fight Írán appeared a jest to thee,
The soldiers think that it hath gone too far.
Defer not to to-morrow this day's work;
Who knoweth what to-morrow may bring forth?
The roses blooming in the garden now
To-morrow thou wouldst pluck — when they are
worthless!
Mark what a wealth of golden equipage,
Of golden helmets and of golden shields,
How many Arab steeds with golden bits,
What Indian scimitars with golden scabbards,

[1] Referring to the partition in the days of Zav. Vol. i. p. 371.

And, over and above these, what famed chieftains
The blast hath vilely borne away—Kulbád,
And bold Bármán who hunted lions only,
And Kharzarwán, whom Zál hath dashed to pieces
And shown his massive mace's mastery,
V. 308 Fierce Shamásás—the shelter of the host—
Slain by Káran upon the battlefield,
And, in addition to these famous men,
Ten thousand others slaughtered in this war;
Worse still, observe the breach of fame and honour
That we can never bind. Though I have slain
One famous chief—illustrious Ighríras—
Let fortune's good and ill cry quits to-day,
And leave to-morrow for the reckoning;
Because the haughty chiefs have come to me,
The heroes, each one with his flag behind him,
And told me much that happened when I fled
In dudgeon and they followed. Now revive not
The memory of the past, but strive to make
A peace with Kai Kubád, lest hosts should come
Upon thee from four sides: on this side Rustam,
Whose prowess in the fight outshineth Sol;
On that Káran, whose eye ne'er saw defeat;
Upon the third Kishwád, the golden-helmed,
Who brought the captives from Ámul; Mihráb
Is on the fourth, next to the Sháh in place,
Lord of Kábul, a man of rede and Grace."

§ 4

How Pashang sued to Kai Kubád for Peace

The chieftain of Túrán, whose eyes were tearful,
Was all astonied at Afrâsiyáb
V. 309 That he should have bethought him of such words,
And that his soul had turned to what was just.
He chose a prudent envoy for Irán,

And wrote a letter worthy of the Artang,[1]
Decked with a hundred colours and designs:—
"In the name of Him who ruleth sun and moon,
And gave to us the faculty of praise!
May He accept the soul of Farídún,
From whom our race deriveth, warp and woof.
Hear now, O famous Kai Kubád! and I
Will utter words of kingly rede and right.
Túr brought calamity on blest Íraj
Upon a question touching crown and throne.
On this I say that feuds should not endure
For ever, and if vengeance for Íraj
Was owing it was wreaked by Minúchihr.
In that first settlement by Farídún, V. 310
Whose object was a just apportionment,
It will be well for us to acquiesce
And not transgress the precedents of kings.
From Turkestán to Má wara 'u'n-Nahr,
Whose boundary is Jíhún, that is our share.
When Farídún was Sháh Íraj ne'er saw it,
But had from him his blessing and Írán.
If we transgress these boundaries and fight
We make earth strait to us, the scimitars
Will clash, God will be wroth, and we shall lose
Our portion in both worlds. What Farídún
Divided unto Salm, Túr, and Íraj,
Let us retain and then be friends henceforth,
For earth itself is worth not so much bale.
The reverend head of Zál hath grown like snow,
The dust is crimson with our warriors' blood,
And yet a man will only own at last
His body's length of all that he possesseth!

[1] The name of the house where the famous Persian painter Máni, the founder of Manicheism, lived; also of a book written by him. Both house and book were elaborately adorned. Manichean MSS. in general were finely written and illuminated. Cf. Professor Bloomfield, "The Long-lost Mani Bible," in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* for March 1906.

We with a shroud for robe, a grave for home,
Shall own but some five cubits' length of earth;
All other wishes are but care and toil—
A cause for trouble in this Wayside Inn.
If Kai Kubád doth acquiesce in this,
And if that sage's head ensueth right,
Not one of us shall dream of the Jíhún,
But let the Íránians keep to their own side.
It may be that good will and intercourse
Will make both realms contented with this pact."
He sealed and sent this to the Íránian host
With jewels, crowns, gold thrones, fair damsels girt
V 311 With gold, Arabian steeds with golden trappings,
And Indian swords in silvern sheaths besides
The goodliest native wares. The envoy reached
Kubád and gave the letter and the message.
The king of kings read and replied at large:—
"We did not recommence; this war was caused
Directly by Afrásiyáb. The wrong
Began with Túr when he bereaved a prince
Such as Íraj was of the throne, and now
It is Afrásiyáb that crosseth over
The river to invade us. Thou hast heard
His treatment of Naudar, which filled wild beasts
With grief and pain, while on wise Ighríras
He did a deed unworthy of a man.
Yet if ye do repent I will renew
The compact, though I well could take revenge,
Armed as I am for all emergencies,
Thus leaving you the lands beyond the river,
And then perchance Afrásiyáb will rest."
The Sháh drew up the treaty and thus planted
A fresh tree in the garden of his greatness.
The envoy went and brought with leopard's speed
The letter to Pashang, who packed his baggage,
Marched back, and sent the dust-clouds heavenward.

He crossed Jíhún like wind, and news thereof
Reached Kai Kubád, who joyed because the foe
Withdrew without a fight, but Rustam said:—
"Look not, O Sháh! for peace in time of war. V. 312
Of old we ne'er had rest from their assaults;
My mace it was that made them thus to-day."
Thus to that noble chief spake Kai Kubád:—
"Naught have I seen more goodly than the right.
Pashang, a scion of blest Farídún,
Avoideth strife for he hath had enough,
And men of wisdom must not look upon him
Askance and with injustice. I will draw
A deed of gift on silk for thee of all
Between the Indus and Zábulistán.
Go take the throne and crown too of Nímrúz,
And lighten all the world. Upon this side
Give to Mihráb Kábul, and keep thy spearpoints
Sharp, for where'er a king is there is war
Though earth is broad enough."
The Sháh prepared
Gifts both for Rustam and for Zál whose head
He crowned, whose loins he girt, with gold, and gave
Half of the world to him. He kissed the ground.
Kubád the fortune-favoured further said:—
"Ne'er may the throne of majesty lack Zál,
One hair of whom outweigheth all the world;
He is the heirloom left us by the great."
They furnished forth five elephants with litters
Inlaid with turquoise brighter than Nile-water,
And spread upon the litters cloth of gold,
Besides unreckoned wealth, a royal robe
Of gold, a crown and girdle wrought of jewels
And turquoise, all of which he sent to Zál,
And said: "I fain had sent a greater gift,
And, should long life be mine, I will not leave V. 313
A wish of thine unsatisfied on earth."

Moreover on Káran the warrior,
Upon Kishwád, Kharrád, Barzín, Púlád,
He showered robes of honour as was fit,
And to the rest that seemed to him deserving
Gave money, shields, and swords, or, if he felt
Their merit greater still, a sword and belt.

§ 5

How Kai Kubád came to Istakhr of Párs

Thence Kai Kubád departed unto Párs
Where lay his treasury. The capital
Was then Istakhr—the glory of the Kaians.
With general assent he claimed the crown
And, mounted on the Kaian throne, held sway
By justice and the customs of the wise.
He thus addressed the chiefs: "The world is mine.
For elephants to war on gnats would make
A breach in Faith and justice. I will have
Naught but the right, for of God's anger cometh
Disaster. I have brought men peace by toil
And justice, and where earth and water are
My treasure is. Kings are my bodyguard;
I hold the citizen and soldier equal.
Make God your refuge, be ye wise and harmless,
Enjoy what ye possess, give liberally,
And thank me too for that which ye enjoy;
While they that want and cannot live by work
Shall pasture at my court."
He gathered troops,
And went about inspecting everywhere.
Thus for ten years he roved and ministered
All justice publicly and privily.
V. 314 He built him many cities—jocund seats—

Such as the hundred that surrounded Rai,
But when the hand of time had fallen upon him
He set his face toward Párs, sat on the throne
'Mid archimages, readers of the stars,
And sages, gathered too his warriors,
And gazing on them with a wounded heart
Talked of the mighty who had passed away.
His gifts and justice made the world rejoice,
And thus he reached his hundredth year in joy.
See if the world hath any king like him.
He had four sons, all men endowed with wisdom,
To keep his memory alive on earth:
The first was glorious Káús, the second
Was Kai Árash, the third was Kai Pashín,
The fourth was Kai Armín. They walked the world
In peace and great content.
A century passed,
A change of fortune came to crown and throne,
For when the Sháh perceived that death drew near,
And that the green leaf was about to wither,
He summoned noble Kai Káús, spake much
Of justice and of generosity,
And said: "I load the baggage to depart.
Perform mine obsequies and take the throne,
Though as for me I seem but just arrived
Rejoicing with my men from Mount Alburz!
Oh! what a thing is fortune thus to leave us
Without a warning! They that worship it
Lack wisdom. Thou, if thou art just and upright,
Wilt have thy guerdon in the other world,
While if thy passions shall ensnare thy wits
Thou wilt unsheathe a sword whose edge is keen—
A sword wherewith thou first wilt wound thyself
And afterward resign it to the foe:
Thy dwelling there will be a place of fire; V 315
Here bitterness of heart and grief be thine."

He spake these words and leaving this wide world
Exchanged his palace for a sepulchre:
It hath been this world's way time out of mind
To form of dust and scatter to the wind.

The tale of Kai Kubád is at an end;
To that of Kai Káús attention lend.

XII

KAI KÁÚS

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kai Káús on ascending the throne abandons the path of wisdom. He invades Mázandarán and is taken prisoner, but is rescued by Rustam. He wars against the king of Hámávarán, whose daughter he marries, and is taken prisoner again, this time by treachery. Rustam again rescues him. Afterward he attempts to fly to heaven, and is a third time saved by Rustam. The poet then tells two episodic stories, that of the Seven Warriors, and that of Suhráb, in both of which Rustam takes a leading part. We next learn what evil came of the marriage of Kai Káús with the daughter of the king of Hámávarán as exemplified in the tragic tale of Siyáwush. The poet then tells how Rustam took vengeance on Afrásiyáb for the execution of Siyáwush, how Gív went to Túrán in quest of Kai Khusrau, the son of Siyáwush, and how Kai Khusrau became joint Sháh with Kai Káús.

NOTE

Kai Káús appears in the Vedas as Kávya Ushaná, *i.e.* Ushaná the son of Kavi. He is said to have installed Agni (fire) as the high-priest of mankind, to have been the leader of the heavenly cows (the clouds) to pasturage, and to have wrought the iron club with which the god Indra slew the demon Vritra.[1]

The conception is therefore mythological. In the Zandavasta Kai Káús appears as Kavi Usa. "We sacrifice unto Verethraghna,[2] made by Ahura. . . . He carries the chariot of the lords; he carries the chariot of the lordly ones, the chariots of the sovereigns. He carried the chariot of Kavi Usa."[3] With the exception of this

[1] HEP, 278. [2] The raven. [3] DZA, ii. 240–2.

reference to his attempt to fly to heaven the remainder of his legend is lost so far as the Zandavasta itself is concerned, but a brief summary of what it once contained is extant in the Dínkard,[1] where we also find a strange story, of which no trace is to be found in the Sháhnáma, that Kai Káús possessed a wonderful ox, to whose judgment all disputes as to the frontier-line between Írán and Túrán were referred. As the decision was generally adverse to the Túránians they conceived the idea of beguiling Káús into slaying the ox, and succeeded in their purpose.[2] The story is characteristic of Kai Káús, who is represented in the poem as a very imperfect character, and easily led astray by passion, wrong-headedness, and evil counsels.

According to the genealogy of the Bundahish, Káús was the grandson of Kai Kubád.[3] Firdausí omits the intermediate generation.

The length of the reign is the same in both cases, and the Bundahish places Káús' attempt to reach the sky after he had been on the throne for seventy-five years,[4] and was, so to speak, at his meridian.

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[1] See p. 81.
[2] WPT, v. 31.
[3] *Id.* i. 136.
[4] *Id.* i. 150.

PART I

THE WAR WITH MÁZANDARÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet, after bewailing the death of Kai Kubád and that an evil shoot should spring from so good a root, tells how Kai Káús was seduced by a dív into invading Mázandarán, how he and all his host were taken captive and blinded by the White Dív, how Rustam went to their rescue, what adventures befell him by the way, and how he delivered the Sháh and host.

NOTE

Mázandarán, the ancient Hyrcania, lay, in the scheme of the old cosmogony, beyond the limits of the Central Clime[1] from which it was cut off by the great range of the Alburz Mountains, and extended from their northern scarp to the shores of the Caspian. Being abundantly supplied with moisture by the clouds which are stopped by, and the snow-fields which form upon, the Alburz Mountains, and the soil moreover being warmed by volcanic heat, the country is extremely fertile and the climate semi-tropical in character. "The lagunes of the coast are succeeded by marsh forests; higher up are fields of rice and plantations of sugar-cane, and beyond these fertile meadows, above which splendid forests of oaks, planes, and elms clothe the heights of Elburz. There is abundance of water fruits, figs and mulberries, olives and oranges, and the vigorous creepers of the vines run even to the summits of the trees."[2] On the other hand the climate is unhealthy and the air of the marshes blanches the inhabitants,[3] who for this reason were known to the Íránians as white dívs or demons. They are referred to in the Zandavasta and in the Pahlaví texts. "These are the words," we read in the former, with reference to a sacred formula which had to be recited several times, "that smite down

[1] Vol. i. p. 71. [2] DHA, v. 9. [3] *Id.* 10.

Angra Mainyu,[1] . . . these are the words that smite down the daévas of Mázana."[2]

In the Dínkard they seem to be described as inhabiting burrows and caves, and as being of filthy habits.[3] In the Sháhnáma we find this blanched race personified as the White Dív whom Rustam in his expedition into Mázandarán encounters in the cave.[4]

The approach to Mázandarán from Írán was difficult and romantic. Communication between western and eastern Írán depends on two routes which, branching from Tihrán, run to the south of, and parallel to, the Alburz range, an outlying spur of which they cross at two passes named the Firúzi Kuh and the Girduni Sirdarra respectively. At a distance of about seventy miles from Tihrán the route that runs through the Firúzi Kuh sends off a branch northward toward Mázandarán. This branch is a mere fissure, a few feet wide, in the mountain-wall, with a stream running at the bottom and water trickling down the precipitous sides, while here and there the fissure opens out into natural grottos and narrow valleys. This route, which abounds with game and is one of the favourite hunting-grounds of the Sháhs, is known as the Girduni Sawachi. Subsequently the pass of the Firúzi Kuh, six miles to the east of the mountain of that name, after traversing a tremendous gorge, sends off another branch to Mázandarán of a somewhat less romantic character than that of the Girduni Sawachi, and runs on to Astrábád, whence also Mázandarán may be reached.[5]

It was on emerging from the gloom of one of these passes that Rustam, we may imagine, reached the smiling land where he encountered Úlád, whose account of the extent of Mázandarán is of course enormously exaggerated.[6] The reader will see on looking at a map of Persia that Mázandarán is a region of quite moderate dimensions. Accuracy in matters geographical is not one of Firdausí's strong points.

With regard to Rustam's route we are told that by Zal's advice[7] he took the short road, not the long one taken by Kai Káús. Of course he would not take the latter, for Kai Káús, we may presume, started from Istakhr in Párs, to the west of the central desert, while Rustam started from Zábul, to the east of it. Firdausí merely means to indicate that Rustam did not follow the ordinary route, but cut as the crow flies across the waste. This route took, we are told, fourteen days, but Rustam ran a two days' journey into one

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[1] *i.e.* Áhriman.
[2] DZA, i. 141.
[3] WPT, iv. 216.
[4] § 12.
[5] MSJP, 363 *seq.* At p. 349 a map of these various routes is given.
[6] § 10, and cf. NIN, 49.
[7] § 5.

and made seven stages of it, in the course of each of which he met with an adventure. This expedition of his is accordingly known as the "Haft Khwán," the former word meaning seven and the latter the tray on which food is served up. His expedition therefore may be regarded as being a meal with seven courses. It has also been suggested that in the account of the seven buildings of Kai Káús, described in Part II. § 8 of this reign, we have the origin of the Haft Khwán of Rustam, and also of the similar expedition, which occurs much later in the poem, of Asfandiyár against Arjásp.[1]

We may add that in the Pahlaví the word used for these buildings is "mán." "Mán" comes from the same root as our word "mansion." In the Pahlaví form of the legend Rustam's expedition may have been known as the Haft Mán. In the translations from the Pahlaví legend, if such existed, this would naturally become "Haft Khán," the seven stopping-places or rest-houses, and this might easily be corrupted into the "Haft Khwán," the seven meals partaken of therein. Our text, however, has "Haft Khwán," which we translate "The Seven Courses," keeping the collocation of "The Seven Stages" for the corresponding expedition of Asfandiyár.

With regard to the opposition of the chiefs to the expedition of Kai Káús to Mázandarán as being unprecedented,[2] we can only suppose it to be a rhetorical flourish put into their mouths by the poet, who has already told us that Farídún and Minúchihr resided there.[3]

At the present day "Dív" is a title of honour among the nobles of that region.[4]

§ 1

The Prelude

If ever mortal injury befall
A fruitful tree, when it hath waxen tall,
Its leaf will fade, its root become unsound,
Its head begin to bend toward the ground;
And when the stem is snapped off at the root V. 316
'Twill yield its station to some fresh young shoot,

[1] WPT, iv. 220 and *note*.
[2] §§ 2 and 3.
[3] See vol. i. pp. 177, 230, 289.
[4] DHA, v. 262.

Resign thereto the garden's burgeoning
And all the lamp-like lustre of the spring;
But if, my friend! an evil shoot should rise,
Let not the good root suffer in thine eyes.
So when a father leaveth to his son
The world, and showeth him the course to run,
If he shall flout his father's regimen
Call him no longer son but alien.
He that abandoneth his teacher's path
Deserveth every evil that he hath.
This ancient hostelry is fashioned so
That thou canst not distinguish top from toe,
And he that wotteth of its evil way
Doth well to quit it with what speed he may.
Now let the stories which an ancient sage
Of prudent mind once told thy thoughts engage.[1]

§ 2

How Káús sat upon the Throne and was tempted to invade Mázandarán

Káús, succeeding to his father's throne
With all the world to serve him, looked upon
Heaped hoards of treasures manifold, and knew
That he had not his peer on earth for wealth
Of necklaces, of earrings, and of thrones,
High-crested Arab steeds, and golden crowns
Inlaid with emeralds.
Now as it chanced
He sat one day and quaffed delicious wine
Within a pleasure-palace arabesqued
With gold, and sat upon the golden throne,
Whose feet were crystal, master of the world,
Discussing many matters great and small
In converse with the Íránian paladins,

[1] There is no break here in the original.

And spake on this wise: "Who is Sháh but I,
Who worthy of the throne except myself?
I rule the world with none to say me nay."
The Sháh was thus conversing in his cups,
What while the captains wondered, when a dív
In minstrel's guise addressed the chamberlain.
"A native of Mázandarán am I,"
He said, "a noted bard. If I am worthy V. 317
To serve the Sháh let me approach his throne."
The chamberlain walked stately to the Sháh,
And said: "There is a minstrel at the gate—
A rare musician—and he hath his harp."
The Sháh bade fetch the man and set him down
Among the harpers. When his harp was tuned
He sang a ditty of Mázandarán:—

"Mázandarán, my native land!
May I forget it never,
And may its fields and fells abide
As populous as ever,

"For on its heights the hyacinth
And tulip bloom, while roses
Are ever blossoming anew
Within its garden-closes.

"The landscape is fulfilled with charm,
The atmosphere is pleasant,
And there is neither heat nor cold,
But spring is ever present.

"While in each garth the nightingale
Discourseth musically,
The deer are pacing daintily
In every mountain valley

"Throughout the year without a break
Intent upon their questing,
And evermore the hues are bright,
And scents exhale unresting.

"As for the rivers thou wouldst say :—
'They run rose-water surely!'
And at the fragrance breathing thence
The soul rejoiceth purely.

"There when the year is young and when
'Tis many a month the older,
A soil all tulips and a-bloom
Saluteth the beholder.

"The livelong year the streamlet's lips
Are laughing, and the foray
Of hawk and hunter after game
Will never fail of quarry.

"The provinces are gaily dight
Throughout their whole dimensions
With golden coins and with brocade,
And goodliest inventions;

"The handmaids there, as idols fair,
Are crowned with crowns all golden,
And there the loins of all the great
With belts of gold are holden.

"He that is not in that fair land
Of joy exceeding measure,
Delighting heart and mind alike,
What can he know of pleasure?"

The words roused Kai Káús, he was resolved
To lead a host against Mázandarán,
And thus harangued his warriors: "We have been
Too fond of feast. The brave but indolent
Will never tire of leisure and of home.
In fortune, Grace, and birth I pass Jamshíd, V 318
Zahhák, and Kai Kubád, and must surpass them
In prowess too: crowned heads should be ambitious."

The nobles heard and liked it not, turned pale,
And frowned, for no one wished to fight the dívs,
Though daring not to say so openly.
They sadly sighed—Tús, Gív, Gúdarz, Kishwád,
Kharrád, Gurgín, and brave Bahrám—and said:—
"Thy slaves are we and walk earth by thy will."

They met thereafter and spake out their minds:—
"What is this turn of fortune? If the Sháh
Remembereth the words said in his cups
'Twill be the ruin of us and of Írán,
And leave the land not even dust and water.
Jamshíd possessed the crown and finger-ring,
With dív and fowl and fay to do his will,
Yet spake he never of Mázandarán,
Or sought to fight against the valiant dívs,
While Farídún with all his craft and wisdom
Ne'er guided us to any such desire.
Had it been something fitting to achieve
By dint of manliness, name, gems, and treasure,
Then Minúchihr would have forestalled the matter
And not repressed his wishes. We must find
Some scheme to turn this evil from Írán."

Then Tús addressed the chiefs: "Brave veterans! V. 319
One remedy there is, and let us use it,
For 'tis not hard. Send we a cameleer
In haste to Zál the son of Sám to say:—
'If now thy head be soiled stay not to wash it,
But whet thy wits and let us see thy face.'

He may suggest some wise rede to the Sháh,
And tell him: 'Áhriman hath prompted this:
The portal of the dívs must ne'er be opened.'
Unless Zál can divert him from such talk
An end will come to all our ups and downs."
They talked it o'er, then sent a cameleer,
Who went apace toward Nímrúz, and when
He came to Zál—the lustre of the world—
Gave thus the nobles' message: "High-born son
Of Sám! a parlous case confronteth us,
And one that knowledge cannot estimate!
Bestir thyself or else we shall not have
Folk, field, or fell. A fancy hath arisen
Within the Sháh's heart. Áhriman hath turned him
From what is right, he is not satisfied
With travail such as his forefathers had,
But would have treasure where he hath not toiled,
And so must throne it in Mázandarán!
If thou delayest but to scratch thy head
He will have gone and given to the winds
Thy travail at the first with Kai Kubád,
V. 320 When thou with Rustam—that insatiate Lion—
Didst like a valiant lion gird thy loins;
All which is now as wind to Kai Káús,
Whose evil purposes distract his mind."
Zál when he heard grieved sorely that the leaves
Upon the royal tree were growing sere,
And said: "Káús, that man of headstrong will,
And not approved in this world's heat and cold,
Will hearken not to what the experienced say,
And sleepeth not upon his own designs.
If one who is the monarch of the world,
Whom years and sun and moon still circle o'er,
One at the thought of whose sword everywhere
Alike the nobles and the people tremble,
Will not obey me 'tis not wonderful;

Still it would grieve me if he hearkened not.
If I think of myself, not of the Sháh,
Then God, the Sháh, and all the warriors
Throughout Írán, will be displeased at me.
I will set out and offer mine advice;
If he accepteth it so much is gained;
If he is headstrong then our course is clear,
And Rustam now will be among the troops."
He mused all night, and when the sun displayed
Its crown on high begirt himself and journeyed,
Escorted by the chiefs, toward the Sháh.
Intelligence reached Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív,
Bahrám, Gurgín, and others: "Zál approacheth;
E'en now his royal standard is in sight."
The army-leaders, helmed as paladins,
Went forth to meet him and, when he was near,
Dismounted, went to him afoot, and blessed him.
Now, as they fared together to the Sháh,
Tús said to Zál: "So then, O noble chief!
Thou hast endured a journey of much toil,
And for the sake of us Íránian nobles V. 321
Hast chosen travail rather than repose!
We are devoted to thee: all of us
Feel honoured by thy crown and Grace."
Zál answered:
"The maxims of the men of old recur
To one whom years have worn, and later on
The course of heaven will justify his conduct.
We must not keep our counsel from the Sháh,
For he hath need thereof. If he rejecteth
The words of wisdom he will rue it sorely."
They cried: "We are agreed and will not hear
Another's words," then sought with one accord
The crown and throne and presence of their lord.

§ 3

How Zál gave Counsel to Káús

Attended by the lords with golden girdles
Zál led the way and, when he saw Káús
Rejoicing on the throne, approached the state
With downcast eyes and folded arms, then said:—
"O worldlord, who art mightiest of the mighty!
Throne hath not heard of, nor crown seen, thy peer,
Revolving heaven hath heard not of such fortune,
As thine. Be victor all thy years and glad
With heart all wisdom and with head all justice."
The famous Sháh received Zál graciously,
And, giving him a seat upon the throne,
V. 322 Asked him about the toil of that long journey,
About the chieftains and exalted Rustam.
He answered: "Ever live and conquer, Sháh!
We all are blithe and brightened by thy fortune,
And have our heads exalted by thy throne."
He then began his well considered speech:—
"O monarch of the world! thou well deservest
To have the throne and crown of mighty men.
Thou art the memory of Sháh Farídún,
And may this age ne'er rob thee of its love.
Now I have heard grave tidings that the Sháh
Hath some design upon Mázandarán.
V. 323 None of thy mighty predecessors thought
Of such a journey. Minúchihr in dying
Left here much wealth and many palaces;
So too did Zav, Naudar, and Kai Kubád
(How many a chief our memories recall
With massive maces and with mighty hosts!)
Yet they attempted not Mázandarán—
The home of warlock-dívs and under spells
Which none hath power to loose; so give not thou

Men, wealth, and money to the winds. That land
Can not be conquered by the scimitar,
Nor will it come to hand through wit and treasure.
To go or e'en to think of going thither
Is held unlucky! Thou must not invade
Those parts because no Sháh hath thought it good,
Who if less great than thou was still God's slave:
Then do not for the sake of covetise
Plant with the blood of such a famous head
A tree whose growth and fruit will prove a curse,
And break the precedents of former Sháhs."

Káús replied: "I need thy views hereon,
But nathless I in courage, Grace, and treasure
Surpass Jamshíd and Farídún as well
As Minúchihr and Kai Kubád, who never
Made mention of Mázandarán; my heart
And host are greater, and the world is 'neath
My trenchant scimitar. The world was won
When thou didst brandish thine; let it see ours.
I shall go thither, snare them all, maintaining
The credit of myself and scimitar,
Then tax them heavily or leave all dead,
So vile and wretched do I hold that crew V. 324
Of dívs and sorcerers, and thou wilt hear
That earth is void of them. Do thou and Rustam
Be regents of Írán and slumber not.
God is my Helper and the prince of dívs
My quarry. Since thou wilt not go with me
Bid me not dally on my throne."

Zál heard,
And baffled answered: "Thou art Sháh, and we
Are slaves who speak in love and, right or wrong,
Must move and breathe according to thy will.
I have relieved my heart as knowledge prompted.
No one can root out death, sew up the eyes
Of destiny with needles, or escape

From want by abstinence; in this regard
E'en princes must submit. May this bright world
Prove prosperous to thee, and mayst thou never
Have reason to recall these words of mine;
May thine own doings cause thee no remorse,
And be thy heart and Faith and rule resplendent."
Grieved that the Sháh would go Zál took his leave
In haste, and as he left the monarch's presence
Both sun and moon were darkened in his eyes.
The gallant nobles—Tús, Gúdarz, Bahrám,
And Gív—went with him, and Gív said to Zál:—
"May God direct us! Were Káús not Sháh
I should esteem him naught. May greed, death, want,
Be far from thee, foes' hands too short to reach thee.
V. 325 Where'er we be or go we hear thy praises,
And next to God trust thee who hath so toiled
For us."
Thus Gív. Zál, clasping to his heart
The warriors, made ready to depart.

§ 4

How Káús went to Mázandarán

Next day arose the tymbals' din, Gúdarz
And Tús led on the troops. Káús, their lustre,
Went with them, and upon a shaded spot
Set up his throne before Mount Ispurúz
For rest and sleep, while terror everywhere
Fell on the brutish dívs. Upon the heights
The Sháh spread cloth of gold; the air was fragrant
V. 326 With luscious wine; the favoured paladins
Sat by his throne and spent the night together.
At dawn they woke and entered helmed and armed
The presence of the Sháh, who ordered Gív:—
"Choose from the warriors two thousand men—

Mace-wielders—to prepare for us a path
Mázandarán-ward, slaughter young and old,
Fire all the settlements, turn day to night,
And slay the warlocks ere they are aware."
Gív girt him, left the portal of the Sháh,
Chose valiant warriors, and when he reached
Mázandarán showered scimitars and maces.
The women, children, and old men with staves,
Received no quarter from his sword; he sacked
And burned the cities, scattering bane instead
Of antidote. He lighted on a spot
Like Paradise, replete with all delights,
And in each street and quarter countless slaves
With necklaces and earrings, and still more
With casques and faces like the shining moon.
In every place were treasures stored away,
Here gold, there gems. The cattle were past count.
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis Paradise itself!"
They told Káús the news, who cried: "Live happy
The man who said: 'Mázandarán may match V. 327
With Paradise, and thou wouldst say that all
The country is an Idols' temple decked
With wreaths of roses and brocade of Chín;
Its Idols come from Paradise with faces
Bathed in pomegranate-blossoms by Rizwán.'" [1]
The Íránians plundered for one week, then ceased.
The monarch of Mázandarán received
The news; his heart was sad, his head was heavy.
There was a dív named Sanja at the court,
Who also grieved. The monarch said to him:—
"Go swift as Sol in yonder circling heaven
And tell the White Dív: 'There hath come a host
Out of Írán to spoil Mázandarán;
They have burnt up our cities and inflamed
Our vengeance by the outrage. Kai Káús,

[1] The door-keeper of Paradise.

With many young and brave, is in command
Without thy help we shall be all destroyed.'"
When Sanja heard the message he sped forth
And carried to the dív the king's appeal.
The White Dív answered: "Be not in despair,
For I am coming with a mighty host
To cut the Sháh's foot from Mázandarán."
He spake and like a mountain rose erect;
His head was level with the turning sky.

V. 328 Night came, a cloud involved the Íránian host,
The world grew like a negro's face for blackness,
And thou hadst said: "'Tis like a sea of pitch,
And all its light is lost."

V. 329 The White Dív spread
Above their heads a tent of pitchy smoke,
Air dusked and eyes were darkened. From the sky
He showered stones and darts, the Íránian troops
Dispersed abroad, and many sought Írán,
Heart-broken at the doings of Káús.
When day had come the ambitious Sháh and most
Among his warriors were blind. The nobles
Were wroth with him, his troops were prisoners,
His treasures pillaged, and his fortunes old.
It is a ne'er to be forgotten tale,
For at such wonders wonder's self must fail!
Now when the Sháh perceived his plight he said:—
"A prudent minister is more than treasure;
Alas that I accepted not the counsel
Of Zál the worldlord but misdoubted it."
When he had passed seven days in misery
And looked on no Íránian, on the eighth
The White Dív thundered at him: "O thou Sháh,
As fruitless as a willow! thou wouldst have
Complete supremacy and seize our pastures.
Like to a maddened elephant's appeared
Thy strength to thee, thou wouldst not yield to any!

Content not with the crown above thy throne
Thou hast perverted wisdom and hast wrought
Ill in Mázandarán, and slaughtered many
With massive mace. The news of mine achievements V. 330
Perchance ne'er reached thee, such a dullard thou
On thine imperial throne! Now thou hast gained
The fitting outcome of thy heart's desire."
Then of the valiant dívs that drew the sword
He chose twelve thousand. setting them to guard
The Íránians, and afflicted grievously
Those headstrong men. He gave them food enough
To keep them living on from day to day,
While all the treasures of the Sháh and host,
The jewelled diadems and turquoise thrones,
All that he saw, he gave o'er to Arzhang,
The general of Mázandarán, and said:—
"Convey these to the king and say to him:—
'Blame not thou Áhriman, for I have done
All that was needed, and have brought yon folk
To dust. The Sháh and paladins will never
Behold the bright sun or the moon again.
I have not threatened him with death, but taught him
The ups and downs of fortune. He will grow
Wise through his troubles, and hereafter none
Will listen to such schemes.'"
Thereat Arzhang V. 331
Went to the monarch of Mázandarán,
And took with him the treasure and the troops,
The captives and the steeds caparisoned.
This done the White Dív went back to his home
As glorious as the sun, while Kai Káús
Remained within Mázandarán to moan:—
"I was to blame for this and I alone."

§ 5

The Message of Kai Káús to Zál and Rustam

Káús with stricken heart sent to Zábul
To Zál a warrior, like a bird that flew
As swift as smoke, to say: "What hap is mine!
My crown and throne have tumbled to the dust,
And heaven hath given to the dívs my treasures
And troops arrayed like roses in the spring;
The wind, thou wouldst say, rose and bore them off.
Mine eyes are blinded and my fortunes shent,
My crown and throne are both o'erturned, and I
Lie stricken in the hand of Áhriman,
Who rendeth me asunder, soul from body.
I often sigh to think on thine advice,
Which I rejected foolishly, thus causing
The present trouble. If thou dost not act
Both capital and interest will be lost."
He went as 'twere a bird as swift as smoke
And told what he had seen and heard to Zál,
Whose skin burst at the tidings, but he kept
V. 332 The news from friend and foe. His shrewd heart showed him
The ills that fate would bring upon Káús.
"The scimitar is all but out," he said
To Rustam. "We must not thus feed at ease,
But make provision for the crown itself,
Because the Sháh is in the Dragon's breath:
How great a bale is on the Íránians!
Thy part is now to saddle Rakhsh and seek
For vengeance with the world-allotting sword.
God surely made thee for a time like this,
And thou art fitted for such labours now,
While I, I have outlived two centuries!
Thou wilt gain high renown and save the Sháh.

Thou must not in this Áhriman's own business
Take matters leisurely or stop to breathe,
But don the tiger-skin and purge thy head
Of sleep and thought. When one hath seen thy spear
Will any say: 'His soul will rest?' If thou
Shouldst fight the sea 'twould turn to blood, thy voice
Will level mountains. Thou must make Arzhang,
And the White Dív no less, despair of life.
As for the monarch of Mázandarán
Go smash him, neck and spine, with thy great mace."
He answered thus: "The way is long, and I . . . V. 333
How shall I go to take revenge?"

Said Zál:—

"There are two routes both hard and dangerous;
One, which is long, was taken by Káús;
The other is a journey of two weeks,
The haunt of dív and lion, and all gloom;
Its murk will maze thine eyes. Choose thou the short,
And see its wonders; God will be thine aid.
What though the way be hard? An end will come,
The feet of glorious Rakhsh will traverse it,
And I will pray all night to see again
Thy limbs and iron mace; while if the Worldlord
Shall let the dívs' grip close upon thy life,
Who can resist His word? 'Tis said and done.
None can abide here though he tarry long,
And one whose fame embraceth all the world
Is not cast down at going."

Rustam answered:—

"I gird me to obey although the great
Of yore walked not to Hell advisedly,
And only one grown sick of life will counter
The rending lion. Think of me as girt
And gone. I ask no help but God's, will give
Both soul and body for the Sháh, and break
The talismans that guard those sorcerers.

All that survive among the Íránians there
Will I bring back and gird their loins again;
I will not spare the White Dív nor Arzhang,
Nor Sanja nor Púlád son of Ghundí,
v. 334 Nor Bíd. I swear by God, the only God,
Not to quit Rakhsh till I have bound Arzhang
With yoke on neck and hands as firm as rocks,
Have trod the brains and headpiece of Púlád,
And shaken earth beneath the feet of Rakhsh."
He donned the tiger-skin and stretched himself,
While Zál called many blessings down on him,
Then mounted on his elephantine steed
With steadfast heart and mien. Rúdába came
With tearful cheeks while Zál too wept. She said:—
"So thou wilt go and leave me here to grieve!
How canst thou hope in God?"
He said: "Good mother!
I did not choose my course; 'tis destiny.
Do thou commit to God my soul and body."
The people came to him to say farewell;
Who knew if he should look on Rustam more?
Uncounted by the wise the moments fly,
And, when an evil day hath passed thee, try
To reckon that the world hath gained thereby.

THE SEVEN COURSES OF RUSTAM

§ 6

The First Course

How Rakhsh fought with a Lion

v. 335 Then Rustam, that world-brightening paladin,
Departed from his sire and, treating night
Like day, made two days' journey into one,

Not giving Rakhsh repose. Now as his body
Failed him through lack of food he reached a plain
Where onager abounded, and urged Rakhsh
To whom their speed was slow: no beast could 'scape
From Rustam's lasso and his horse's feet.
The Lion with his royal lasso caught
A gallant onager and, striking sparks
Upon an arrow's point, enkindled fire
With stubble, thorns, and wood to roast the beast.
He ate the flesh and threw away the bones;
The onager itself was pot and tray.
He spied some pasture, slipped off Rakhsh's bridle,
Turned him out loose upon the meadow-land,
And made himself a couch within a reed-bed;
He deemed it safe though it was fear's own door,
For in it was a lion's lair; no elephant
Dared pluck a reed. One watch passed, then the lion V. 336
Came boldly forth and was amazed to see
An elephantine form among the reeds,
Reposing with a charger standing by.
"First," said the lion, "I must maim the steed,
Then I can take the rider when I please."
He sprang at glossy Rakhsh, who raged like fire
And lashed out at the lion's head, then fixed
His sharp teeth in its back and dashed the beast
To pieces by a shift that made it shiftless.
When Rustam, deft of hand, awoke and saw
How earth was straitened to that ravening beast
He said: "O foolish Rakhsh! who bade thee fight
A lion? Hadst thou perished 'neath its claws
Could I have carried to Mázandarán
My helmet, tiger-skin, bow, lasso, sword,
And massive mace? Had my sweet sleep been broken
Thy combat with the lion had been brief."
He slept and rested long, and when the sun

Rose o'er the darksome hills awoke still drowsy;
He rubbed down Rakhsh and saddled him, then prayed
To God, the Author of all good, for aid.

§ 7

The Second Course

How Rustam found a Spring

He had to face all dizzy as he was
A desert waterless, a heat intense
That dried the birds to powder; plain and waste
v. 337 Were as they had been scorched thou wouldst have said.
Rakhsh was exhausted, while his rider's tongue
Failed through the heat and drought, and Rustam, clutching
A double-headed dart, went staggering
Like one bemused, and saw no means of safety.
He looked up saying: "O all-righteous Judge!
Thou bring'st all toil and hardship on my head,
And if Thou findest pleasure in my pains
My hoard is great indeed! I fare in hope
That God will grant deliverance to the Sháh,
And that the Ruler of the world will free
The Íránians from the clutches of the Dív,
Unscathed. They sinned, and Thou hast cast them out,
But still they are Thy slaves and worshippers."
v. 338 This said, that elephantine form became
Weak and distraught with thirst, and fell, with tongue
All cracked and blistered, on the burning dust.
Anon a well-fed ram passed by. The hero
On seeing thought: "Where is its watering-place?
In sooth God's mercy is extended to me!"
Then in the Worldlord's strength rose to his feet
And followed up the ram, with scimitar

In one hand while the other grasped the reins,
Until he saw the spring, for thither went
That stately ram. Then Rustam looked toward heaven,
And said: "O Judge, that ever speakest sooth!
The ram hath left no tracks about the spring!
It is no desert-sheep of flesh and blood!"

When hardships press on thee, in thy concern
Flee unto God, the Just One; they who turn
Away from Him have wisdom still to learn.

He blessed that ram and said: "Ne'er may mishap
From circling heaven be thine; green be thy pastures;
May cheetah never mark thee for its prey;
Snapped be the bow and dark the soul of him
That shooteth at thee who hath rescued Rustam,
Else were he thinking of his shroud; but now
He is not in the mighty dragon's maw
As yet, or in the clutches of the wolf,
So that the fragments of his clothes and limbs
Should serve as tokens to his enemies."

His praises offered he unsaddled Rakhsh, V. 339
Washed him, and made him shining as the sun.
Then Rustam much refreshed filled up his quiver
And as he hunted dropped an onager
Huge as an elephant, removed the entrails,
The hide, and feet, lit up a blazing fire,
And having washed the carcase roasted it.
This done he feasted, breaking up the bones,
And having quenched his thirst prepared for sleep.
He said to Rakhsh: "Fight not and make no friends.
If any foe approacheth run to me,
But venture not to counter dívs and lions."

He lay and slept, his lips in silence bound,
While Rakhsh till midnight grazed and strayed around.

§ 8

The Third Course

How Rustam fought with a Dragon

A dragon, such an one as, thou hadst said,
No elephant could 'scape, came from the waste.
Its haunt was there; no dív dared pass thereby.
It came, beheld the atheling asleep,
A charger near him, and was wroth. It thought:—
"What do I see? Who dareth to sleep here?"
Because no lions, dívs, or elephants
Dared pass that way or, if they did, escaped not
The clutches of that dragon fierce and fell.
V. 340 It turned on glossy Rakhsh, who ran to Rustam,
Stamped with his brazen hoofs upon the ground,
Whisked with his tail, and gave a thundering neigh.
The hero woke up furious, looked about
Upon the waste, perceived not that fell dragon,
And wreaked his wrath on Rakhsh for waking him.
He slept again, again the worm approached
Out of the gloom; Rakhsh ran to Rustam's couch,
And kicked the earth about and trampled it.
The sleeper woke, his cheeks rose-red with passion,
Looked round and, seeing nothing but the gloom,
Said to affectionate and watchful Rakhsh:—
"Thou canst not blink the darkness of the night
Yet wakest me again impatiently!
If thou disturb me more I will behead thee
With my sharp scimitar, and carry it,
My helmet, and my massive mace, on foot.
I said: 'Should any lion come at thee
I will encounter it.' I never said:—
'Rush on me in the night!' Leave me to slumber."
Then for the third time with his tiger-skin

Upon his breast he set himself to sleep.
The fearsome dragon roared and, thou hadst said,
Breathed fire. Rakhsh left the pasturage forthwith,
But dared not to approach the paladin.
Yet was his heart distracted by his fears
For Rustam with that dragon, till at length,
O'ermastered by affection for his lord,
He rushed swift as a blast to Rustam's side
And neighed and fretted, pawed upon the ground, V. 341
And stamped the earth to pieces with his hoofs.
Then Rustam, wakened from his sweet repose,
Raged at his docile steed; but now the Maker
Willed that the dragon should be seen, and Rustam,
Perceiving it amid the gloom, unsheathed
The keen sword at his girdle, thundered out
Like spring-clouds, and filled earth with battle-fire.
Then said he to the dragon: "Tell thy name;
Earth is no longer thine, yet must not I
Rob thy dark form of life, thy name untold."
The laidly dragon said: "None scapeth me.
For centuries this waste hath been my home,
And mine its firmament; no eagle dareth
To fly across or star to dream thereof."
It further said: "What is thy name, for she
Will have to weep that bare thee?"
"I am Rustam,"
He answered, "sprung from Zál—the son of Sám—
And Narímán withal. I am myself
A host, and trample earth 'neath dauntless Rakhsh.
Thou shalt behold my prowess; I will lay
Thy head in dust."
The dragon closed with him,
And in the end escaped not though it strove
So fiercely with the elephantine hero
That thou hadst said: "He will be worsted." Rakhsh,
On seeing the dragon's might, and how it battled

With Rustam, laid his ears back, joined the fray,
Bit at the dragon's shoulders, tore its hide
As though he were a lion, and amazed
The valiant paladin, who with keen glaive
Smote off the dragon's head; blood jetted out
In rivers, and its carcase hid the earth.
V. 342 The matchless one, astonied at the sight,
Invoked God's name and bathed him in the spring.
Desiring conquest through God's strength alone
He said: "O righteous Judge! me Thou hast given
Grace, might, and wisdom; what care I for lion,
Dív, elephant, parched desert, and blue sea?
When I am wroth all foes are one to me."

§ 9

The Fourth Course

How Rustam slew a Witch

Thanksgivings done, he harnessed rose-cheeked Rakhsh
And mounting came in time where sorcerers dwelt.
Long had he fared and saw, as Sol declined,
Trees, grass, and stream—the very spot for youth.
There was a spring as bright as pheasant's eyes;
Beside it were a golden bowl of wine,
A roasted mountain-sheep with bread thereon,
And salts and sweetmeats. Rustam thanked the Lord
For showing him a place so opportune,
Dismounted from his steed, took off the saddle,
And marvelled at the loaves and venison.
V. 343 It was a sorcerers' meal, and when he came
His voice had caused those dívs to disappear.
He sat beside the rushy stream and brimmed
A jewelled cup with wine. A dainty lute

Was there, the desert seemed a banquet-hall!
He took the lute up, touched the chords, and sang: —

"Oh! Rustam is an outcast still
And hath no days of pleasure,
Marked out for every kind of ill
And not a moment's leisure.

"Be where he may it is his plight
With battle still to harden,
And wilderness and mountain-height
Must serve him for a garden.

"His combatings are never done
And there is no assuagement,
'Tis dragon, dív, and desert—one
Perpetual engagement!

"The wine and cup, the scented rose,
And where lush herbage groweth—
Such things are not at his dispose,
These fortune ne'er bestoweth

"On one that with the crocodile
Is still engaged in fighting,
Save when the leopard for a while
The combat is inviting."

The sound of music reached a witch's ears;
She made her cheeks like spring, although by rights
She was not fair, and then, perfumed and decked,
Approached, saluted, and sat down by Rustam,
Who gave God thanks at finding in the desert
Board, wine, and lute, and youthful boon-companion.
Not knowing that she was a wicked witch,
An Áhriman beneath her bravery,

He handed her a cup of wine, invoking
The Giver of all good. Now when he named
The Lord of love her favour changed; no soul
Had she for gratitude, no tongue for praise,
But blackened at God's name, while Rustam, flinging
His lasso quicker than the wind, ensnared,
And questioned her: "What art thou? Speak and show
Thy proper favour."
In the lasso's coils
There was a fetid hag all guile and wrinkle,
V. 344 Calamitous. He clave her with his blade
And made the hearts of sorcerers afraid.

§ 10

The Fifth Course

How Rustam took Úlád captive

He journeyed on and reached a place of gloom
Black as a negro's face—a murky night
Without a star or moon; thou wouldst have said:—
"The sun is captive and the stars are lassoed!"
He gave the rein to Rakhsh and journeyed on,
Not seeing height or river for the murk.
When he emerged to light he saw a land,
Like painted silk with crops, where all was verdure
And streams; the old world had renewed its youth.
His clothes were drenched, and longing for repose
He took off his cuirass of tiger-skin,
And dripping helm, to dry them in the sun,
Unbridled Rakhsh, and loosed him in the corn,
Then, donning his dried helmet and his breastplate,
Couched like a mighty lion in the grass,
His shield his pillow and his hand on hilt.
The watchman of the plain, on seeing Rakhsh
Among the crops, ran up with hue and cry;
He smote the hero smartly with a stick

Upon the foot and said, as Rustam woke:—
"O Áhriman! why didst thou loose thy steed
Among the corn to eat where others toiled?"
But Rustam, angered, seized the watchman's ears,
Wrung them and tore them off without a word.
The watchman howled and snatched them up, aghast V. 345
At Rustam. Now Úlád was marchlord there—
A brave and famous youth. To him the watchman
Went howling with his hands and head all bloody,
And ears wrung off, and said: "There is a man,
Like the Black Dív, with leopard-skin cuirass
And iron casque, a perfect Áhriman,
Or else a dragon was asleep in mail!
I went to drive his charger from the corn,
He would not suffer it but, when he saw me,
Rose without word, wrung off mine ears, and slept!"
Úlád was hunting there with other nobles,
But when he heard the watchman and beheld
The Lion's track in his preserves, they rode
Toward where the peerless Rustam had been seen
To find out who he was, and why he served
The watchman of the plain so scurvily.
Úlád in threatening wise drew near to Rustam,
Who mounted Rakhsh, unsheathed his trenchant sword,
And then came onward like a thunder-cloud.
As they drew near they questioned one another.
"What is thy name?" Úlád cried. "Who art thou?
Who is thy king and who is backing thee?
Hence is no passage to the warrior-dívs.
Why didst thou tear away the watchman's ears
And turn thy charger loose among the corn?
Just so will I make black the world to thee
And lay thy helm in dust."
"My name is 'Cloud,'" [1] V. 346
Said Rustam, "if a cloud hath lion's claws,

[1] Cf. p. 13.

With swords and maces only for its fruit,
And beareth on its lap the heads of chieftains.
My real name, should it reach thine ears, would freeze
Thy life's breath and heart's blood. Hast thou not heard
Of the elephantine warrior's bow and lasso
In every company? We call the mothers
Of sons like thee shroud-stitchers, wailing-women.
Thou comest thus against me with a troop,
But only throwest walnuts on a dome."

With that he drew his baleful Crocodile,
Hung his coiled lasso to the saddle-bow,
Came like a lion midst a flock, and slew
All that were in his reach. At every stroke
He sheared two chieftains' heads and strewed the dust
Beneath his feet therewith. The troops thus broken
Fled in dismay, and wilderness and dale
Were filled with dust-clouds by the cavaliers
As they dispersed among the rocks and hollows.
Then Rustam, like an elephant enraged,
With sixty coils of lasso on his arm,
Pressed forward and, when Rakhsh was near Úlád,
Whose day was darkened, flung his mighty lasso,
Ensnared that chieftain's head, and then alighting
Made fast his hands, drave him in front and, mounting,
Said: "If thou speak the truth, and if I find
No guile at all in thee from first to last,
If thou wilt show me where the White Dív dwelleth,
Where dwell Púlád son of Ghundí and Bíd,
And where Káús, who caused these ills, is bound;
V. 347 If thou dost show this truly and art faithful,
Then from the monarch of Mázandarán
Will I take crown and throne and massive mace,
And thou shalt be the ruler of the land;
But if thy words prove guileful I will make
Thine eyes run blood."

Úlád said: "Be not wroth,

But gracious just for once and slay me not
In wantonness, and I will answer thee.
I will point out to thee the roads and city
Wherein Káús is bound, the White Dív's dwelling
And Bíd's, since thou hast reassured my heart.
Know, O thou worshipful dív-hearted hero!
That God hath fashioned thee of noble clay!
There are between us now and Kai Káús
A hundred leagues, O thou of gracious feet!
Whence to the White Dív is another hundred.
The road is bad and dangerous, through a gorge—
A fearful spot o'er which no eagle flieth.
There is a cavern midst two hundred others,
A wondrous place beyond all measurement,
And there twelve thousand warriors, all dívs,
Keep watch by night upon the mountain-top;
Their captain is Púlád son of Ghundí,
While Bíd and Sanja are their outpost-guards.
Of all the dívs the White Dív is the chief;
At him the mountains shake like willow-leaves,
And thou wilt find his person mountain-tall,
With shoulders, breast, and neck ten cords across.
E'en with such arms and hands and reins as thine,
And though thou brandishest sword, mace, and spear,
And hast such stature, mien, and energy,
It is not well for thee to fight that dív.
Beyond are rocks that no gazelle could pass,
And then a river two leagues wide and more V. 348
Watched by the dív in charge of all that province
With all the other dívs at his command.
Call it three hundred leagues to the Narmpái[1]
From the Buzgúsh,[2] whence to Mázandarán
The journey is a foul and tedious one.

[1] The name of a tribe, "the Bandy-legged"; ἰμαντόποδες, loripedes. Cf. p. 63.

[2] The name of a tribe, "the Goat-ears."

A myriad of cavaliers at least
Are posted through the realm, so armed and paid
That thou wilt not see one dissatisfied.
There are twelve hundred elephants of war;
The city cannot hold them. Thou'rt but one,
Though iron, and but gratest on the file
Of Áhriman."

The words made Rustam laugh.
"If thou wilt be my comrade," he replied,
"Thou shalt see how one elephantine chief
Will treat yon famous band by help of God,
The Prosperer, and fortune, arms, and prowess.
When they behold my might of breast and neck,
And mace-blows in the fight, their feet and hides
Will burst in sheer dismay, they will not know
A stirrup from a rein; so point me out
Káús, where'er he be, and step along."

This said, he sprang on Rakhsh, while swift as wind
Úlád ran on beside him, day or night
Not resting till he reached Mount Ispurúz,
Where dívs and warlocks had o'erthrown Káús.
At midnight shoutings went up from the plain,
The folk lit watch-fires in Mázandarán
And torches everywhere. Then matchless Rustam
Asked of Úlád: "What is the cause that fires
Are springing up to right and left of us?"

"It is the entrance to Mázandarán,"
Úlád replied. "The more part of each night
V. 349 None dareth sleep; the dív Arzhang is there
And he is ever noisy."

Rustam slept
Till dawn, then took Úlád, bound him in anguish
Against a tree, and, hanging on the saddle
The mace his grandsire had been wont to use,
Departed confident and full of ruse.

§ 11

The Sixth Course

How Rustam fought with the Dív Arzhang

In royal helm and sweat-soaked tiger-skin
He sought, intent on fight, the chief Arzhang,
And shouted in the middle of the host;
Thou wouldst have said: "The hills and seas are rent!"
The dív Arzhang came leaping from the camp
At that tremendous shout, while Rustam spurring
Came on him like Ázargashasp, grasped boldly
His head and ears and neck, then lion-like
Tore off his head and flung it at his troops.
The dívs' hearts burst in terror at the sight
Of Rustam's iron mace, and son and sire,
Forgetting land and crops, went off pell mell,
While Rustam drew his vengeful scimitar
And cleared the neighbourhood. At set of sun
He made all speed back to Mount Ispurúz,
Untied Úlád, and, as they sat beneath
The lofty tree, asked how to reach the city V. 350
Where Sháh Káús was, and then hurried on
Led by Úlád afoot. When he arrived
Rakhsh gave a thundering neigh, which Kai Káús,
Who heard it, understood and told the Íránians:—
"Our evil days are all but over now;
I heard the neigh of Rakhsh; it made my heart
And spirit young. Thus neighed he in the wars
Of Kai Kubád against the Turkman king."
The soldiers said: "His mind hath gone through hardship,
And he hath lost his wisdom, sense, and Grace!
Thou wouldest say: 'He talketh in his sleep.'

But in these grievous bonds we can do naught;
In good sooth fortune hath abandoned us."
Anon that ardent lover of the fray,
The elephantine chief, approached Káús,
And all the noble paladins—Gúdarz,
Tús, gallant Gív, Bahrám the Lion, Shídúsh,
And Gustaham—flocked round while Rustam wept
Right sorely, did obeisance to the Sháh,
And asked about his longsome toils. Káús,
Embracing him, inquired concerning Zál,
And all his travail, then said privily:—
"Let not these sorcerers get sight of Rakhsh,
For when the White Dív is apprised: 'Arzhang
Is dead and Rustam is with Kai Káús!'
The valiant dívs will gather, earth will teem
With them, and then thy toils will bear no fruit.
Seek the White Dív's abode, exert thyself
V. 351 With sword and arrow; holy God may aid thee
In bringing to the dust these sorcerers' heads.
O'er seven mountains must thou pass, and troops
Of dívs throng everywhere. At length a cavern
Of frightful aspect will appear before thee,
A fearsome place, as I have heard: the approach
Is held by warrior-dívs equipped like pards
For fight. That cavern is the White Dív's home:
He is the hope and terror of his troops.
May'st thou have strength to put an end to him
Because he is that army's chief and stay.
My soldiers' eyes are blinded by their griefs;
I am in darkness too. Our leeches trust
To blood extracted from the White Dív's vitals,
In which regard a wise physician said:—
'Let three drops of his blood descend like tears
Upon the eyes and it will banish blindness.'"
He made him ready, and in setting forth
Spake thus to the Íránians: "Be alert,

For 'tis the White Dív that I go against—
That Elephant of war, full of resource,
And compassed by a host of warriors.
If he shall catch my body with his noose
A shameful sorry plight will long be yours,
But if the Lord and my good star shall aid me
Our country and our throne will we restore,
And this our royal Tree shall fruit once more."

§ 12

The Seventh Course

How Rustam slew the White Dív

He went girt up—all battle and revenge;
He took Úlád and made Rakhsh go like wind. V. 352
As soon as Rakhsh had reached the seven mountains,
With all their troops of valiant dívs, the chieftain
Drew near the abysmal cave, saw them on guard,
And spake thus to Úlád: "Thou hast been faithful,
So now that we must act point out the way."
Úlád made answer: "When the sun is hot
The dívs will sleep and thou wilt overcome them;
So bide thy time and thou wilt see no dívs,
Except some few on duty, and may'st triumph
If He that giveth victory shall aid thee."
So Rustam paused till noon, then, having bound
Úlád fast with the lasso, mounted Rakhsh,
Unsheathed his warlike Crocodile, and shouted
His name like thunder, came like flying dust
Among the troops, and parted heads from trunks.
None sought for glory by withstanding him.
Thence radiant as the sun he went to seek
The White Dív, found a pit like Hell, but saw not
The sorcerer for the murk. There sword in hand

He paused; no room was there for fight or flight.
V. 353 He rubbed his eyelids, bathed his eyes, and searched
The cave till in the gloom he saw a Mountain
That blotted all within, with sable face
And hair like lion's mane—a world to see!
Now Rustam hasted not to slay the dív
Asleep, but roused him with a leopard's roar.
He charged at Rustam, like a gloomy mountain
With iron helm and brassards, seized a millstone
And drave at him like smoke. The hero quailed,
And thought: "Mine end is come!" Yet like a lion
Enraged he struck full at the dív and lopped
From that enormous bulk a hand and foot,
So mighty was he with his trenchant sword!
As 'twere some lofty-crested elephant
And lion in its wrath the maimed dív closed
With Rustam, and one-footed wrecked the cave.
They wrestled, tearing out each other's flesh,
Till all the ground was puddled with their blood,
And Rustam thought: "If I survive this day
I ne'er shall die."
The White Dív also thought:—
"Life hath no hopes for me, for, should I scape
This Dragon's claws, maimed as I am and torn,
None great or small within Mázandarán
Will look at me."
Such was his wretched comfort!
But still they wrestled, streaming blood and sweat,
V. 354 While elephantine Rustam in God's strength
Strove mightily in anguish and revenge,
Till sore bestead, bold Lion that he was,
He reached out, clutched the dív, raised him neck-high,
And dashed the life-breath from him on the ground,
Then with a dagger stabbed him to the heart

And plucked the liver from his swarthy form :
The carcase filled the cave, and all the world
Was like a sea of blood. Then Rustam freed
Úlád, put back the lasso in the straps,
And, giving him the liver of the dív
To carry, went back to Sháh Kai Káús.
"O Lion!" said Úlád, "thou hast subdued V. 355
The world beneath thy sword, and I myself
On my bruised body bears thy lasso's marks,
So now I hope that thou wilt keep thy promise,
For lion-fierceness and a royal mien
Sort not with broken faith."
"I give thee all
Mázandarán," he answered. "I have yet
Long toils before me, many ups and downs,
For I must hale its monarch from his throne
And fling him in a ditch, behead a myriad
Of sorcerer-dívs with my relentless sword,
And then, it may be, tread the ground again,[1]
But if not I will still keep faith with thee."
He reached Káús while all in gladness cried:—
"The chief of ardent spirit hath returned!"
And ran to him with thanks and praise past count.
He said: "O Sháh, thou seeker after knowledge!
Rejoice, thy foe is slain. I have ripped out V. 356
The White Dív's liver, and his king hath naught
To hope from him. What would my lord the Sháh?"
Káús blessed Rustam. "Ne'er may crown and host
Lack thee," he said. "The mother of such offspring
Must not be mentioned but in terms of praise.
Now may a thousand blessings be on Zál,
And on the country of Zábulistán,
Because they have produced so brave a chief.
In sooth the age hath not beheld thy like,

[1] In war-time he would ride, and he had sworn to ride till he had triumphed. Cf. p. 44.

But brighter still is my lot since I have
For liege this lion-slaying Elephant."
When he had made an end of praise he said:—
"O warrior of blesséd steps! now put
The White Dív's blood upon mine eyes and those
Of all my folk; God willing, we may see
Thy face again."
They anointed his dim eyes,
Which grew as bright as Sol, and forthwith Rustam
Anointed all the others with the blood.
Their eyes grew bright, and all the world to them
A rosary. They hung the crown and set
Káús beneath it on an ivory throne
As monarch of Mázandarán, with Rustam,
Tús, Faríburz, Gúdarz, Ruhhám, and Gív,
Gurgín, and brave Bahrám. One week he revelled,
The eighth day mounted with his chiefs and troops,
Who spread themselves like fire among dry reeds
Throughout the land and plied the massive mace
According to the bidding of the Sháh.
They scorched the realm with their keen scimitars,
V. 357 And of the warlocks slew so many that blood
Flowed in a river. When night fell the warriors
All rested and Káús proclaimed: "The wrong
Hath been avenged, the dívs have their deserts,
'Tis time to cease from slaughter. Now we need
A man of weight and sense, with sense to wait
Yet prompt, to work upon and overawe
The monarch of Mázandarán."
The son
Of Zál and all the other chiefs agreed
On this that such a letter should be sent
To give his darkened mind enlightenment.

§ 13

How Káús wrote to the King of Mázandarán

A skilled scribe wrote upon white silk a letter
Both kind and harsh, inspiring hope and fear,
First praising God, the Source of every good,
"Who gave man wisdom, made the turning sky,
Revealing hardship, cruelty, and love,
Who gave to us to compass good and ill,
And ruleth o'er the circling sun and moon. . . .
If thou art upright and thy Faith is pure V. 358
All men will praise thee, but the curse of heaven
Will fall on thee if ill-disposed and hurtful.
If God is just why should His laws be broken?
Observe how He in punishment for sin
Is sending dust from dív and sorcerer!
So now if news hath reached thee of their fate,
And mind and wisdom are thy monitors,
Quit thou thy throne and from Mázandarán
Come, like our other subjects, to our court,
And, as thou canst not strive with Rustam, pay
Such tax and tribute as we may demand.
Thus haply thou mayst still retain thy throne;
But if thou wilt not pay despair of life,
E'en as the White Dív and Arzhang despaired."
The letter done, the Sháh affixed his seal
Of musk and spicery, and called Farhád—
Him of the mace of steel, a favourite
Among the nobles of the land, and one
Who had not shared the warfare and the toil—
To whom he said: "Convey to yonder dív
Escaped from bonds this letter of advice."
He kissed the ground, bare the Sháh's letter forth,
And reached the valiant horsemen, the Narmpái.[1]
The people there with leathern feet appear,

[1] Cf. p. 55.

Hence their nickname Narmpái for many a year.
There lived among his chiefs and men of war
The monarch of Mázandarán of yore.
Farhád sent on a man to tell the king
Of his approach and business, who on hearing :—
"A prudent envoy cometh from the Sháh,"
Sent forward to receive him a great host,
V. 359 Selected by the king to show his power,
To whom he said: "We must make known to-day
How great the difference is 'twixt man and dív,
So act the pard and get these sages' leader
Within your clutches that he may repent
Himself in terror at the sight of you."
They went forth frowning but their purpose failed.
On coming to Farhád one of the chiefs—
A mighty man—took hold upon his hand,
Wrung it, and pained him, yet he did not blench,
Or flush. They carried him before the king,
Who asked about Káús and that long journey,
Then set the document before a scribe,
And sprinkled wine and musk upon the silk.
He read the letter to the king who writhed;
But when he heard of Rustam and the dív
Blood filled his eyes, his heart throbbed, and he thought:—
"'Tis sunset and night cometh, 'tis the time
For rest, but Rustam will not let earth rest,
His name will always be in evidence."
He mourned Arzhang and the White Dív, the slaying
Of Bíd and of Púlád son of Ghundí,
Then entertained the envoy for three days
Among the warriors and men of name,
And on the fourth said: "Go back to the Sháh,
That witless youth, and bear to him this answer:—
'Is wine unmingled in the cup of fortune?
V. 360 Am I such that thou sayest: "Quit thy land,

Thy throne and country, and attend my court?"
My court is more exalted than thine own,
Mine are a thousand thousand troops and more,
And wheresoe'er they turn them in the fight
They leave not stone or colour or perfume.
Prepare thyself forthwith; I shall be ready;
I will lead forth an army lion-like
And rouse those heads of yours from their sweet slumbers.
I have twelve hundred elephants of war,
While thou hast none, and I will send dark dust
Up from Írán till hills and vales seem one.'"
Farhád, perceiving his defiance, pride,
And arrogance, was much concerned to get
An answer to the letter, hastened back,
And told the Sháh what he had seen and heard:—
"The king is higher than heaven and his purpose
Is not less high. He would not listen to me;
The world is nothing worth in his regard."
Thereat Káús called Rustam and repeated
Farhád's report. The Elephantine said:—
"I will relieve our nation from disgrace;
Let me bear back this answer: 'I will draw
My trenchant sword.' We need a trenchant letter,
A message like a thundering cloud. Myself
Will go to him as envoy; at my words V. 361
The rivers shall run blood."
The Sháh replied:—
"The signet and the crown gain light from thee,
Who art at once ambassador, bold Tiger,
And haughty Lion of the battlefield."
With that he called a scribe, whose pen he made
An arrowhead, and wrote: "Such talk is futile
And cometh ill from one of sober sense.
If thou canst purge thy head of arrogance
Do as thou art commanded like a slave.

Thou wilt not wreck thy realm but pay me tribute
Unvexed by war, enjoy Mázandarán,
And 'scape with life from Rustam; but if thou
Refusest I will march upon thee, stretch
My host from sea to sea, and then the soul
Of thy malevolent White Dív will bring
The vultures to enjoy thy brains, O king!"

§ 14

How Rustam went on an Embassy to the King of Mázandarán

The letter sealed, aspiring Rustam flung
His mace upon the saddle and approached
V. 362 Mázandarán, whose monarch heard: "Káús
Hath sent another letter and an envoy—
One like a savage lion—with a lasso
Of sixty coils within the straps. Beneath him
There is a speedy charger; one would say:—
'It bulketh like a mighty elephant.'"
On hearing this the king selected chiefs
And bade them go to meet this savage Lion.
As Rustam saw them he beheld beside
The road a spreading tree, seized on two branches,
And twisting round the tree with might and main
Uprooted it, himself unscathed the while,
Then poised it like a dart, while all the troops
Looked on astound. As they came up he hurled
The tree, whose boughs hid many cavaliers.
One of the chiefest of Mázandarán
Seized Rustam's hand and squeezed it to assay
His fortitude in pain, but Rustam laughed
While all the company looked on in wonder,
And as he laughed he crushed the other's hand.
That strength-assayer lost all strength himself,
Paled, and fell off his steed. One went before

And told the monarch of Mázandarán
That which had chanced. There was a cavalier
Hight Kaláhúr, whose fame rang through the land,
And who, like some fierce pard, loved fighting only.
The king, who mightily esteemed his valour,
Called him and sent him forth to counter Rustam,
Thus saying: "Meet the envoy, give fresh proofs V. 363
Of prowess, shame him, make him weep hot tears."
So Kaláhúr came lion-like to Rustam
With louring looks and with a leopard's greeting,
Then took and squeezed the Elephantine's hand
Till it turned blue with pain, who bore it lightly,
As holding manhood's patent from the sun,
And stoutly wrung the hand of Kaláhúr,
Whose nails fell off like leaves. He went and showed
The king his mangled hand. "I cannot hide,"
He said, "the anguish that I feel. Enjoy
Thyself in peace; thou canst not fight this hero.
If he is willing let us pay the tribute,
Submitting to preserve Mázandarán,
And portion out the tax to great and small
To make this heavy travail light; 'tis better
Than quaking for our lives."
The matchless Rustam
That moment came like some fierce elephant
Before the king who, seeing him, assigned him
A place of honour, asked about Káús,
The host, the travail of the longsome road,
Its ups and downs, and then said: "Thou art Rustam;
Thy breast and arm befit a paladin."
He said: "I am a slave if fit to serve.
Where Rustam, that brave paladin, is present
There I am useless. Since God made the world V. 364
A chief so eminent hath not appeared.
In fight he is a mountain. What and how
Am I to speak about his mace and Rakhsh?

What army can withstand him when he warreth?
He maketh mountains seas, and seas like mountains.
What lion, elephant, or dív will raise
The battle-cry against him when he fighteth?
He is a noble army in himself
And not a messenger; 'twas he that sent me
To say: 'If thou are prudent sow not seed
Of evil. Thou hast sown it in abundance,
And lightly left the path of manliness.
How hast thou used the monarch of Írán,
His troops, and paladins in thy revenge?
Thou hast not heard perchance of Rustam's name,
Who hath the welkin for his meanest thrall;
But if I had permission from the Sháh
To come to this thy folk I would not leave
One of thy host alive, and thine own head
Should be upon a spear.'"

He gave the letter—
A message from ambition to self-will—
And said: "The scimitar is bearing fruit,
It beareth on its lap the heads of nobles."

The king when he had heard the embassage,
And read the letter, was displeased and marvelled.
He spake to Rustam, saying: "To what end
Are all these frivolous demands of thine?
Say to Káús: 'Thou art indeed the Sháh,
But, though thou hast the heart and claws of lions,
Still I am monarch of Mázandarán,
Possess a host, sit on the golden throne,
And wear the crown. To summon me absurdly
Before thee thus is neither right nor royal.
Think, and ambition not the thrones of kings,
For in the quest dishonour will befall thee.
Ride thou Íránward or a lance's point
Shall end thy days. If I lead forth my host
v. 365 Thou'lt know not head from foot. 'Tis thy conceit;

Be wise and cast away thy bow, for when
We meet thy talk and violence will cease.'
Say too for me to Rustam: 'Famous chief!
Whatever Kai Káús may give to thee
I will bestow a hundred to his one,
Will make thee chief of chiefs, rich past desire,
Exalt thy head above the sun and moon,
And give to thee command of all my troops.'"
But Rustam, with his shrewd mind contemplating
Throne, host, and court, esteemed the king's speech brainless.
Such insults angered him, and he replied:—
"O witless king! good sooth thy fortunes lour!
Hath Rustam, that exalted paladin,
Need of thy treasury and of thy troops?
The son of Zál is monarch of Nímrúz
And hath no peer; so cease to wag thy tongue
Or he will pluck it out."
The king was wroth;
His evil nature turned his thoughts to bloodshed
He cried: "Arrest the envoy in my presence,
Disseat him and behead him."
Instantly
An executioner approached the throne
To seize his wrists and hale him from his seat,
But Rustam, roaring like a lion, caught
The executioner's wrists and dragged him close,
Then flung him down and, holding one foot fast,
Set his own foot upon the other one
And rent the man asunder! None e'er saw V. 366
A sight like that! Then noble Rustam cried:—
"If I had but permission from the Sháh
To war against thine army I would put thee
This instant into pitiable plight."
He spake and went forth from the court, his eyes
Like bowls of blood, while quaking at his words

And might the king made ready royal gifts
Of raiment, steeds, and gold, and proffered them
To Rustam, but he would accept of naught,
Because such presents would involve disgrace,
And left the country of Mázandarán,
Concerned at these grave doings. Full of vengeance,
And in hot blood, he came before the Sháh,
Told his experience in Mázandarán,
And said to him: "Be not concerned one whit,
Show courage and prepare to fight the dívs.
I do not value them a single grain
Of dust, and I will make this mace their bane."

§ 15

How Káús fought with the King of Mázandarán

When Rustam left, the king of sorcerers
Prepared for war, brought out his tent-enclosure,
And led the whole host forth upon the waste;
Their dust hid sun and desert, plain and mountain,
While earth reeled 'neath the tramp of elephants.
V. 367 He marched like rushing wind. Káús on hearing,
"The dívs' host is in sight," first ordered Rustam
To arm for fight and then to Tús, Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, and to Gurgín and Gív,
Those men of noble lineage, he gave
The arraying of the host, the ordering
Of spear and shield. They pitched the camp-enclosures
Upon the deserts of Mázandarán.
Upon the right was Tús, son of Naudar,
Whose clarion-blasts thrilled to the mountains' hearts;
Gúdarz was on the left wing with Kishwád,
And clad the heights in iron; Kai Káús,
In chief command, was posted at the centre.
The troops drew up while elephantine Rustam,

Who never saw disaster, led them on.
Juyá, a noble of Mázandarán,
A fame-ensuer, a mace-brandisher,
And bragger likewise, by his monarch's leave
Confronted Kai Káús. The warrior's mail
Shone brilliantly, his falchion seared the ground;
He passed along the Íránian line with shouts
That plain and mountain echoed: "He must send
Dust up from water who would fight with me."
Not one came out against him, thou wouldst say:—
"Their veins pulsed not with blood." Then cried
Káús:— V. 368
"Why hath this dív's voice, valiant warriors!
Thus dazed your hearts and made your faces dark?"
They answered not a word, and thou hadst said:—
"The host is withered up before Juyá."
Then Rustam took the reins and shouldering
His shining spear said: "Will the Sháh permit me
To face this caitiff dív?"
Káús replied:—
"Be thine the task, for none will seek it else.
Go! May the Maker aid thee, be all dívs
And sorcerers thy quarry."
Rustam urged
His gallant Rakhsh and grasped his weighty spear,
Came on the scene like some mad elephant,
A Pard beneath him and in hand a Dragon,
Sent dust-clouds flying as he wheeled about,
And shouting shook the battle-field. "O knave!"
He cried, "thy name is cancelled 'mong the great.
This is no time of peace and ease for thee,
But pity; she shall weep who bare thee, nurtured,
And chastened thee."
"Be not too sure," he answered
"About Juyá and his head-reaping sword;
Thy mother's liver shall be split anon,

And she shall wash thy mail and casque with tears."
When Rustam heard he raised his battle-cry,
Proclaimed his name, and as he charged appeared
A moving mountain, while his foe dismayed
Wheeled round unwilling to contend with him,
But Rustam following, swift as dust, and aiming
The spearpoint straight against the girdlestead,
V. 369 So speared the mail that straps and buckles burst,
Unseated him, raised him aloft, and turned him
Like bird on spit,[1] then flung him down dust-choked,
With shivered mail. The warriors of the foe
Looked on astound, faint-hearted, pale of face,
And babble filled the field. Their king commanded
The whole host, saying: "Lift your heads and fight
Like leopards in this strife."
The warriors heard
His warlike words, and of that countless host
A vengeful throng advanced. The Sháh perceived it
And came on too in orderly array.
Both armies drew their swords and closed amid
The din of trump and drum, the sky was ebon,
Earth indigo, while swords and maces gleamed
Like lightning flashing from a murky cloud.
The air was crimson, black, and violet,
With spears and flags. The shouting of the dívs,
The clouds of dust, the roar of kettledrums,
And neigh of steeds, rent earth and shook the mountains;
None e'er saw such a fight. Arose the din
V. 370 Of arrow, mace, and sword, the plain became
A pool of heroes' blood, earth like a sea
Of pitch whose waves were maces, swords, and arrows.
Swift steeds sped on like ships upon the deep,
And thou hadst said of them: "They founder fast!"
While maces rained upon the casques and helms

[1] Cf. vol. i. p. 386 and *note*.

As autumn-blasts shower leaves from willow-trees.
Thus for a week those glory-seeking hosts
Encountered, on the eighth day Sháh Káús
Took from his head the royal casque and stood
Before the Judge and Guide of this world, weeping,
Then falling prostrate he exclaimed: "O Judge
Whose word is truth, who madest sea and land! V. 371
Give me to quell these dívs who fear not Thee,
And grace for me the throne of king of kings."
He donned his helm and joined his famous troops.
There rose a shout and trumpet-blare, the host
Moved like a mountain. He commanded Gív
And Tús to bring the tymbals to the front.
Gúdarz with Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Ruhhám, Gurgín, all eager for the fray,
Guráza like a wild boar, with a flag
Eight cubits high, Farhád, Kharrád, Barzín,
Rushed on the field to seek revenge anew.
First, matchless Rustam charging on the centre
Bathed earth with warriors' blood. Upon the right
Gúdarz fetched with Kishwád arms, drums, troops, baggage,
While from the right wing to the left Gív fared—
A wolf among the sheep. From dawn till sunset
Blood ran in streams, all looks were fierce and grim,
And thou hadst said: "The sky is raining maces."
The slain were heaped on every side, the grass
Was smirched with human brains. The drums and trumpets
Were like a thunder-clap, an ebon veil
Concealed the sun. Then elephantine Rustam
Charged with a mighty power against the quarter
Where stood the monarch of Mázandarán,
Who with his dívs and elephants of war V. 372
Awhile maintained his ground. Then Rustam gave
His pointed lance to one to hold, invoked

The name of God, raised high his mace, and raged;
His voice filled all the air, the dívs became
Dispirited, the elephants confounded;
Their trunks were scattered over all the plain,
And naught but corpses could be seen for miles.
Then calling for a spear he charged the king;
Both roared like thunder. When the king beheld
The spear of Rustam wrath and courage failed,
While Rustam, seething with revenge, sent up
v. 373 A mighty lion's roar, struck the king's girdle,
And pierced him through the mail. The sorcerer
Turned to a boulder by his magic arts
Before the Íránian host, while matchless Rustam
Stood in amaze, then shouldered his sharp lance.
The Sháh came up with drums and elephants,
With standards and with troops, and said to Rustam:—
"Why tarry here so long, exalted chief!"
He answered: "When victorious fortune showed
Amid the stress the monarch seeing me
Took up his massive mace, I gave to Rakhsh
The rein and speared the monarch through the mail.
Methought: 'Now will he tumble from his saddle.'
He turned to stone before me, as thou seest,
And recketh not of aught that I can do,
But I will carry him to camp, perchance
He will resume his shape."
The Sháh bade some
To bear and set the stone before his tent.
Then all the strongest of the host essayed
In vain to move the mass, howbeit Rustam
Raised it unaided to the troops' amaze,
Then shouldering the rock walked off therewith
With all the people shouting at his back.
They praised the Almighty, scattering gems and gold
O'er Rustam as he bare the stone and threw it
v. 374 Before the tent-enclosure of the Sháh.

He set a guard and said: "Quit these black arts
And sorceries to take thy proper shape,
Or else with this sharp steel and battle-ax
Will I break up the stone."
The sorcerer heard,
The stone dissolved like mist, the king was seen
In helmet and cuirass, and Rustam seizing
His hand turned laughing to the Sháh and said:—
"Permit me to present this piece of rock,
Which feared mine ax and quaketh in my grasp."
The Sháh on looking saw him not the man
For crown and throne; he had a loathly face,
A lanky shape and boar's head, neck, and tushes.
Káús recalled the past with pain and sighs,
Then bade a headsman hew the dív in pieces,
Whom matchless Rustam taking by the beard
Haled from the presence of Káús. They hewed
The dív to pieces as the great king bade.
They gathered all the booty from the camp,
And put together thrones and crowns and girdles,
Steeds, jewelry, and arms. The troops attended,
And each received according to his meed.
The impious dívs, whom all beheld with horror,
Were then beheaded by the Sháh's command
And flung beside the way. He said in prayer:—
"O righteous Judge! Thou hast not left a wish V. 375
Of mine unsatisfied, hast made me conquer
These sorcerers, and revived my hoary fortune."
He spent a week before the Lord in prayer,
Upon the eighth day oped the treasury-door,
And gave to all that lacked; another week
So passed while every man received his meed.
The third week still within Mázandarán
He called for amber cups and ruby cups,
And spent a night in revel. Thus rethroned
He said to Rustam: "Chief of paladins!

Thou hast displayed thy prowess everywhere,
And now I have received my throne from thee.
Bright be thy heart, thy Faith, and thine allegiance."
Then Rustam answered: "All men have their uses.
Whate'er I did was owing to Úlád,
My faithful guide, who hopeth now to rule
Mázandarán, for so I promised him
If he did well. Perchance the king of kings,
Who tendereth lieges, will exalt him thus?
First let the Sháh grant him investiture
By solemn covenant and under seal
As monarch of Mázandarán, and then
Let all the other chieftains do him homage.
He will approve himself thy faithful liege
And send to thee the tribute that is due."
The Sháh, on hearing what his servant said,
Assented, summoned from Mázandarán
The chiefs, and said in speaking of Úlád:—
"Do as he counselleth and bear no grudge."
He gave Úlád a special robe of honour,
And said: "Good worketh constantly unseen,"
V. 376 Bestowed on him the royal crown, and then
Set his own face to go to Párs again.

§ 16

How Káús returned to the Land of Írán and farewelled Rustam

Now when Káús was entering Írán,
And when the army's dust concealed the world,
The excitement reached the sun, and men and women
Met him with loud acclaim; they decked the land
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
The world grew young through him, and there arose
A New Moon from Írán. Glad and triumphant

He sat enthroned, unlocked his ancient hoards,
And summoned almoners. A shout went up
Before the gate of elephantine Rustam,
And all the captains of the host assembled
Rejoicing in the presence of the Sháh.
Then matchless Rustam, casque on head, drew near
And seated by the Sháh asked leave to go
To Zál. The worldlord gave him costly gifts,
Such as he merited—a throne with rams' heads
All jewelled in turquoise, a royal crown
Of gems, a robe of gold worn by the Sháh,
A splendid torque and armlet, and withal
A hundred moon-faced boys with golden girdles,
A hundred lovely damsels musky-haired,
A hundred noble steeds in golden harness,
A hundred black-haired mules with golden bridles
All laden with brocade of royal fashion
From Rúm, Pahlav, and Chín, a hundred purses
Filled with dínárs, bright stuffs, perfumes, and trinkets,
A ruby goblet full of purest musk,
Another of turquoise filled with rose-water,
And therewithal a patent writ on silk
With ink of musk, wine, ambergris, and aloes.
Upon that chief—the Light of earth—the Sháh V. 377
Bestowed anew the whole realm of Nímrúz,
So that thenceforth none else should have the throne,
And blessed him, saying: "May none see sun and moon
Without thee, be the chiefs' hearts warm to thee,
And be thy soul fulfilled with love and kindness."
Then Rustam leaped down, kissed the throne, made ready
For his departure, and bound on the baggage.
The din of kettledrums rose from the city,
And all partook his joy. They put up garlands
While bells and clarions sounded. Rustam went,

The Sháh remained, illumining the world
With laws and usages. When thus returned
He portioned out the earth among his chieftains,
Appointing Tús the captain of the host.
"Avert," he said, "disaster from Írán,"
While Ispahán bestowed he on Gúdarz,
Gave him the throne and lordship of that march,
And then disposed himself for mirth and wine,
Displayed his majesty and smote the neck
Of sorrow with the scimitar of justice.
None thought of death, the earth grew full of verdure—
A garden of Iram[1]—with streams and dew,
And rich by justice and security;
The hand of Áhriman was stayed from ill,
And day and night the fruits and foliage
Invoked a blessing on the crown and throne:—
"A hundred thousand blessings every hour
From the Creator be upon the Sháh,
Who by his justice civilizeth earth
And in his justice mindeth bounteousness."
'Twas noised abroad: "Káús the Sháh hath taken
The crown and throne out of Mázandarán."
V. 378 All wondered that he should achieve such greatness,
The loyal with their gifts and offerings
Drew up in rank before the monarch's door,
And all the world was decked like Paradise,
Fulfilled with wealth and justice.
Thou hast heard
About the warfare with Mázandarán,
Now hear the contest with Hámávarán.

[1] See vol. i. p. 100.

PART II

THE DOINGS OF KAI KÁÚS IN THE LAND OF BARBARISTÁN AND OTHER TALES

ARGUMENT

Káús makes a progress through his realm. He wars against the kings of Barbar, Misr, and Hámávarán; he marries Súdába, the daughter of the king of Hámávarán, and through treachery is taken captive by him. On this the Arabs and Afrásiyáb both invade Írán and fight for its possession. The Íránians in despair appeal to Rustam, who rescues Kai Káús, defeats Afrásiyáb, and reinstates the Sháh, who, warned by past experience, rules justly for a time, rises to the height of his power, and builds himself great palaces on Mount Alburz. Afterward he falls again into temptation, tries to mount to heaven, is rescued again by Rustam, again repents, and again is restored to power. The Part concludes with an account of one of Rustam's raids into Túrán.

NOTE

§§ 1–6. In the accounts of Kai Káús' two expeditions to Barbaristán we have a duplication of tradition.

The late Professor Darmesteter has thrown considerable light on that obscure subject, Firdausí's geography in this part of the poem.[1] There are several Barbars, and he points out that the one here intended is the Berbera nearly opposite Aden in the British Somali Coast Protectorate. It is the Pun-t of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, and was then and is still a great trading station. When the south-west monsoon changes into the north-east wind thousands of traffickers begin to arrive, and the place is kept busy from October to April. Further, he points out with regard to Hámávarán that it is a form of the word Himyar, which is another name for Yaman. We may therefore conclude that Firdausí's notion was

[1] DEI, ii. 221–224.

that Kai Káús marched from Nímrúz to the sea-coast of Makrán (Balúchistán), there built his fleet, sailed past the southern shores of Arabia, and reached some spot north of Berbera on the western shore of the Red Sea. He would then, as Firdausí says, have Misr (Egypt) on his left hand, Barbar on his right, and the sea between him and his objective Hámávarán (Yaman), which confronted him across it. The matter has become confused from the fact that Firdausí had just stated that the people of Misr and Shám (Syria) had rebelled against Kai Káús, and therefore Hámávarán has been assumed to mean Syria. We may add that the two historians Tabarí and Mas'údí both mention Kai Káús' expedition to Yaman, and so far, though their accounts differ considerably from Firdausí's, support Professor Darmesteter's elucidation of this episode.[1]

The matter has been further confused by Firdausí's use of the word "Zirih" in this part of his work. The word is usually employed in connexion with the lakes and swamps of Sístán, which formally were much more extensive.[2] The word, however, is merely an older (Pahlaví) form of the modern Persian "daryá," a sea, lake, or river. It has come, however, to be regarded as a proper name, and such an expression as "the sea of Zirih" is not only tautological but distinctly misleading. We translate "Zirih" sea. The expedition of Kai Káús looks like an attempt to capture an ancient trade-route.

The marriage of Kai Káús with the daughter of the king of Hámávarán is the cause of serious trouble later on, as will appear in Part IV.

The reference to Syria and a certain similarity of circumstance suggest that in the account of the treacherous capture of Kai Káús by the king of Hámávarán we have a distorted historical reminiscence of the overthrow of Antiochus Sidetes in the early spring of B.C. 128 or 129. Mithridates I., in the course of a reign of thirty-eight years (B.C. 174–136), had extended the narrow bounds of the Parthian kingdom both eastward and westward, to the Hindu Kush and to the Euphrates respectively. Westward the increase had taken place at the expense of the Seleucid kingdom of Syria. The successor of Mithridates—Phraates II.—made no attempt to enlarge his empire, but the king of Syria—Antiochus Sidetes—took the first opportunity to attempt to recover the provinces of which he had been deprived by Mithridates. He led a large and splendidly equipped host into Babylonia and thrice defeated Phraates II., who, though worsted, was not conquered, and still maintained himself with an army in the country. The three great cities of Babylon, Seleucia, and Ctesiphon, however, fell into the hands of

[1] ZT, i. 465. MM, ii. 119.

[2] See vol. i. p. 4.

the Syrians. Winter came on, and Antiochus Sidetes, resolved to maintain his advantage, distributed his forces throughout the cities and towns of Babylonia with the intention of renewing operations in the spring. The Syrian troops with their motley entourage of camp-followers, cooks, actors, etc., soon made themselves intolerable to the natives among and upon whom they were quartered. An understanding was entered into with Phraates II., who promised to be at hand with his army, and at a given signal the Syrian invaders, who were thoroughly enjoying themselves after their campaign and had been kept wholly ignorant of the impending danger, were attacked throughout Babylonia, and either massacred or taken captive. Antiochus Sidetes himself perished, his son Seleucus was taken prisoner and his niece as well, whom Phraates II. married.[1]

§§ 4 and 7. In the account of the invasion of Írán by the Arabs during the captivity of Kai Káús in Hámávarán, and their defeat by Afrásiyáb, we seem to have a reference to the invasions and conflicts that were actually going on during the period when the Zandavasta was being compiled or reconstructed, *i.e.* during the third century after the Christian era.[2] In the Zandavasta we read: "We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda. . . . It was that Glory that Thraétaona bore with him when Azi Daháka was killed; that Glory that Frangrasyan, the Turanian, bore when the wicked Zainigáu was killed."[3]

In the greater Bundahish we read: "There was a fiend called Zinígáv who had poison in his eye: he had come from the country of the Arabs to reign on Iran-Shahr: any man he gazed at with his evil eye, he killed. The Íránians called Frásyáv into their country, he killed that Zinígáv."[4] In the Bundahish Záinígáv is said to have been the grandfather of Zahhák,[5] the great protagonist of the Arab race in the Sháhnáma.[6] The Íránians, when they had to choose between the Túránians and the Arabs, preferred the former. Even the arch-enemy Afrásiyáb is allowed to have possessed for a while the divine Grace of kingship[7] when he opposed the common foe, the Arabs.[8]

§§ 8–10. We are told in the Dínkard that Kai Káús built himself seven dwellings on Mount Alburz, one of gold, two of silver, two of steel, and two of crystal, that he warred against the dívs of Mázandarán and fell into a trap which they laid to destroy him. To this end one of them undertook to tempt him by making him

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[1] RP, 91 *seq.* [2] See vol. i. p. 61 *seq.*
[3] DZA, ii. 307, as amended in i. l., *note.* [4] *Id.*
[5] WPT, i. 131. [6] See vol. i. pp. 54, 141.
[7] *Id.* p. 82. [8] For the Arab invasions see *id.* p. 11.

discontented with his earthly sovereignty and inducing him to aspire to that of the sky of the archangels. He yielded to the tempter. Consequently the divine Glory left him, and he was only saved from destruction by the fravashi, or immortal principle, of the as yet unborn Kai Khusrau. Néryósang, the messenger of Urmuzd, was about to smite Káús when the fravashi cried out: "Thou shouldst not smite him, *O* Néryósang . . . for if thou shouldst smite this man . . . *there will* not be afterwards . . . a thorough destroyer *of* the high priest of Túrán; because owing to this man *will* be born *him whose* name is Síyávakhsh, *and* owing to Síyávakhsh I *shall* be born, who am the Khúsróí . . . so that I *may* accomplish the destruction of his champions and troops, when I would occasion a distant flight of the sovereign of Túrán." Accordingly Káús was released and became discreet.[1]

Underground dwellings, such as Kai Káús is said to have excavated for stabling purposes in connexion with his buildings, are very numerous in northern Írán.[2]

The reader will note that in § 9 we have Iblís where we should expect Áhriman, showing that this story came to Firdausí through the Arabic.[3]

§§ 11–14. In the story of the Fight of the Seven Warriors with which this part concludes we have an account of a border-foray of the Chevy Chase order. More than seven Iránian warriors, however, are mentioned.

§ 1

How Kai Káús warred with the King of Hámávarán

V. 379 We have received it both from archimage
And ancient bard of rustic lineage
That afterward Káús resolved to make
A progress through his kingdom. From Írán
He journeyed to Túrán and Chín, and after
Passed to Makrán, and thence down to the sea
In state; men's waists knew neither belt nor buckle.
The chiefs all paid their tribute and their dues,
The Ox took care not to provoke the Lion.
Thence to Barbar they went—a brilliant throng
With crown and diadem, intent on conquest.

[1] WPT, iv. 220–223. [2] GHP, i. 25, *note*. [3] See vol. i. p. 70.

The monarch of Barbar prepared for war,
And matters changed their hue. A host came forth
And stayed the revels of the great king's troops,
The elephants were hidden by the dust,
Men saw not hand or rein. The hosts encountered
Like mighty waves. Gúdarz beholding this
Took from the saddle-bow his mighty mace,
Urged on his steed and, with a thousand warriors V. 380
With javelins and with breastplate-piercing arrows,
Closed with and brake the centre of the foe.
Behind him charged the Sháh, thou wouldst have said:—
"There is not left a cavalier or spearman
Within Barbar." The elders of the country,
On seeing that the blast of war had passed,
Came to Káús, heart-broken, to seek peace,
And said: "We are thy slaves and bow our necks
To tribute; we will pay in gold and jewels
Instead of drachms, and earn thy treasurer's praise."
Káús received them graciously and taught them
New laws and ways. Anon the sound of bells
And cymbals rose with shouts and clarion-blare,
And he departed westward toward Mount Káf. V. 381
The people when they heard about the Sháh
Came forth to him and proffered fealty,
While all the great men went to welcome him,
And laid a heavy tribute on themselves.
When men performed his will with due submission
He and his host passed by and hurt them not.
He led the army to Zábulistán
As Rustam's guests and tarried there a month
With hawk and cheetah, song and minstrelsy.
Ere long a bramble grew among the roses.
To meet with trials is the lot of all,
And he that mounteth must expect a fall.
The Arabs rose when all seemed going well.

A wealthy and aspiring man of parts
Set up his standard both in Misr and Shám,
The people turned away from Kai Káús,
Renouncing fealty, who when he heard
Bade the drums sound and marched forth from Nímrúz
Light-heartedly, the soldiers wrote his name
Upon their shields, their swords shook in their scabbards.
Unnoticed by the foe he led his host
Down to the sea, built ships of war and transports
Beyond compute, embarked the host and sailed
A thousand leagues as thou wouldst count on land
V. 382 Till he arrived to win his own again
Where three states met—Misr on his left; Barbar
Upon his right; 'twixt him and his objective
Hámávarán, which fronted him, the sea.
Each had a mighty host. News came to them:—
"Káús hath crossed the water with his troops."
The three conferred, their troops met at Barbar—
An army such that desert, sea, and mountain
Were all aweary of the horses' hoofs.
There was no room left for the ravening lion,
Or path for onager across the plains;
The fish in water and the pard on rock,
The cloud and flying eagle in the air,
Sought passage, but what passage could there be
For wild things in a region so bested?
Now when Káús had disembarked his host
One saw not plain or mount. "The world is mailed,"
Thou wouldst have said, "each spearpoint is a star!"
What with the golden helms and golden shields,
And glittering axes borne upon the shoulder,
Thou wouldst have said: "The earth is running gold,
And Indian scimitars are raining souls."
The army's dust made heaven like sandarach,
The whole world turned as black as ebony,

The mountains shivered at the trumpets' blast,
And earth was bent beneath the horses' hoofs,
The din of tymbals would have made thee say:—
"Earth is one camp."
When from the Íránian host
The trump and drum were heard Bahrám, Gurgín,
And Tús came forth and, where Gúdarz was stationed,
Shídúsh, Farhád, and Gív let fall their reins, V. 383
And steeped the heads of all their spears in bane.
The horsemen bent upon the saddlebow,
And shout and crash of battle-ax were heard;
Thou wouldst have said: "They quarry stone and iron,
Or dash down heaven to earth." When at the centre
Káús advanced, and host encountered host,
The eyes of men grew dim, vermilion rained
On lapislazuli, and thou hadst said:—
"The air is hailing and is planting tulips
Among the rocks." The javelins' eyes flashed fire,
And earth became as 'twere a sea of blood.
The Íránians so dismayed the three allies
That end and middle were all one to them.
The monarch of Hámávarán was first V. 384
To drop the scimitar and massive mace,
Saw that the day was lost and sorrowing sought
Peace with the Sháh, agreeing to send tribute,
Steeds, implements of war, and thrones and crowns,
Provided that Káús, when all was paid,
Should go and keep his troops from harrying.
Káús replied: "I grant you all protection.
Seek not my crown and throne."
He then marched back
Well pleased to camp, and from Hámávarán
An envoy brought him treasures, stores of arms,
With emeralds and other gems and said:—
"O just and mighty lord! we chiefs and commons
Are dust upon thy feet and slaves of thine.

Be joyful and triumphant all thy years,
And be the heads and fortunes of thy foes
O'erturned."
He kissed the ground and bore to Tús
The store of gold and gems, who therewithal
Gave to each man a largess great or small.

§ 2

How Káús asked to Wife Súdába, the Daughter of the King of Hámávarán

Anon one said to Kai Káús: "This monarch
Hath in his bower a daughter goodlier
In stature than a cypress, crowned with musk,
With locks like lassos, dagger-shaped of tongue,
V. 385 With lips like sugar, decked like Paradise
With charms, or like bright Sol in jocund spring.
None else should be the consort of the Sháh:
How good it were for him to mate this Moon!"
His heart was stirred, he answered: "It is well.
I will demand her from her sire; her beauty
Will well become my ladies' bower."
He chose
A man of noble birth, shrewd, wise, and grave,
Bade him set forward to Hámávarán,
And said: "Dispose the king to favour me,
And charm his intellect with honied words.
Say thus to him: 'The most redoubted chiefs
Throughout the world seek mine affinity
Because the sun is lighted from my crown,
Earth is the footing of mine ivory throne,
And one that sheltereth not beneath my shade
Hath little standing-room. I seek to be
Affined to thee and wash the face of peace.
Now I have heard that thou hast in thy bower

A daughter who is worthy of my state,
Immaculate in form and countenance,
Praised everywhere by all. Thou wilt obtain
The son of Kai Kubád as son-in-law,
For know that Sol thus favoureth thy cause.'"
This shrewd man with the ready tongue approached
The ruler of Hámávarán, adorned
His tongue with eloquence, his heart with zeal,
And furnished forth his lips with courtesies.
He gave that monarch greeting from Káús,
Then did the embassage, which pained the king,
Who thought: "Though he be king of kings and world-lord
Victorious and obeyed, I have no daughter
But this, and she is dearer than sweet life:
Yet if I slight and spurn this messenger
I cannot fight. 'Tis best to shut mine eyes v. 386
To this affliction and repress my wrath."
He answered that fair-spoken envoy thus:—
"He asketh of me much—two things unequalled
In preciousness; my wealth is my support,
My child my treasure; being robbed of her
My very heart is gone, yet I resign them
And yield to his request."
He called Súdába,
And full of sorrow spake thus of Káús:—
"A courteous envoy hath arrived and brought
A letter from that mighty lord, who lacketh
Naught that is great and good, to this effect:—
He would deprive me, though I wish it not,
Of heart-repose and all my peace of mind.
What dost thou say now? What is thine own wish?
What is thy shrewd decision in this case?"
Súdába answered: "If this must be so
There is no need to sup on grief to-day.
Why grieve at union with the king of earth,

Who can deprive the mighty of their lands?
This is not grief but joy."
The king perceived
That she was not unwilling, called the envoy,
And gave him the chief place. They made a compact,
Each with the rites and sanctions then obtaining.
v. 387 The broken-hearted monarch and his chiefs
Were busied for a week, and then brought forth
Two scores of litters and three hundred slaves,
A thousand each of camels, steeds, and mules,
Whose loads were of dínárs and of brocade,
And 'neath the haudahs hung embroidered trappings.
An escort was drawn up in long defile;
The New Moon graced one litter; following her
There came her marriage-portion, then the escort
Arrayed like Paradise; thou wouldst have said:—
"The heaven hath planted tulips in the earth!"
Now when that fair-faced troop and Heart's Delight
Approached the presence of Sháh Kai Káús
A New Moon issued from the haudah like
A new-throned monarch robed. There musk and rose
Contrasted, and the earrings hung on civet;
Eyes languished, cheeks were ruby-red, and eyebrows
Sprang from a column like a silvern reed.
Káús in rapt amaze invoked God's name,
He called the hoary, shrewd, and wise archmages,
And having judged her fit to be his consort
He sanctioned his desires with legal rites.
"I knew thee at first sight," he told his spouse,
"Fit to adorn mine Idols' golden house."

§ 3

How the King of Hámávarán made Káús Prisoner

Meanwhile the father grieved and sought a cure;
So eight days afterward he sent at dawn

A messenger to Kai Káús to say:—
"If now the Sháh will be mine honoured guest
The people of Hámávarán will be
Much honoured too when they behold his face."
In this wise sought he to entrap Káús, V. 388
And being bad of heart and shrewd of wit,
Thought to retain his kingdom and his child,
And to escape all tribute. Now Súdába
Knew that her sire meant outrage at a feast,
And said to Kai Káús: "This is not well.
Thou must not be his guest, lest at the banquet
He make a brawl and get thee in his clutches.
All this ado is made on mine account,
And must result in thy discomfiture."
He heeded not her words because he held
Her people feeble folk, and as a guest
Went with his warriors and mighty men.
The ruler of Hámávarán possessed
A pleasure-city, Sháha hight, and had
A residence therein. He decked the city
Throughout, and when the exalted Sháh arrived
The citizens all did him reverence,
Showered gems and saffron, mingled ambergris
With musk, and wove the sounds of harp and song
Like warp and woof. The monarch and his nobles
Descrying Sháh Káús approached on foot.
The palace from the gateway to the hall
Rained jewels, pearls, and gold; men poured them forth
From golden trays and sifted ambergris
And musk o'erhead. The king set up a throne
Of gold within the palace and Káús
Sat there in joy. He revelled for a week;
The place delighted and enchanted him.
The monarch of Hámávarán stood girded—
A subject in his presence day and night—
With all his troops to serve the Íránians V. 389

Till each felt safe, and all suspicion ceased;
But when the week was o'er their hosts were ready
And rose; the soldiers of Barbaristán
Had been apprised and were upon the march:
Such was the plot. Their advent joyed the king.
At night came sound of trumpet and assault
When no Íránian was prepared for fight.
Forthwith the forces of Hámávarán
Seized on Káús and Gív, Gúdarz and Tús,
Gurgín and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And all the other famous warriors;
These they took captive and bound fast in bonds,
And throne and Grace were shent! What saith the man
Of insight and O sage! what thinkest thou?
"Trust in another man is not secure
Without the tie of blood to make it sure,
And even one so bound to thee may turn
His face away and thine affection spurn.
If then another's love thou fain wouldst try
Prove it in weal and in adversity,
For if in rank thou art more high than he
Then envy will abate his love for thee.
The course of this pernicious world is so,
It lightly changeth with all winds that blow."
Káús was ta'en; his over-confidence
Achieved the purpose of Hámávarán.
There was a mountain with a cloud-capt head,
Which God had lifted from the ocean-depths,
And on the mountain-top a fortress rose;
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky is in its lap.'
'Twas thither that the monarch sent Káús,
Gív, and Gúdarz, and Tús; the other chiefs
He flung inside that stronghold with the Sháh
v. 390 Bound. Over it a thousand warriors,
All swordsmen of renown, kept watch. He gave
The camp-enclosure of Káús to spoil,

Bestowing on his own chiefs crowns and purses.
Two files of ladies with a covered litter
Between them were deputed to escort
Súdába home and trampled on the tents.
Now when Súdába saw the ladies come
She rent her royal raiment and plucked out
Her musky tresses. With her filbert-nails
She stained her rosy cheeks the hue of blood,
Exclaiming thus: "Men that are men indeed
Hold in contempt such tricks and outrages.
Ye should have bound him on the day of battle
What time his robe was mail, his throne a steed,
And chieftains such as Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús
Rent with their drums your hearts. Ye make the throne
Of gold an ambuscade and break your faith."
She called the servants "dogs," her jasmine-skin
Was smirched with blood, she did not spare her words.
She said: "I will not part with Kai Káús
Although he shall be hidden in the dust,
And, since he needs must drag his chain, behead me
All guiltless as I am."
They told her sire,
Who was enraged and, eager for revenge,
Dispatched her to his fortress, broken-hearted
With blood-stained cheeks to join her husband there.
Thenceforth she sat in sorrow with the king
Engaged in tending him and comforting.

§ 4

How Afrásiyáb invaded the Land of Írán

The ambitious Sháh being bound, his army made
Toward Írán, and having passed the sea
In ships and transports crossed the desert homeward.

V. 391 When they arrived 'twas bruited through the realm:—
"The Cypress-tree is missing from the garden,
The throne of king of kings is overturned."
Now when men saw the golden throne left void
They all desired the crown; upon each side
Great hosts of Turkmans and of desert-spearmen
Approached, cries rose from both sides of Írán,
And peace was changed to strife. Áfrásiyáb
Joined battle fiercely with the Árábian host;
They fought three months, and many heads were lost
To win a crown, the Arabs were o'erthrown,
And all their gain was loss. The Turkman troops
O'er-ran the country and enslaved the folk.
It is the custom of this Wayside Inn
That greed should bring both travail and chagrin;
At last both good and evil pass away;
Death is the hunter and this world his prey.

V. 392 The people said: "Our fortunes are o'erturned,
We are confronted with a grievous case.
Woe for Írán, for it is desolate,
The lair of pards and lions! 'Twas erewhile
All warrior-horsemen and the seat of kings,
But now a scene of hardship and of bale,
The dwelling-place of dragons sharp of claw!
Seek we a remedy and banish care.
One fed on leopards' milk shall succour us;
Dispatch we then a sage in state to Rustam."
An archmage went to him and told the tidings,
And Rustam, deeply moved, wept tears of gall.
He answered: "I and mine are girt for vengeance.
First I will see about Káús, then sweep
The Turkman from Írán."
He summoned troops,

V. 393 Who flocked to him out of Zábul, Kábul,
And Hindústán. Throughout his wide domain

Arose the sound of trump and Indian bell.
The heart of Rustam raged like fire; he led
The army forth and like a storm-wind sped.

§ 5

How Rustam sent a Message to the King of Hámávarán

Then Rustam sent a wary messenger
To make his way to Kai Káús and say:—
"I am approaching with a mighty host
To fight the ruler of Hámávarán.
Be glad of heart and feed not on thy grief:
Behold! I am already in the land."
Withal a man of name among the chiefs
Went to the ruler of Hámávarán,
And Rustam wrote to him in warlike terms
A letter all mace, scimitar, and fray:—
"Thou hast entrapped our Sháh and broken faith.
It is not manly to use guile in war,
Nor art thou dour like the bold crocodile
Which never ambuscadeth in the fight
Although its heart be brimming with revenge. V. 394
Thou shalt escape the Dragon's evil clutch
If Sháh Káús be set at large; if not,
Prepare thyself to feel my weight in battle.
Thou surely must have heard the chieftains tell
Of how I fought against Mázandarán,
Fought with Púlád son of Ghundí and Bíd,
And smote the White Dív."
As he read the letter
The king turned dizzy, and the world grew dark
Before his eyes. He answered: "Kai Káús
Shall never set foot on the plain, and when
Thou comest to Barbaristán, and all
Thy cavaliers have fled, a chain and pit
Are ready for thee too. If these delights

Allure thee I, according to our custom,
V. 395 Will meet thee with my troops."
When Rustam heard
The answer, and the chieftains had assembled,
The trumpets sounded and he mounted Rakhsh.
He went by sea because the way by land
Was tedious, crossing to Hámávarán
With all his mighty host in ships and transports.
The troops were ready both to spoil and slay,
And banished all compunction from their hearts.
Now when the monarch of Hámávarán
Had news of vengeful Rustam and his host
V. 396 He raged, the war-cry rose, and all the world
Seethed up in blood and pillage. Rustam donned
His armour, mounted on the snorting Rakhsh,
And shouldering his mace charged furiously.
Whenas the foemen saw his chest and arms,
And how he handled mace and battle-ax,
Thou wouldst have said: "They have no hearts at all."
They scattered in their fear of him, and thus
That great host fled back to Hámávarán.
The king in conclave summoned two young men
In order to dispatch them to Barbar
And Misr, like rushing wind, each with a letter
Penned in distress of heart with blood for ink,
V. 397 And thus it ran: "Our realms confine, we share
In good and evil, and in fight and feast.
If ye will join with me I fear not Rustam
In fight; if not, the evil will extend,
And evil's hand extendeth on all sides."
Whenas the letter reached the kings, announcing
That Rustam led his host across the desert,
They feared, bestirred themselves, arrayed their powers
And marched toward Hámávarán. The land
Became all hill, troops stretched from range to range,

And dust obscured the moon. Then Rustam sent
A warrior in haste to Sháh Káús
By stealth to say: "The monarchs of three realms
Approach to fight—brave men who shall not know
Their heads from feet when I encounter them;
But thou must not be injured by our strife
Since evil men are prone to outrages,
And e'en Barbar's throne would avail me not
If ill befell the person of the Sháh."
Káús made answer: "Have no care for this;
The earth was not spread out for me alone,
And bane will mix with sweets and love with hate
While heaven turneth. God too is my friend,
My refuge, and my stronghold is His love.
Give Rakhsh the rein, and level to his ears
Thy lance's point; let not a foe remain
In arms or hiding."
Matchless Rustam heard, V. 398
Armed, and went forth to battle, urged fleet Rakhsh
Along, and challenged all the world to fight,
Then stood alone and glared upon the foe,
But no one dared though Rustam waited long,
Until bright Sol was setting in the sea,
And dark-hued night was coming on apace.
Then that great elephantine chief returned,
And rested in his tent till night was passed;
The next day, when the sun grew bright again,
He came forth and arrayed his mighty men.

§ 6

How Rustam fought with Three Kings and delivered Káús

Next day they set the battle in array
And raised their standards. When the peerless Rustam
Had led his forces to the field, and viewed

The armies of three monarchs and three realms,
He thus harangued his noble warriors:—
"Keep your eyelashes well apart to-day,
And look to mane and forelock, steed and rein,
With both eyes on your spearpoints. Be the foe
A hundred or a hundred thousand horse
Their sum importeth not for, since the All-holy
Is our ally, I will bring down their heads
To dust."

V. 399 The monarchs on their side were seated
On elephants; their forces stretched two miles.
Barbaristán sent eight score elephants
All foaming like the Nile, Hámávarán
Contributed a hundred more—huge beasts—
And had a line of battle two miles long,
And thirdly was arrayed the power of Misr.
The atmosphere was darkened, earth was hidden,
And thou hadst said: "The world is all of iron,"
Or: "Mount Alburz hath donned a coat of mail."
Behind the warriors' backs amid the dust
Waved flags of yellow, red, and violet;
The mountains echoed with the heroes' shouts,
Aud earth was weary of the tramp of steeds.
Then were the claws and hearts of lions rent,
And lusty eagles flung their plumes away,
The clouds of heaven melted in mid air,
For how could anything oppose such troops?
The Íránians ranked the host to right and left,
The heroes longed for battle and revenge.
Guráza held the right where was the baggage,
Upon the left was glorious Zawára—
A Dragon and a Lion in the fray—
While Rustam at the centre, with coiled lasso
V. 400 Hung to his saddlebow, bade sound the advance.
Then sword and javelin gleamed; thou wouldst have said:—

"Heaven hath sown earth with tulips," and where Rustam
Urged Rakhsh: "He spreadeth fire," and: "All the waste
Is as a Zam[1] of blood, not like a field
Of elephantine Rustam's." Helméd heads
Were smitten off, and plain and hollow strewn
With mail. The peerless hero urged on Rakhsh
And, deigning not to slaughter common folk,
Charged at the king of Shám and lassoed him
(Thou wouldst have said the lasso crushed his waist),
Then snatched him from the saddle, like a ball
Struck by a polo-stick, and flung him down.
Bahrám made fast his hands. They captured sixty
Of name and deluged plain and hill with blood.
The monarch of Barbar and forty chiefs
Were taken prisoners by Guráza's hand,
And when the monarch of Hámávarán V. 401
Beheld his soldiers slain on every side,
Beheld a troop of wounded warriors,
Another troop fast bound in heavy chains,
And valiant Rustam with his trenchant sword
Creating Doomsday on the battlefield,
He felt: "This day is one of bale," and sent
To Rustam to ask quarter, promising
To give up Kai Káús and all the leaders,
And to restore the treasures, crowns, and jewels,
The tent-enclosures, thrones, and golden girdles,
And slaves. They made a peace and then disbanded
Three hosts. The monarch of Hámávarán
Went home and sat in council, sent, and fetched
Káús, and righted him. When Rustam thus
Released the Sháh with Gív, Tús, and Gúdarz,
He stored three kingdoms' arms, three monarchs' riches,
The tents, the crowns, and everything of value, V. 402

[1] The name of a river.

Among the treasures of Sháh Kai Káús,
Who then refulgent in his sun-like Grace
Prepared a gilded litter of brocade
Of Rúm, a crown of gems, a turquoise seat,
A sable housing decked with jewelry,
And placed them on a steed of easy pace,
Whose bridle was adorned with gold. He made
The litter out of fresh-cut aloe-wood
Inlaid with many divers kinds of gems,
And bade Súdába take her seat therein
Secluded like the sun beneath the earth,
Then led the army campward from the city
To reassert his claims upon Írán.
A hundred thousand horsemen from Barbar,
Hámávarán, and Misr assembled round him,
While his own host was fifteen thousand score
Of cavaliers on bardéd steeds and more.

§ 7

How Káús sent a Message to Afrásiyáb

V. 403 Now when the Arab spearmen of the desert
Heard from Hámávarán of Rustam's doings
With Misr and with Barbar and with their kings,
They chose a wise and valiant man, well skilled
In horsemanship and javelin-play, and wrote
A royal letter couched in fitting terms.
"We are," they said, "the servants of the Sháh
And only walk the world at his command;
So when a host came from the Kargasárs
To seek his throne our hearts were greatly grieved
At such presumption. When Afrásiyáb
Desired thy throne (may none such dream thereof)
We chiefs and swordsmen went forth to the field
V. 404 With our long spears and turned his joy and ease

To bitterness. On both sides many fell,
The age grew conversant with good and evil,
And now we hear of thee and that the Grace
Of king of kings reviveth. When thou comest
Back from Barbar we all will shoulder spears,
Fill earth from hill to hill with foemen's blood,
And make the world run like Jíhún."
The envoy
Spurred forth toward Barbaristán, the Sháh
Received the letter couched in such fair terms,
Then wrote a letter to Afrásiyáb:—
"Quit thou Írán and limit thine ambition.
I wonder much at what I hear of thee.
Thou hast no wants, thou joyest in Túrán;
Then be not covetous or fondly grasping
At ill, which soon will bring thee lengthy toils.
A smaller matter is enough for thee—
To save thy skin. Dost know not that Írán
Is my seat, earth all mine? The boldest leopard
Will never dare to face the lion's claws."
He gave a paladin the letter sealed, V. 405
Who reached the monarch of Túrán and Chín
In haste, first kissed the ground and did obeisance,
And after compliments gave him the letter
Which, when Afrásiyáb had read it, filled
His head with vengeance and his heart with rage.
He answered: "Only miscreants talk thus.
In thy case, if Írán had satisfied thee
Thou hadst not coveted Hámávarán,
And now that I have won Írán, and raised
My fluttering flag, that broad champaign is mine
On two accounts; thou needs must hear the truth:
First—I inherit all the land from Túr, V. 406
My grandsire and the son of Farídún;
And secondly—I cleared it of the Arabs
With my sword-arm. I with my scimitar

Behead the mountains and bring eagles down
From their dark cloud-tops."
He equipped his troops,
And marched in person to oppose Káús,
Who, when he heard, arrayed a boundless host
And from Barbar marched to Arabia
To meet Afrásiyáb; the world was filled
With trump and tymbal-din, the sky was ebony,
V. 407 The earth was iron. What with crash of ax
And twang of bow a blood-wave swept the field,
While Rustam thundering from the centre broke
The foemen with one charge. On that field slept
The fortunes of Túrán. Afrásiyáb
Boiled, like fermenting must, without a fire,
And cried: "O gallant hearts of mine, my Lions,
And chosen chiefs! 'twas for a time like this
That ye were reared upon my breast, and now
Ye play at battle with mine Arab foes!
Be strong, renew the fight, and make the world
Too narrow for Káús, spear and cut down
His warriors, and behead his haughty chiefs.
As for this lion-hearted man of Sigz,[1]
Who maketh heaven redden with his sword,
Be bold and take him captive with your lassos.
Whoever on the battlefield shall bring him
Down from the pard-skin to the dust shall have
A realm, a parasol, my daughter's hand,
And be entitled 'captain of the host;'
Him will I make the lord of all Írán,
And will exalt him to revolving heaven."
Thereat the Turkmans rallied to the fight.
With massive maces in their hands the brave,
V. 408 The chieftains of Írán, so slaughtered them
That rivers, plains, and hills were strewn with slain—

[1] According to C, glossary (*s.v.*), a mountain in Zábulistán where Rustam was born, but more probably = Sajistán = Sístán.

The more part of their host—and earth was puddled
With blood to clay. The Turkmans' fortune slept.
Afrásiyáb fled Rustam with the troops
From Ghúr; he sought for gain but gained a loss,
And seeing fortune's bent left them and stricken
Marched toward Túrán, his warriors mostly slain:
He searched the world for honey and found bane.

§ 8

How Káús ordered the World

Káús arrived at Párs, the world began
An age of happiness. He acted justly,
Adorned the throne, and gave free scope to feasting;
He sent forth wise and noble paladins
With troops to all parts—Marv and Níshápúr,
Harát and Balkh. Then justice ruled the world;
The wolf eyed not the lamb. Such were his treasures,
His state, and Grace, that fairies, men, and dívs
Served him, all were his lieges, other kings
Were soldiers in his host. He gave the office
Of paladin of paladins to Rustam—
The author of his weal—and wearied out
The dívs to build himself on Mount Alburz
Two mansions, each ten lassos long, which they
Constructed at his bidding of hard stone.
He excavated stables in the rocks,
The columns were of stone with clamps of steel,
And there he kept the war-steeds and the camels V. 409
To ride or carry litters. He erected
A pleasure-house of crystal, studding it
With emeralds; a cupola of onyx
Brought from Yamán, and there installed archmages
That learning might not fail; two armouries
Of virgin silver and a golden palace

Twice sixty cubits high for his own seat
With turquoise traceries; he spared not jewels.
It was a dwelling after his own heart,
Where daily provand waxed continually.
There was no summertide or wintertide,
The air was ambergris, the rain was wine,
The days of springtide lasted all the year,
And roses there were like a maiden's blush,
The heart was far from sorrow, pain, and travail,
The dívs were harmless being spent with toil.
So good and just was he that fortune slept,
While drudging dívs beneath his rigour wept.

§ 9

How Káús, beguiled by Iblís, ascended the Sky

One dawn Iblís, unknown to Kai Káús,
Addressed the assembled dívs: "Our daily task
Is one of cruel labour for the Sháh.
V. 410 We need a dív shrewd and presentable
To tempt him, soil his Grace, wean him from God,
And thus abate his tyranny."
They heard
And mused. None answered, for they feared Káús.
At length a wicked dív arose and said:—
"Be mine this subtile task. I will pervert
His mind from God as none but I can do."
Appearing as a youth of good address
And mien, he waited till the famous Sháh
Went hunting from Pahlav. The dív approached
With roses to present, then kissed the ground,
And said: "Thy glory and thy Grace are such
That heaven is thy fit home and earth thy slave;
Thou art the shepherd, nobles are the sheep.
One thing is lacking still—that thou shouldst leave

Thine everlasting mark upon the world.
How is it that the sun concealeth from thee
The secret of its rising and its setting?
What is the moon? What are the night and day,
And who is master of the turning sky?
Thou hast the earth and all thou didst desire;
Now take the heaven also in thy toils."
The Sháh's heart strayed, he tarried not to think,
Convinced that turning heaven favoured him.
He knew not that the sky is ladderless,
Nor that, though stars be many, God but One,
What ever He commandeth must be done V. 411
How ever great the struggle and the stress.
The Maker hath no need of sky and earth;
'Twas for thy sake that both of them had birth.
The Sháh mused how to roam the air though wingless,
And often asked the wise: "How far is it
From earth to moon?"
The astrologers replied.
He chose a futile and perverse device:
He bade men scale the aeries while the eagles
Were sleeping, take a number of the young,
And keep a bird or two in every home.
He had those eaglets fed a year and more
With fowl, kabáb, and at some whiles with lamb.
When they were strong as lions and could each
Bear off a mountain-sheep he made a throne
Of aloe from Kumár[1] with seats of gold.
He bound a lengthy spear at every corner,
Suspended a lamb's leg from every spear-head,
Brought four strong eagles, tied them to the throne,
And took his seat, a cup of wine before him.
The swift-winged eagles, ravenous for food,
Strove lustily to reach the flesh, and raising

[1] Cape Comorin.

The throne above earth's surface bore it cloudward.
Káús, as I have heard, essayed the sky
To outsoar angels, but another tale
Is that he rose in this way to assail
The heaven itself with his artillery.
The legend hath its other versions too;
None but the All-wise wotteth which is true.
Long flew the eagles, but they stopped at last,
V. 412 Like other slaves of greed. They sulked exhausted,
They drooped their sweating wings and brought the Sháh,
His spears, and throne down from the clouds to earth,
Alighting in a forest near Ámul.[1]
The world preserved him by a miracle,
But hid its secret purposes therein.
In answer to his prayers a duck[2] appeared,
For something must be had to eat and drink,
And if Sháh Kai Káús had perished there
Worldlord Khusrau had not been born from him.[3]
Instead of sitting on his throne in might
His business then was penitence and travail.
He tarried in the wood in shame and grief
Imploring from Almighty God relief.

§ 10

How Rustam brought back Káús

While thus the Sháh sought pardon his own host
Was searching for him everywhere. When Rustam
With Gív and Tús gat news of him they marched
With many troops and drums. Said old Gúdarz
To Rustam: "Since my mother suckled me

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Siyáwush; also the name of the yet unborn son of Kai Káús and father of Kai Khusrau.

[3] Couplet inserted from C. See introductory note to this Part.

I have been conversant with crown and throne,
With kings and great men of unsleeping fortune,
But have not seen in all the world a man
'Midst high and low so self-willed as Káús.
He hath no wisdom, common sense, or Faith,
He is wrong-headed and wrong-hearted too.
Thou wouldest say: 'He hath no brains, his thoughts
Are all awry.' None of the great of yore
Hath e'er essayed the heavens. Like witless madmen V. 413
He is borne off his feet by every wind."

Whenas the paladins arrived they rated
The Sháh. "The madhouse is thy proper place,"
Gúdarz said, "not the city. Thou surrenderest
Thy seat to foes and tellest none thy whims.
Thrice hast thou been in trouble, yet thy head
Is none the wiser! To Mázandarán
Thou led'st a host, and look what mischief followed!
Again, thou madest merry with a foe,
Yet thou—his idol—hadst to worship him!
And when none in the world save holy God
Remained to read the title of thy sword,
Since earth was conquered, thou must needs try heaven,
Although to soar one hand-breadth is revolt.
What bale hast thou encountered yet escaped!
Hereafter folk will tell of thee: 'A Sháh
Went to the sky to see the sun and moon,
And count the stars.' Now do as princes do
When prudent, pious, and beneficent—
Serve God and Him alone in weal and woe."

Káús, abashed before those famous heroes,
Replied: "No harm can come of righteous judgment;
Thy words are righteous and thou hast convinced me."

He wept gall, called on God, and took his seat
Distressed and penitent within the litter.
He reached his lofty throne, but, being troubled V. 414
Still at his great offence, he quitted it

And entered not his palace out of shame,
But paced the dust in prayer before his God
For forty days. Thou wouldst have said: "His skin
Hath burst." He prayed with tears of blood and wailed
For Grace. Abashed to meet the mighty men
He ceased from banquetings and audiences,
Repented and did penance, giving largess,
And laid his cheek upon the darksome dust
In prayer to God who in a while forgave him.
His scattered troops assembled at his gate;
God's pardon gave him brightness; he was ware
That penance had borne fruit. He took his seat
Crowned on the throne of gold, gave to his troops
A donative, reformed the world, and grew
A Light to great and small; thou wouldst have said:—
"The world, now right is done, is all brocade,
The king of kings illumineth the throne."
From every province those illustrious chiefs,
That had assumed the crown, renewed allegiance
And journeyed to his court, old times returned,
The monarch bathed his crown in love and faith,
The princes all attended as his slaves
Before him while he sat upon his throne
Of jewel-work with crown and ox-head mace.
V. 415 I tell the tale as I have heard it told,
And none hath such another to unfold.
Such were the actions of the worldlord king
And Rustam, chief of paladins! Whene'er
A king is just then all is well and fair;
He needeth not to cry for succouring.
Káús saw what was right, did what was right,
A breath of wind was this world in his sight.

THE STORY OF THE FIGHT OF THE SEVEN WARRIORS

§ 11

How Rustam went with the Seven Warriors to the Hunting-ground of Afrásiyáb

To strive with death is but a bootless strife,
Such is the moral taught by Rustam's life.
A minstrel whom a lion once surprised—
A man of valiant heart—thus moralised:—
"If thou wouldst have the glory of the brave,
And wouldst imbrue in blood an Indian glave,
Seek not to spare thyself, for destiny
Will not be balked when 'tis the time to die.
If, being wise, thou keepest death in sight
The brave will count thee not a man of might.
Both Faith and wisdom sanction not this course,
But their good teaching is enslaved by force."
A goodly gest of Rustam's next I tell. V. 416
Once at Nawand—that place of palaces—
The mighty hero gave a splendid feast
Where tall Barzín[1] now beaconeth the way.
The great men of Írán— a famous band—
Tús and Gudárz son of Kishwád, Bahrám
And Gív—both noble men—Gurgín and Zanga,
Kharrád and Gustaham, that haughty swordsman
Barzín and, crown of all the band, Guráza,
Assembled at the place of banqueting,
Each with his meiny—an illustrious throng.
They spent a while at polo, wine, and hunting,
And, when they all were merry, Gív bemused
Said thus to Rustam: "O illustrious chief!

[1] The name of a fire-temple.

Come let us, if thou hast a mind to hunt,
Hide from the great Afrásiyáb's preserves
The sun's resplendent visage with the dust
Of horsemen, cheetahs, hawks, and our long spears.
There let us chase the rapid onager,
O'ercome the lion with the sword, and take
Boars with the spear and pheasants with the hawk
Throughout the livelong day. Come let us go
V. 417 A-hunting in yon desert of Túrán
To make ourselves a memory in the world."
Then Rustam answered: "Bé it as thou wilt,
And prosper thou. Seek we Túrán at dawn
To hunt and harry in the deserts there."
They all agreed and, when they rose next day,
Made ready eagerly, and setting forth
With cheetahs, hawks, and baggage bravely sped
Toward the Shahd across the hunting-ground
Of great Afrásiyáb, on one side mountains,
A river on another side, Sarakhs
Upon the third, a wilderness in front.
Both deer and sheep flocked on the plain, which soon
Was occupied by tents and huts. The deer
Were frighted by the company, the lions
No longer ravened there, birds as they flew
Knew something of the sport, for bird and beast
Lay everywhere in heaps, some killed, some wounded.
V. 418 The hunters were light-hearted, full of glee,
With laughter constantly upon their lips,
And having spent a sennight wine in hand
Were jovially bemused. The peerless Rustam
Came as the eighth day dawned with needful warnings:—
"Afrásiyáb no doubt hath heard of us
By this. We must not let that Áhriman
Take counsel with his famous officers,

Devise a ruse, come forth to fight, and rob V. 419
Our cheetahs of their hunting-grounds. We need
An outpost on the road to bring us news,
However scanty, of our enemies;
We must not let them cut us off."
The chief
Of all the offspring of Gívgán—Guráza—
Girt him for that emprise. With such a watchman
The ruses of the foe were nothing worth.
The others hunted in security.
At length Afrásiyáb gat news of them
At sleeping-time and called his veteran chiefs,
Discoursed to them at large of Rustam, told them
About the seven warriors—lion-like
And gallant cavaliers—and thus he said:—
"We must not dally, but devise a ruse,
And fall upon them unawares. If we
Can seize these seven warriors we shall straiten
The world for Kai Káús. We must go forth
As if to hunt and take them by surprise."
He chose him thirty thousand famous swordsmen,
And spake thus: "Go not by the beaten track, V. 420
And slumber not but hasten night and day."
They hastened forth along the desert-route.
And raised their necks for strife. Afrásiyáb
Dispatched meanwhile to cut those proud chiefs off
A countless host. As they drew near the chace,
Advancing quickly eager for revenge,
The outpost saw them like a darksome cloud,
While dust arose like lapislazuli
Wherein a flag appeared. Like rushing wind
He turned back shouting lustily and found
The matchless Rustam and his mates at wine,
Then cried: "O Rustam, lion-man! away
With these delights, for such a countless host
Appeareth that the plain and heights are one;

The standard of the fell Afrásiyáb
Is shining sun-like through the clouds of dust!"
Then Rustam, laughing heartily, replied:—
"Victorious fortune is with us, why fear
The Turkman king and dust of Turkman horse?
All told he is not five score thousand strong,
And were I by myself upon this plain,
What with my battle-ax, cuirass, and Rakhsh,
I should not trouble for Afrásiyáb
With all his mighty army and his dash;
Nay, any one of us upon the field
Would over-match the whole host of Túrán.
A battle-ground like this is all I need;
I want not I the Íránian warriors.
We have a band of seven cavaliers,
Such men of name, such swordsmen, that each one
Will match five hundred, two will match a thousand,
Skilled cavaliers and spearmen though they be.
V. 421 And now, cup-bearer! fill up to the brim
The goblet with the vintage of Zábul."
They poured the wine, and Rustam's spirits rose;
He took a bowl and toasted Kai Káús.
"I give the monarch of the age," he said,
"And may he flourish ever soul and body,"
Then kissed the ground. Again he took the cup,
And cried: "This goblet do I drain to Tús."
Thereat those princes of the worldlord rose
And prayed the paladin have them excused.
"We can no more," they said; "Iblís himself
Could not drink fair with thee. Wine, one-blow mace,
And battlefield are thine and thine alone."
Then from a golden cup the hero drank
Zawára's health in red wine of Zábul,
Whereat Zawára took the cup in hand,
And he too gave the health of Kai Káús,
Then quaffed the wine and kissed the face of earth,

While Rustam fell to praising him and said :—
"The brother doth the brother's cup essay!
A Lion he, the wine-cup is his prey."

§ 12

How Rustam fought with the Túránians

"O glory of the monarch and the chiefs!"
Said Gív to Rustam, "I will seize and hold
The bridge against the foe, so that our men
May arm, for mirth is over." V. 422
With strung bow
He ran toward the bridge but found the king
Across already leading on his van.
Then matchless Rustam donned his tiger-skin,
Bestrode his huge fell Elephant, and went
With roarings like a bellowing crocodile
Against the Turkman host. Thou wouldst have said
That when Afrásiyáb caught sight of Rustam
Mailed, with such hands and breast and arms and neck
And shouldered battle-axe, he swooned away.
Tús and Gúdarz, the wielders of the lance,
Gurgín and Gív, the gallant cavaliers,
Bahrám, Barzín, Farhád, and Zanga son
Of Sháwarán, the warriors, sprang up,
All with their spears and Indian swords in hand,
And ranged themselves like leopards for the combat.
Gív, like a lion that hath lost its prey,
Rushed to the fight and with his whirling mace
Laid many stalwart Turkman chieftains low.
Their fortune was averse, the fighting-men
Of Chín recoiled. Afrásiyáb astound V. 423
Rushed forth to join the mellay. Rustam saw,
And, shouldering his massive mace and gripping V. 424
His charger firmly, came before the host

With lion's roars. Behind him was Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, in mail with mace of steel.
When the Túránians' eyes were growing dim,
And Rustam's helm touched heaven, Afrásiyáb
V. 425 Spake to Pírán the son of Wísa, saying:—
"O full of wisdom and my loyal chieftain,
Most famous of the Lions of Túrán,
Aspiring and redoubted! ply thy reins,
Go forth with speed, and clear the field of foes.
Írán is thine if thou dost conquer; thou
Hast elephantine form and lion's claws."
Pírán departed like a rushing wind,
Arrayed ten thousand Turkmans—gallant swordsmen
Of high renown—and came like fire on Rustam,
For victory or defeat both hung on him.
That hero foamed and, as thou wouldst have said,
Eclipsed the sun. He urged his charger on;
A roar arose as of the rising sea.
With shield o'er head and Indian sword in hand
He slew most of those chiefs. Afrásiyáb
Saw this from far and said thus to his nobles:—
"If they fight thus till dark there will not be
A single horseman left! Think we no more
Of battle. We came forth to fight the Íránians
And in our own conceit were lions then,
V. 426 Yet now I seem a fox as I survey
The plain, and feel a skulker from the fray!"

§ 13

How Pílsam fought with the Íránians

There was a warrior, by name Pílsam,
Of royal race and eager for renown,
His sire was glorious Wísa and his brother
Victorious Pírán. Both in Írán

And in Túrán he had no peer save Rustam.
On hearing what Afrásiyáb had said
He frowned with rage and, hasting to the king,
Cried in his eager longing for the fray:—
"A youthful warrior of this host am I.
What dust before me are the valiant Tús
And gallant Gív—that Lion known to fame—
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And brave Guráza! At the king's command
I will go lion-like, smite off their heads,
O'ercloud their moon, and bring their crowns to dust."
The king replied: "O famous warrior!
May victory be thine. Thou must prevail
And come back conquering and glorious."
Thereat Pílsam roared like a brazen trumpet, V. 427
Charged the Íránian centre swift as dust,
And struck to right and left with sword and ax,
With lion-roars assailed Gurgín like wind,
And smote upon the head his foeman's charger,
Which came down headlong in its agony.
This Gustaham, the well approved in war,
Beheld and, swiftly rushing from his post,
Made like a raging lion for Pílsam,
And closing with that fiercely blazing Fire
Thrust at his foeman's belt; the buckles held;
The spear was shivered in his grasp; he flung
The haft away. Pílsam drew his keen sword,
Struck Gustaham with fury on the crest,
And sent his helmet rolling, leaving him
Stunned and disarmed. When Zanga on the right
Saw that fierce struggle he advanced to help,
And marked the evil plight of Gustaham.
Pílsam the Crocodile opposed the charge,
And, coming with an Indian sword in hand,
Struck at and clave the mail of Zanga's steed,
Which tumbled prone. The gallant warrior fell,

Took up, and knit his mail-skirt round his waist
To strive afoot against the great Pílsam
Amid the dust—the prey against the lion.
Dark clouds of dust rose from the scene of strife.
Gív, looking from the centre of the host
And seeing earth dark in the heroes' eyes,
V. 428 Roared like the thunder on the mountain-top,
Or like the savage lion in the fight.
He went to aid his comrades, and all four
Attacked Pílsam. That hero blenched no jot,
But rushed upon them plying sword and mace:
The four chiefs' hands were paralysed with wonder.
Pírán, beholding from the centre, saw
His brother's desperate case, rushed forth to help him,
And shouted furiously to Gív: "O noble!
It is no glory for you four to fight
One lion-like and famous warrior."
He spake and charged amid a cloud of dust,
While Rustam too rushed bravely to the mellay
And smote with sword and axe and massive mace
The captains of the army of Túrán.
Then fled Pílsam, well knowing that that Dragon
Would have his life. The Íránian chiefs and warriors
Slew with the massive mace so many Turkmans
That corpses were piled up to reach the moon.
Afrásiyáb looked on and sighing cried:—
"Where is Alkús the warrior who wished
So oft to fight with Lions, in his cups
Would challenge Gív and plan a fight with Rustam?
Írán was all that he would talk of then,
Where are his ardour and his bluster now?"
V. 429 Alkús was told, urged on his night-hued steed,
And with his hands no doubt already bathed
In blood came to the centre to the king,
And cried aloud: "A man of war am I,
A Lion waiting. At the king's command

I will go forth to battle single-handed."
The monarch said: "Choose captains from the host."
More than a thousand valiant cavaliers
Went with him, carrying head-strewing lances,
And glittering like Jupiter and Venus.
Alkús as he approached the Íránians
Obscured the sun and moon in clouds of dust,
And when Zawára showed and challenged fight
Soon countered him and thought: "This should be Rustam,"
Because he knew the seed of Narímán.
Zawára charged in lion-wise, but when
His lance snapped, he was frayed and drew his sword.
They veiled the world with dust. Both falchions shivered.
They seized their maces. Quick as wind Alkús
Dealt such a blow as left Zawára senseless,
Who swooned and tumbled speechless from his saddle.
Alkús leaped down to take his foeman's head,
But Rustam seeing how his brother fared
Rushed like a fire toward him with a shout
Which shook Alkús' hand and dulled his sword.
At hearing Rustam's voice thou wouldst have said:— V. 430
"His heart showed through his skin." Swift as the wind
He mounted, all forgetful of his manhood,
And Rustam said: "Thou hadst not measured then
The Lion's claws and therefore wast so brave."
Then while Zawára, blood-stained, sorely wounded,
And battered by the mace, regained his saddle,
Alkús encountered Rustam and thereby
Robed his bark-saddle with a winding-sheet,
For thrusting with a spear at Rustam's girdle
He failed to pierce the mail, while Rustam thrust
A spear at his foe's head and dashed him down
As 'twere a mountain-crag to earth, his helmet
Drowned in his heart's blood, while both armies wondered.

Then fear came on the soldiers of Túrán,
While lion-like the seven warriors
Drew, and their gallant captains followed them
With massive maces laid upon their shoulders.
Afrásiyáb beheld them with amaze,
Turned, gazed upon his mighty men, and said:—
"The foe hath overcome you. Strive and battle
Like valiant pards."
The soldiers heard his voice,
And fell on Rustam in a mass, while he
Charged them in fury with the seven warriors.
They drave and routed all the Turkman host,
Incarnadined the land with brave men's blood,
And laid so many low that what with corpses
And trunkless heads no vacant space was seen
For troops to fight on, wheel, or pass between.

§ 14

How Afrásiyáb fled from the Battlefield

V. 431 Afrásiyáb turned rein on seeing this,
And fled, like some dark cloud, pursued by Rustam,
Who thus exhorted Rakhsh: "My clever steed!
Lag not in battle-time, for I will slay
The monarch by thine aid and make the plain
Like coral with his blood."
The fiery charger
Sped on so rapidly that thou hadst said:—
"His flanks have put forth wings!" Then Rustam loosed
The lasso from the straps and aimed to catch
His foeman round the waist. The leathern noose
Fell on his helm; the Turkmans' leader snatched
His neck away; again the wind-foot steed
Beneath him sped like fire. Afrásiyáb

Escaped, but with wet cheeks and drouthy mouth,
While all his horsemen hurried after him
With spirits broken and with shattered arms.
He sped like wind and overpassed the stream
With stricken heart, his soldiers mostly slain:
He searched the world for honey and found poison.
Of treasures and of thrones, of crowns and girdles,
Of swords and jerkins, jewelry and helms,
Of noble steeds caparisoned with gold,
Of casques and scimitars with golden scabbards,
And other gear, great store fell to the Íránians. V. 432
They gathered all and left the field, rejoicing,
They did not strip the slain or seek the fallen,
But went back to the hunting-ground and took
All kinds of steeds and equipage. They wrote
To Sháh Káús to tell of hunt and fight,
And how they had not lost a warrior;
Zawára had been thrown and that was all.
The paladin remained two weeks with mirth
Upon the scene of triumph, on the third
They sought the Sháh and saw his glorious crown.

The custom of our Wayside Inn is so,
One man hath quiet and another woe.
In this wise or in that time passeth by;
Why should a wise man feel anxiety?

The legends of this matter now are told,
Such as have reached us from the days of old.

PART III

SUHRÁB

ARGUMENT

The poet, after justifying in his prelude the ways of God to man in the matter of early death, tells how Rustam, in the course of one of his hunting expeditions to Túrán, marries Tahmína, the daughter of the king of Samangán. Rustam returns to Írán and is subsequently informed by Tahmína, who has remained at Samangán, that she has borne him a son—Suhráb. In after years Suhráb joins the host of Afrásiyáb in an invasion of Írán in the hope of meeting his father, who has been misled by Tahmína into forming a false estimate of their son's person and prowess. After a series of tragic misadventures father and son meet in single combat with fatal results.

NOTE

The story of Suhráb is purely episodic, it might be omitted from the present reign without any apparent solution of continuity, and it is the only tale in the whole Sháhnáma that is at all familiar to the English reader. It has been translated into English at least twice, and has been retold according to Western ideas by Matthew Arnold, who has also followed the incorrect account of the episode given in Sir John Malcolm's 'History of Persia,' i. 27, note, where Tahmína is represented as having informed Rustam that she had given birth to a daughter. The improbability of the story may thus be lessened for the English reader, but to the Oriental eye it is the very improbability that makes it so impressive, as being an illustration of the working out of destiny which frustrates the best intentions, over-rides all obstacles, and makes mankind the puppets of its will. There is no trace of this story in Pahlaví literature as at present known to us.

§ 8. White Castle, known also as Mount Sipand,[1] probably is identical with the Spentódáta of the Zandavasta [2] and the Spendyád mountain of the Bundahish.[3] It was the scene of the death of

[1] See vol. i. p. 236. [2] DZA, ii. 289. [3] WPT, i. 39.

Narímán, Rustam's great-grandfather, of Rustam's second exploit,[1] and of the defeat and death at the hands of Káran of the Túránian hero Bármán,[2] who, it is worth noting, has reappeared as if nothing had happened.[3] Similarly Kulbád reappears.[4]

We are here introduced to a female warrior—Gurdáfríd—the only one in the poem, with the exception of Gurdya, the strong-minded and courageous sister of Bahrám Chubína. Gurdya, however, does not appear on the scene till the Sháhnáma is near its end. As for Gurdáfríd, she merely crosses Suhráb's path for a moment and nothing more is heard of her. This seems to show that the story of Suhráb was, like the rest of the Sháhnáma, based on existing materials. If Firdausí had invented the story himself it is almost inconceivable that he should not have made more of the relations between Suhráb and Gurdáfríd.[5]

§ 1

The Prelude

The story of Suhráb and Rustam hear: V. 433
  Thou hast heard others; let it be thy part
To hear this too: 'tis fraught with many a tear,
  And Rustam will enrage thy gentle heart.
Now if a rude gust should arise and bear
  A yet unripened orange to the dust,
Shall I describe this as unfair or fair,
  Shall I pronounce it tyrannous or just?
Where is the evil if we all must die?
  Why clamour and appeal from what is right?
Thy spirit wotteth not this mystery;
  Beyond the Veil there is no path in sight.
We all must reach the insatiable door,
  The greedy door that openeth twice for none;
Yet so a better place may be in store
  For thee, and heaven's eternal rest be won.

[1] Vol. i. p. 329 *seq.* [2] *Id.* p. 354. [3] § 7, and cf. vol. i. p. 48.
[4] See pp. 18, 264, and cf. vol. i. p. 361.
[5] A lament of Suhráb's for the loss of Gurdáfríd is added in C, but the couplets are asterisked and V rejects them.

Unless death swallowed all men up in turn
  Earth would be trampled down by young and old;
If fire in giving light shall also burn
  The matter is no marvel to behold,
For burn it will and that as readily
  As offshoots issue from an ancient stem,
And whether young or old the victims be
  Death's blast, like dread fire, hath no awe of them.
Should pleasure then a youthful mind engage
  Since years are not the only cause of death,
V. 434 Which is the end alike of youth and age
  Unless thou seek a passage in the Faith?
While if Salvation's light be in thy heart
  Thy lot as servant is to hold thy peace;
Be busied in preparing to depart,
  Let prayerful adoration never cease.
In serving God there is no mystery
  Unless the Dív consorteth with thy soul;
Be fervent here below and thou shalt be
  In perfect peace when thou hast reached thy goal.
The exploits of Suhráb I next shall tell,
And how the combat with his sire befell.

§ 2

How Rustam went to the Chace

I tell what rustic bard and archimage
Told from the legends of a bygone age:—
One morn in dudgeon Rustam rose to hunt,
Girt him, filled up his quiver, mounted Rakhsh,
And hied him to the marches of Túrán,
A savage Lion prowling after prey.
When he drew near the marches and beheld
The plain well stocked with onager, he flushed
Rose-like and smiled, then urging on his steed

He dropped much game with arrow, mace, and lasso.
He lit a fire with sticks, dry grass, and thorns,
Chose out a tree to serve him for a spit,
And set thereon a lusty onager— V. 435
A feather's weight to him! He tore the meat,
When roasted, from the bones and sucked the marrow,
Drank of a neighbouring stream and wooed repose,
While Rakhsh careered and grazed along the mead.
Some Turkman horsemen chanced upon the plain
And marked the tracks of Rakhsh. These they pursued
Beside the stream, observed him in the pasture,
Surrounded him, and with their royal lassos
Essayed to take him. Rakhsh perceiving this
Raged like a mighty lion. Lashing out
He laid two Turkmans low and with his teeth
Tore off another's head. Thus three were slain,
And still the head of Rakhsh escaped the noose;
At length the others threw from every side
Their lassos, caught him round the neck and took him,
Then walked him to the city, all desirous
To have a share in him.
When Rustam woke
From pleasant sleep and needed docile Rakhsh
He looked about the mead but found him not,
Whereat in dudgeon and astound he hurried
Toward Samangán. "Now whither shall I trudge,"
He said, "to 'scape my dark soul's shame, or how,
Thus armed with quiver, mace, helm, scimitar,
And tiger-skin cuirass, shall I o'erpass
The waste or make a shift to deal with foes? V. 436
How will the Turkmans say: 'Who stole his Rakhsh?
Thus matchless Rustam slept his life away!'
Now must I plod all helpless and forlorn;
Still let me arm, I yet may trace him out."
Thus with a weary, aching heart he went
In evil case and much discouragement.

§ 3

How Rustam came to the City of Samangán

When Rustam drew near Samangán the king
And nobles heard: "The Crown-bestower cometh
Afoot for Rakhsh escaped him in the chace."
The king's chief nobles, who wore crowns themselves,
Went forth to welcome Rustam, and all said:—
"Can this be Rustam or the rising sun?"
The monarch went to him afoot attended,
And asked: "Who dared to meet thee in the fight?
We of this city are thy friends and servants,
We and our goods are both at thy disposal,
The heads and lives most dear to us are thine."
Then Rustam, seeing that the words were honest,
Replied: "In yonder meads my Rakhsh while ranging
Without a rein or halter strayed from me,
And I have traced him from the river-side
V. 437 To Samangán. If thou recoverest him
My thanks are thine besides the recompense
Of one that doth aright; should he be lost
I will behead no few among thy chiefs."
The king made answer: "O exalted man!
None will presume to thwart thee. Come and be
My guest and be not wroth; all will be well.
Let us refresh our hearts with wine to-night
And keep them free from care, for wrath and passion
Advantage not while gentleness will draw
The snake out of its hole, and Rustam's Rakhsh—
A steed so known—will not continue hidden.
We will seek out thy Rakhsh and bring him quickly,
Thou doughty veteran!"
Rustam heard with joy,
And easy in his mind agreed to pay

A visit to the king who, greatly pleased,
Bestowed him in the palace and stood slave-like
Before him, then invited from the city
And army chiefs to entertain with Rustam,
And bade the cooks to spread the board. The guests
And minstrels strove to banish Rustam's gloom,
While black-eyed, rose-cheeked Idols of Taráz
Gave wine and feast and music greater charm.
At length bemused and drowsy Rustam went
To where the king had furnished for his guest
Musk and rose-water, and a place of rest.

§ 4

How Tahmína, the Daughter of the King of Samangán, came to Rustam

At noon of night, while Phosphor crossed the sky, V. 438
There came mysterious whispers, Rustam's door
Was softly opened, and a slave who bare
A taper savouring of ambergris
Walked stately toward the drunken sleeper's couch.
Behind the slave there was a moon-faced girl
Sun-bright, all scent and hue, with arching eyebrows
And locks that hung in tresses lasso-like,
In stature like a lofty cypress-tree,
With cheeks carnelians of Yaman in colour
And mouth as straitened as a lover's heart.
All soul was she and keen of intellect,
Thou wouldst have said: "She is not of the earth."
The lion-hearted Rustam marvelled at her
And calling on the Maker asked: "Thy name?
What seek'st thou midst the murk of night? Thy will?"
She said: "Tahmína: and thou well mayst say
That mine affliction teareth me in twain.

Sole daughter of the king of Samangán,
And by descent half lion and half pard,
There is no mate for me among the kings,
Nor are there many like me under heaven.
No one hath seen me yet outside the bower,
No one hath ever heard me spoken of,
But many and many a story have I heard
Of thee from every one—just like romance!
V. 439 How dív and lion, pard and crocodile,
Thou fearest not, thou art so deft of hand!
How thou departest to Túrán by night
And roamest there unsleeping and alone,
Dost roast an onager to make a meal
And set air wailing with thy scimitar!
How at the sight of thee with mace in hand
The hearts of lions and the hides of pards
Are rent! How eagles seeing thy naked sword
Dare not to swoop upon their quarry, and how
Great lions bear the traces of thy lasso,
And clouds rain blood in terror of thy spear!
Such are the tales of thee that I have heard!
Oft have I bit my lips in wonderment
And longed to see thy shoulders, neck, and breast.
God hath ordained thy sojourn in this city,
And now if thou wilt have me I am thine—
I who was never seen by fowl or fish—
Because for one thing I adore thee so,
Have sacrificed my prudence to my passion,
And for another—haply God Almighty
May lay upon my breast a child of thine.
Oh! may he be like thee in might and manhood,
And heaven assign to him both Sol and Saturn!
Moreover I will bring back Rakhsh to thee
And put all Samangán beneath thy feet."

The matchless Rustam heard her to the end.
He saw what beauty and intelligence

Were hers, and that she brought him news of Rakhsh.
Perceiving that the affair would turn out well
He bade an archimage—a man of worship—
Go and demand the maiden from her sire.
The king, that noble Cypress, was well pleased
To be affined to Rustam, and bestowed
Tahmína on him with the usual rites. V. 440
The people all poured out their souls with joy
And called down blessings on the paladin:—
"May this New Moon prove fortunate to thee,
And be thy foes' heads plucked out by the roots."
Night was not longsome while his mate was by,
But when the sun was bright he longed to throw
The musky lasso off. He wore an armlet—
A famous one. That gave he to Tahmína,
And said: "Keep this. If thou shalt bear a daughter
Then plait it in her hair, and choose a time
Propitious, and auspicious auguries;
While if the stars vouchsafe to thee a son
Bind round his arm this token of his father.
He will be like Sám son of Narímán
In stature and a Karímán[1] in manhood
And character, and bring down soaring eagles.
The sun will scorch not him."
He passed the night
In converse with his bride, and when the sun
Shone bright, and decked the earth with lovesomeness, V. 441
In taking leave he clasped her to his breast
And showered kisses on her eyes and head,
But fair Tahmína turned in tears from him
To be the spouse of pain and misery.
The noble king of Samangán approached,
Inquired of Rustam how the night had sped,
And, having heard, gave him good news of Rakhsh,
News that rejoiced the crown-bestower's heart.

[1] The father of Narímán and great-great-grandfather of Rustam.

He came, caressed the steed, and saddled him,
Pleased both with glossy Rakhsh and with the king.
Then homeward to Zábulistán he went,
But no one heard him speak of this event.

§ 5

The Birth of Suhráb

Nine months passed and a moon-like babe was born;
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis elephantine Rustam,"
Or else: "'Tis lion-Sám," or "Narímán,"
And since the babe smiled and was bright of blee
Tahmína gave to him the name Suhráb.
He looked a year old in a month, his chest
Was like his sire's, at three he exercised
In arms, at five he had a lion-heart,
At ten none dared encounter him in fight.
He bluntly asked his mother once: "Now tell me,
Since none of my milk-fellows can compare
With me, and my head reacheth to the sky,
V. 442 Of what stock am I and of what descent?
What shall I say when asked about my father?
Thou shalt not live unless thou answer me."
His mother said: "Then listen and rejoice,
But be not rash. Thou art the son of Rustam,
The hero of the elephantine form,
The progeny of Zál the son of Sám,
And Narímán. Thy head out-toppeth heaven
Because thou comest of the famous stock,
For never since the Maker made the world
Hath there appeared a cavalier like Rustam,
Nor one like Sám the son of Narímán,
Whose head the heaven itself dared not to touch."
She brought and showed a letter from his sire,
Three bright gems, and three purses filled with gold,

Sent to him by his father at his birth
With these words: "Guard these well, because thy sire
Hath sent them unto thee, O noble child!"
His mother said besides: "Afrásiyáb
Must not know aught hereof. He is the foe
Of Rustam and the troubler of Túrán.
May he ne'er seek revenge upon thyself
And slay the son in dudgeon at the sire.
Moreover, if thy father shall perceive
Of what a stamp thou art, so high and proud,
Then will he summon thee and rend my heart."
Suhráb replied: "A thing like this will out. V. 443
Old chieftains, warriors in the past, recount
His deeds. What right hadst thou to hide that I
Come of such fighting stock? Now will I gather
A boundless host of Turkman warriors,
Drive from his throne Káús, will cut away
From Tús his foothold in Írán, and leave not
Gurgín, Gúdarz, and Gív, or Gustaham
Son of Naudar, or warrior Bahrám,
But give the treasure, throne, and crown to Rustam
Instead of Sháh Káús; then from Írán
March forth to take Afrásiyáb's own seat,
And raise my spearhead higher than the sun.
I will do lion's deeds and make thee mistress
Of all Írán. Since Rustam is the sire
And I the son none other shall be king.
When sun and moon are shining in the sky
Why should the stars set up their crowns on high?"

§ 6

How Suhráb chose his Charger

He said moreover: "Thou shalt see my prowess,
But I must have a charger swift of foot

With hoofs of steel flint-shattering, in strength
V. 444 Like elephants, in flight like birds, in water
Like fish, and on the land like deer, to bear
My warrior-breast and neck, mine ax and mace:
I must be mounted to encounter foes."

His mother's head rose o'er the shining sun
At hearing this. She bade the herdsman bring
His herds of horses for Suhráb to choose
A charger. So they gathered to the city
The herds that wandered over hill and desert,
And when some large-limbed, lusty steed appeared
Suhráb flung round its neck the leathern noose,
Then laid his hand upon the beast to prove it
And made it grovel. Thus his might broke down
Full many a noble steed; he could not find
One adequate, and grieved. At length a warrior
Approached the elephantine youth and said:—
"I have a colt—one of the breed of Rakhsh—
In strength a lion and as fleet as wind.
He is as 'twere a valley-treading mountain
And skimmeth like a bird along the waste.
In strength and swiftness he is like the sun;
None ever saw so fleet a roan. Beneath
The stamping of his hoofs the Bull-fish [1] quaketh;
His leap is like the lightning; on the mountains
He goeth like the raven; on the water
Like fish and water-fowl; upon the desert
Like shaft from bow, pursuing and o'ertaking
The enemy."

Suhráb laughed out for joy,
And when they brought to him that glossy charger
V. 445 Both proved it and approved it, coaxed, caressed,
Then saddled it, and mounted. He appeared
Like Mount Bístún; his spear was pillar-like.
He said: "Since I have gotten such a steed

[1] See vol. i. p. 71.

I must ride forth at once and turn the day
Of Kai Káús to gloom."
He made him ready
To fight the Íránians, and a host assembled.
He then approached his grandsire, asking leave
To go, and help in going: "I am fain
To seek Írán and see my glorious sire."
Thereat the king provided him with arms
Of every kind, thrones, diadems, and casques,
Steeds, camels, belts, gold, gems, and Rúman jerkins.
He marvelled at that youth of tender age
And freely gave a royal equipage.

§ 7

How Afrásiyáb sent Bármán and Húmán to Suhráb

Afrásiyáb had news: "Suhráb hath launched
His ship, a host hath gathered unto him.
Although his mouth still savoureth of milk
His mind is set on shaft and scimitar;
His sword will purge the earth, and now he seeketh
To fight Káús. He feareth none. Why more?
His prowess hath shown higher than his birth."
Now when Afrásiyáb had heard these words V. 446
They pleasured him, he laughed and showed his joy.
Then from the valiant captains of the host—
Those that were wielders of the massive mace—
He chose two chiefs; Húmán was one, the other
Bármán; no laggards they when Lions strove.
He gave to them twelve thousand valiant troops,
And said: "Be this your secret policy:
The father must not recognise his son
By any ties of instinct, love, or race;
So, when the twain encounter, in good sooth
The matchless Rustam will be put to it.

It may be that this lion-man will slay him.
Then will we press Káús, seize on Írán,
With Rustam gone, and settle with Suhráb
Some night by binding him in endless sleep;
While should he perish by his father's hand
That hero's heart will never cease to burn."

Those two shrewd paladins went to Suhráb,
Preceded by a present from the king—
Ten steeds caparisoned, ten mules of burden,
A turquoise throne with ivory steps, a crown
Of amber tipped with pearls—and took a letter
Of adulation to the noble youth:—
"If thou shalt seize the Íránian throne the age
V. 447 Will rest from strife. We are not far apart;
Írán, Túrán, and Samangán are one.
I send thee troops enough, sit on the throne
And don the crown. Túrán hath no such leaders
And brave hearts as Húmán and as Bármán,
Whom I dispatch to thee as guests, to be
At thy command, to fight, if thou wouldst fight,
And make the world strait to thine enemies."

Now when Suhráb was ware of their approach
He girt his loins and with his grandsire went
Like wind to meet Húmán, rejoiced to see
Such troops. Húmán for his part was amazed
To see the neck and shoulders of Suhráb,
Then gave to him the letter of the king,
The gifts, the horses, and the mules of burden,
And with Bármán delivered the king's message.
Now when the atheling had read the letter
He beat the tymbals and led forth the host.
Earth was all troops and clamour, neither lion
Nor crocodile could fight him. Thus he led
The host toward Írán, burned everywhere
The cultivated parts, and left all bare.

§ 8

How Suhráb came to White Castle

White Castle was a stronghold of Írán
And veteran Hajír was castellan— V. 448
A man of might and courage, mace and arrow—
For Gazhdaham was failing though still brave
And venturesome. His daughter,[1] who was proud,
Renowned, and malapert, bore arms and fought
On horseback. As Suhráb approached, Hajír
Saw him and mounting on his steed like dust
Sped forth upon the field. Suhráb enraged,
And drawing forth the scimitar of fight,
Rushed from the host as 'twere a blast and cried:—
"O fool to throw thy life away and come
Alone! Sit tight and firmly grasp thy reins.
What are thy name and lineage? She that bare
Will have to weep for thee." V. 449
Hajír replied:—
"Enough! I need no help in fighting thee.
Hajír am I, a warrior and chieftain.
I will take off thy head to send the Sháh
And leave the vultures to consume thy body."
Suhráb laughed out and charged; both hurled their spears
Too fast for eyes to follow. Brave Suhráb,
Strong as an elephant, came on like fire
Upon his moving mountain of a steed.
Hajír thrust at his waist; the spearpoint glanced.
Suhráb the Lion drove the weapon back,
Struck with the butt his foe's waist lustily,
And threw him like a boulder to the earth,
As though the matter were not worth a thought,
Astound in heart and soul. Suhráb dismounted,

[1] Gurdáfríd.

Sat on his foeman's breast, and had in mind
To cut his head off, but Hajír with effort
Turned on his right side and entreated quarter.
Suhráb accorded it, well satisfied,
Gave him some cautions, made him fast in bonds,
And sent him to Húmán. Those in the hold
On hearing what had chanced cried mournfully:—
"Hajír is lost among the enemy!"

§ 9

How Suhráb fought with Gurdáfríd

When she whose sire was Gazhdaham had heard:—
V. 450 "The chief is worsted!" she was grieved, exclaimed
In her distress, and heaved a deep cold sigh.
A woman like some valiant cavalier
Was she and ever famous in the fight.
Her name was Gurdáfríd, and none as yet
Had seen her match. Hajír's discomfiture
So shamed her that her tulip-cheeks became
Like red chrysanthemums.[1] Time pressed, she armed,
Concealed her tresses underneath her mail,
Secured her Rúman casque upon her head,
And came down, like a lion, from the hold
With girded waist upon a wind-foot steed.
She sped like dust and cried in thunder-tones:—
"What are these troops and who commandeth them?
What lusty Crocodile is there among you
To match himself with me in single combat?"
None volunteered until Suhráb beheld her.
He bit his lips and laughed. "Again," said he,
"An onager hath come within the toils
Of him that hath both strength and scimitar."
He armed like wind, put on a helm of Chín,

[1] Khír. Cf. WPT, i. 104.

And rushed out to encounter Gurdáfríd,
Who when she saw him strung her bow up, drew it,
And broadened out her breast. No bird had found
A passage through her shafts; she showered them
Upon Suhráb and wheeled to left and right.
He saw and was abashed, waxed wroth and charged,
His shield above his head. Thus pressed she hung
Her bow upon her arm and, while her steed V. 451
Pranced to the clouds, couched at Suhráb her lance,
And plied her reins with fury. He too shook
His reins and urged his charger on like lightning,
Fierce as a leopard, at his doughty foe.
He thrust a deadly dart with all his strength,
Struck Gurdáfríd upon the belt and rent
Her coat of mail, but even as she reeled
She drew her sword and clave the dart asunder,
Regained her seat and sent the dust-clouds flying;
But liking not such fighting turned and fled.
He urged his dragon-steed, and he too made
In wrath day dark with dust. He pressed upon her
With loud cries, jostled her, and snatched her helm.
Her hair escaped, her face shone like the sun.
He said: "It is a girl! Her head of hair
Is worthy of a crown. If such a girl,"
He said amazed, "come from the Íránian host
Upon the field, good sooth their cavaliers
Will send dust cloudward on the day of battle!"
He loosed his coiled up lasso from the straps
And caught her round the waist, then said to her:—
"Why seekest thou the fray, O moon-faced maid?
No onager like thee hath ever come V. 452
Within my toils. Thou wilt not 'scape my clutch,
So struggle not."
She saw no other course,
So showed her face and said: "O warrior,
Midst warriors a lion! two hosts watch

Our prowess with the mace and scimitar,
And now that I have shown my face and hair
The troops will say: 'He sent the dust-clouds flying
And all to fight a girl!' 'Twill be disgrace
To persevere in such a fight as this.
Chiefs should be wise, so let us keep it dark
And save thee from reproach on mine account.
Our troops and stronghold are at thy command,
There is no need to fight, the castle, treasure,
And castellan are thine when thou shalt please."
She showed her face, her smiles displayed the pearls
Within her jujube-lips, a garden she
In Paradise; no villager e'er set
So tall a cypress. She had eyes like deer's,
With arching eyebrows, and thou wouldst have said:—
"She bloometh ever."
"Keep thy word," said he,
"For thou hast seen me on the day of battle.
Trust not yon castle-wall, it is not higher
Than heaven, and my mace will bring it down,
While no foe's lance will ever reach my neck."
V. 453 She turned and rode with him toward the hold,
And Gazhdaham himself came to the gate.
They opened it and Gurdáfríd came in
Both bruised and bound. They shut it and lamented
For her and for Hajír. Then Gazhdaham
Approached with chiefs and troops, and said to her:—
"Brave-hearted lion-smiter! we were troubled
On thine account. Thy fighting and address
Have not disgraced us, and no foe hath harmed
Thy life, thank God!"
Then laughing much she went
Upon the ramparts to observe the foe,
Beheld Suhráb still mounted, and exclaimed:—

"O warrior of Túrán! why take such pains?
Be off with you and give up battlefields."
Suhráb replied: "O fair of face! I swear
By crown and throne and sun and moon to raze
These ramparts to the ground and capture thee,
Thou minx! Thou wilt repent thy foolish words
When thou art writhing in thy helplessness.
Where is thy promise?"
But she laughed and mocked him:—
"The Turkmans win no helpmates from Írán,
And thou hast failed with me, but never mind!
Thou art no Turkman who art so commended
Among the great, and with such strength and limbs
Art peerless midst the paladins! However,
When news shall reach the Sháh: 'A chief is leading V. 454
An army from Túrán,' he will march forth
With Rustam whom ye cannot stand against,
And all thy host will perish. What mishap
Will then descend upon thy head I know not,
But woe is me that such a neck and shoulder
Should disappear within the maw of pards!
So do not trust too much those arms of thine
Or else the stupid ox will graze beside thee.
'Twere best to issue orders for retreat."
Suhráb, who thought the hold his own, was shamed.
He gave to pillage all the land and crops
Around the walls, then for a moment washed
The evil hand, and said: "Our time for action
Is not to-day; our hands are stayed from fight.
At daybreak we will raise dust from these walls
And carry war's alarms inside the place."
With that he turned about his charger's rein
And took the way to his own camp again.

§ 10

The Letter of Gazhdaham to Káús

Now when Suhráb had gone old Gazhdaham
Called for a scribe to write to Kai Káús,
Then hurried off a speedy messenger
And, having praised the Sháh, reported thus:—
"A mighty host of valiant warriors
Attacketh us, led by a paladin,
Whose years do not exceed twice seven at most,
In stature taller than a lofty cypress,
And in his aspect like the shining sun.
His breast is lion-like, his mien is stately.
I have not looked on such a hand and mace
V. 455 Within Írán. Whenas he brandisheth
His Indian scimitar it shameth him
To fight mere seas and mountains. Rattling thunder
Is no match for his voice, or for his arm
Our trenchant sword. No peer within Írán
Or in Túrán hath he. This chief is named
Suhráb, and feareth not dív, elephant,
Or lion; thou mayst say: 'Tis surely Rustam,
At least some hero sprung from Narímán!'
The brave Hajír rode out to challenge him,
But, as I saw, no longer kept his seat
Than while a warrior might wink an eye,
Or scent go up a nostril to the brain.
Suhráb unhorsed him to his great amazement.
He is not hurt, and they have spared his life,
But he is sorry and hath got his skinful
Of anguish. Many Turkman cavaliers
Have I beheld, but never heard of one
With such a seat. God grant he grapple not
With one of us between the battle-lines;
I would have none, e'en though a Mount of flint,

Meet him upon the plain. The earth would pity
That Mount if he should charge it in the fight,
And if the Sháh shall stop to breathe, march forth
No host, and set no ambuscade, consider
The Glory of Írán as gone, the world
As panic-stricken by this warrior's sword-point.
Since he is Strength itself he will despoil us,
And none can grapple with him hand to hand,
Or ever saw so skilled a rider. 'He,' V. 456
Thou wouldest say, 'is Sám the cavalier.'
We cannot fight this eager warrior
With such a mace, grip, and dexterity.
Know that the fortune of our warriors noddeth,
And that his greatness reacheth to the sky.
To-night we pack the baggage and withdraw,
For if we tarry we shall make no fight,
To say no more; these walls will not withstand
One at whose rush a lion turneth laggard."
The letter sealed he called a messenger,
And said: "Be out of sight of them by dawn,"
And having sent the letter on its way
Prepared to follow it without delay.

§ 11

How Suhráb took White Castle

Whenas the sun rose o'er the mountain-heights
The soldiers of Túrán girt up their loins,
And spear in hand Suhráb the chief bestrode
His swift-paced charger, purposing to capture
The garrison and bind them like a flock;
But having, roaring like a lion, forced
The gates, he saw no man of name within,
For in the night the garrison had fled
With Gazhdaham, because beneath the hold

There was a way not wotted by the foe.
V. 457 Those still inside concerned with the defence
Or otherwise came to Suhráb as bidden,
And sought by every means to save their lives.
He looked for Gurdáfríd but found her not.
His heart was fain for love and union with her.
"Woe's me!" he thought, "the bright Moon is beclouded!"
V. 458 Káús received the letter and was grieved.
He called the captains of the host to counsel—
V. 459 Tús and Gúdarz son of Kishwád, and Gív,
Gurgín, Bahrám, and brave Farhád—and read
Aloud to them the news about Suhráb.
He said in private: "This will cost us time,
V. 460 And Gazhdaham saith naught to comfort us.
What shall we do, and what will cure this smart?
Who in Írán can fight him?"
All agreed
That Gív should go to Rustam at Zábul
To say: "The throne of empire is in danger,"
And summon him to take the field for war,
Because the Íránians looked to him for shelter.
A scribe as they discussed was sitting by
In that the case was one of urgency.

§ 12

How Káús wrote to Rustam and summoned him from Zábulistán

The Sháh then bade indite to famous Rustam
A letter, and began by praising him:—
"Be thy heart prudent and thy spirit bright.
Know that a Turkman chieftain with his host
Hath come and is beleaguering White Castle.
He is a brave, heroic paladin,

In form an elephant, in heart a lion.
None in Írán can fight him; thou alone,
That art so good at need, canst dim his lustre,
Thou heart and back-bone of the Íránian chiefs,
Who hast the claws and might of lions! Thou
Didst take the country of Mázandarán,
And in Hámávarán undo our bonds.
Sol weepeth at thy mace, and at thy sword V. 461
Mars grilleth. Indigo is not so dark
As dust-clouds raised by Rakhsh; no elephant
Can match thee in the fight; thou lassoest lions;
Thy spear-point scatheth mountains. In all ills
Thou art the shelter of Írán. The warriors
Through thee exalt their helms. A grievous matter
Confronteth us; I ache to think thereof.
The warriors in counsel read a letter
From Gazhdaham and were agreed that Gív
Should bear thee this account of good and ill.
Now when thou readest this by day or night
Ope not thy lips for words, and if thou have
A posy in thy hand stay not to smell it,
But act with promptitude and show thy face,
Because unless thou march forth from Zábul
With wary horsemen and shalt raise the war-cry,
To judge by that which Gazhdaham hath told
None will confront this warrior."
This sealed
The Sháh gave swift as wind to gallant Gív,
And said: "Be instant, ply thy fleet steed's rein.
Whenas thou reachest Rustam neither tarry, V. 462
Nor sleep, within Zábul; if thou arrive
By night return next day. Thus say to him:—
'A war is imminent, and in thine absence
We cannot hold the foe of small account.'"
Gív took it and sped night and day like wind,
No rest, no sleep, no water, and no food,

Until Zál heard the cry: "A cavalier
Approacheth from Írán as swift as dust."
The matchless Rustam met him with the troops
And nobles wearing helmets. When they met,
Gív and the warriors great and small dismounted,
And Rustam too who asked news of the Sháh,
And of Írán. They went thence to his palace
To rest awhile. Gív told his errand, gave
The letter, spake much of Suhráb, delivered
His other tidings and the presents sent.
When Rustam heard and read he laughed amazed,
And said: "A horseman hath appeared like Sám!
Now from our people this would not be strange,
But from the Turkmans 'tis incredible.
None sayeth, and I know not, whence he is.
The daughter of the king of Samangán
Bare me a son but he is still a child.
The noble boy at present wotteth not
Of warfare, of attack, and self-defence.
I sent his mother gold and precious stones
V. 463 In plenty, and the messenger brought answer:—
'The darling is not growing very fast,
But quaffeth wine with lips that savour milk.'
No doubt he will be eager soon for war,
And then his onslaught will be lion-like;
He will lay low the head of many a horseman;
But as for what thou sayest, O paladin!
'He came to fight us, vanquished brave Hajír,
And bound him with the lasso head and foot!'
The Lion's whelp, though grown both brave and doughty,
Could not do that. Come, go we to Zál's palace,
Rejoicing, then consider plans and who
This lucky Turkman paladin may be."
They sought the ancestral hall and stayed awhile
V. 464 In unconcern, then Gív again applied

To Rustam, praising him and saying: "Hero,
And chief of paladins! may crown and throne
Be bright to thee who art the crown's adornment,
Thou favourite of fortune! Sháh Káús
Said thus: 'Sleep not within Zábulistán.
If thou arrive by night return next day,
For God forbid that war should press on us.'
Now, O exalted and most glorious chief!
Let us depart in all haste to Írán."
But Rustam answered: "There is naught to fear,
For everything will end in dust at last.
Abide we here to-day in merriment
Naught recking of Káús and of the chiefs.
One day will we remain to breathe ourselves
And put some liquor to our thirsty lips;
Thereafter we will hasten to the Sháh
And show the heroes of Írán the way
In case bright fortune be not yet awake.
At all events the matter is a trifle,
The rising sea will quench the fiercest flame.
E'en from afar my flag will fray his heart
Amid a feast. How can he be like Rustam—
The master of the scimitar and mace—
Or Sám the hardy, brave, and circumspect?
He will not prove so eager for the fray.
We need not take such matters seriously."
They took the wine in hand and grew bemused
With drinking to the monarch and to Zál.
Next morning Rustam though crop-sick made ready
To start, but tarrying through drunkenness
Gave orders to the cooks to spread a feast.
The banquet done they held a drinking-bout
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
Next day he held another sunny-bright V. 465
And on the third day brought out wine at dawn,
Forgetful of Káús. Upon the fourth

Gív, ready to depart, said thus to Rustam:—
"Káús is rash and hasty; to his mind
This is no trifle. He was vexed and anxious,
And would not eat or slumber or repose.
By thus delaying in Zábulistán
We place him in a strait; he will be wroth
And in his headstrong humour seek revenge."
But Rustam answered: "Give it not a thought,
For none will chafe at us."
He gave command
To saddle Rakhsh and blow the brazen trumpets.
The horsemen of Zábul came at the call
In mail—a mighty army. He therein
Installed Zawára as chief paladin.

§ 13

How Káús was wroth with Rustam

Tús and Gúdarz son of Kishwád met Rustam
One day's march from the court. Both he and they
Alighted and saluted heartily.
They reached the court all loyalty and mirth,
But, when they did obeisance, Kai Káús
V. 466 Made no response but frowned on them in anger,
And bare him like a lion of the wood,
First stormed at Gív, then wholly lost to shame
Proceeded: "Who is Rustam that he thus
Should disobey me and break fealty?
Had I a sword I would smite off his head
As 'twere an orange. Seize him! Gibbet him
Alive, and name him not to me again."
Gív's heart was pained; he cried: "Wilt thou lay hand
On Rustam thus?"
But upon this the Sháh

Raged at them both, so that all present marvelled.
He bade Tús: "Go and hang them both alive,"
Arose himself, and flamed like fire from reeds,
While Tús drew near and seized the hand of Rustam,
To all the warriors' wonder, purposing
To lead him forth and to beguile his wrath;
But Rustam furious with Káús replied:—
"Indulge not such a fire within thy breast.
Thy deeds grow worse and worse! Thou art not fit
For sovereignty. Hang for thyself yon Turkman
Alive, then rage and scorn thine enemies.
Mázandarán, Sagsár, Hámávarán,
Rúm, Misr, and Chín are all my charger's thralls,
My sword and arrows have transfixed their livers.
Thou livest but through me. Why waste thy heart V. 467
In vengeance?"
In his wrath he struck the hand
Of Tús, thou wouldst have said: "An elephant
Hath struck him!" Tús fell headlong to the ground
While Rustam passed him by with angry mien,
Went out, and mounted Rakhsh in wrath, exclaiming:—
"I conquer lions and distribute crowns,
And who is Sháh Káús when I am angry,
Or Tús that he should lay a hand on me?
My might and my successes are from God,
Not from the Sháh or host. Earth is my slave
And Rakhsh my throne, a mace my signet-ring,
A helm my crown; my mates are sparth and spearhead,
My two arms and my heart my Sháh. I lighten
Night with my sword and scatter heads in battle.
Why doth he vex me? I am not his slave
But God's. The warriors called me to be Sháh,
But I refused the throne of sovereignty
And looked to custom, law, and precedent.
Do I deserve thy words? Art thou my patron?
Mine was the throne. I set Kubád thereon.

What care I for Káús, his wrath and bluster?
If I had not fetched Kai Kubád myself,
When he had fallen into low estate,
And brought him to Írán from Mount Alburz,
Thou hadst not belt or vengeful scimitar,
Or might and majesty entitling thee
To speak a word to Zál the son of Sám."

V. 468 He told the Íránians: "Valorous Suhráb
Will come and leave not either great or small;
So make shift, all of you! to save your lives,
And let discretion be your remedy.
Ye will not see me more within Írán:
The land is yours and mine the vulture's wing."

He smote his steed and left them while his skin
Split, thou hadst said, with rage. The nobles' hearts
Were troubled; they were sheep, he was their shepherd.
"Here," said they to Gúdarz, "is work for thee;
Thine is the hand to make the broken whole;
Thy words no doubt will influence the Sháh.
Go then to this insensate, speak to him,
Ply him with patient and persuasive speech:
Perchance thou mayst restore our fallen fortune."

Then all those warrior-nobles sat in conclave—
Gív and Gúdarz and lion-like Bahrám,
Ruhhám and brave Gurgín. They said: "The Sháh
Regardeth not the feelings of the great.
Since Rustam, who is chief of paladins,
First saved Káús none else hath succoured him
In all his straits and dangers. When the dívs
Bound in Mázandarán the Sháh and us
What toil and hardship Rustam underwent
On his account, and rent the fierce dívs' reins,
Then set the Sháh upon the throne and summoned
The mighty men to do him reverence!
Another time too when our sovereign's feet
Wore heavy fetters in Hámávarán

What monarchs Rustam slaughtered for his sake
And never turned away but brought Káús
Home to his throne, and did obeisance to him!
If Rustam's recompense must be to hang V. 469
Then we must flee just when at such a crisis
We should take action."
Thereupon Gúdarz
Made haste to go before the Sháh and said
Thus: "What hath Rustam done that thou shouldst send
The dust up from Írán to-day? Art thou
Forgetful of Hámávarán, forgetful
Of what the dívs did in Mázandarán,
That thou sayst: 'Put him living on the gibbet?'
Vain words become not Sháhs. When he hath gone,
And that great host and wolf-like paladin
Have come, whom hast thou left to take the field
And strew the dark dust o'er him? Gazhdaham
By sight or hearsay knoweth all thy warriors,
Yet saith: 'Ne'er let a cavalier propose
To fight Suhráb. Small wisdom 'twere for any,
Though brave as Rustam, to encounter him.'
Kings should be wise, for haste and wrath avail not."
The Sháh, perceiving that Gúdarz spake justly,
Repented of his folly and replied:—
"Thy rede is right; the old give best advice.
Now go to Rustam, treat him courteously, V. 470
Induce him to forget my hastiness,
Assure him that my favour is restored,
And bring him hither to illume my soul."
Gúdarz went after Rustam with all speed,
Attended by the leaders of the host.
They gathered round him and saluted saying:—
"Live happy evermore, be all the world
Beneath thy feet, and mayst thou sit for ever
Upon the throne. Thou knowest that Káús

Is brainless and no picker of his words
When angered, but regretteth them anon,
And groweth reconciled through sheer good nature.
If Rustam be aggrieved against the Sháh
The Íránians have done naught to drive him hence
And hide his glorious face. The Sháh moreover
Is sorry for those words of his and gnaweth
His hand's back in chagrin."

The hero said:—

"I need not anything of Kai Káús.
A saddle is my throne, a casque my crown,
My mail my raiment and my purpose death.
What is Káús to me? A pinch of dust.
Why should I fear or tremble at his wrath?
Do I deserve such unbecoming words
From one that I released from bonds and led
To crown and throne? Once in Mázandarán
I fought against the dívs, and once I fought
The monarch of Hámávarán and freed
Káús in his foe's grip from bonds and woe.
V. 471 Now I have had enough; my heart is full;
I fear but holy God."

As soon as Rustam
Had had his fill of speech Gúdarz rejoined:—
"The Sháh and famous warriors suspect
That thou art frightened at this Turkman chief.
They say in private: 'Gazhdaham was right,
Our fields and fells will know us now no more,
For sithens Rustam is afraid of fighting
'Tis not for thee and me to tarry here.'
I noticed that the Sháh's ill will and wrath
Made hue and cry at court, and all men spake
About the brave Suhráb. Eclipse not thou
Thy high fame in the world by this withdrawal,
And further, since a hostile host is near,
Dim not this crown and throne so wantonly,

For we have been insulted by Túrán,
And none whose Faith is pure approveth that."
The matchless hero all amazed replied :—
"I would not live a coward, I would tear
My soul out first. I flee, as well thou knowest,
Because the monarch scorned me, not from fight."
He shrank from that reproach, retraced his steps,
And came to Sháh Káús, who seeing him
Arose and thus excused what had occurred :—
"My temper is by nature choleric,
And trees must grow as God hath planted them.
Through this new, unexpected foe my heart
Was faint as a new moon. I sought a cure
And sent for thee. Thy tarrying made me wroth, V. 472
But having wronged thee, elephantine chief!
I sorrowed and my mouth was filled with dust."
Then Rustam answered him : "The world is thine.
We are thy subjects, thine is to command.
I am a liege, if worthy of the name,
Before thy gate to do thy will. Thou art
The Sháh, the lord of earth ; I am thy slave."
Káús replied : "O paladin ! be bright
Of mind for evermore. To-day we hold
A banquet and to-morrow think of battle."
He had a royal pleasure-house made ready ;
Its hall was like a garden in the spring.
They called the chiefs and scattered gems for joy.
Half through the night they revelled and their talk
Was of the doings of the mighty men.
They drank till hearts and eyes were dazed with wine,
And all became bemused, returning home
While tedious night was traversing the dome.

§ 14

How Káús and Rustam led forth the Host

When Sol had pierced night's pitch-hued cloak and come
V. 473 Forth from the veil Káús bade Gív and Tús
To bind the drums upon the elephants.
He oped the treasury-door, gave out supplies,
Then called to horse and loaded up the baggage.
A hundred thousand cavaliers in mail
Went into camp, and as the army marched
Heaven darkened with the chargers' dust. The tents
And tent-enclosures stretched two miles, and earth
Was clad with elephants and horses' shoes;
The sky grew dark as indigo, earth turned
To ebony, the drum-roll shook the plain.
The army marched, the sun's bright visage gloomed,
And double-pointed javelin and dart
Flashed like a flame through dust as through a veil.
What with the spears and flags of divers fashion,
The golden bucklers and the golden boots,
Thou wouldst have said: "There came an ebon cloud
Which showered sandarac." The world discerned not
Between the night and day, and thou hadst said
That neither sky nor Pleiades existed.
Thus marched the army, hiding soil and rock,
Until it neared the portal of the stronghold.
An outcry from the lookout warned Suhráb:—
"A host hath come." He mounted to the walls
To view it and then showed it to Húmán,
Who, when he saw so great a multitude
Approaching, was afraid and held his breath.
Suhráb the hero said: "Relieve thy heart
Of care, thou wilt not see in this vast host
A single warrior or massive mace

Meet me upon the field though sun and moon
Be on their side. The men and arms abound,
Yet know I nothing of the leaders' names!
Now by the fortune of Afrásiyáb V. 474
Will I make all the desert like a sea."
Descending, light of heart and unconcerned,
He joined the revels of the revellers,
And recked not of the war.
The Íránians
Set up the camp-enclosure of the Sháh
Before the castle on the open plain;
Men, tentage, and enclosures covered hill
And wilderness till naught was left to fill.

§ 15

How Rustam slew Zhanda Razm

At sunset, when night's skirt trailed o'er the day,
Came Rustam girded and intent on war
Before the Sháh, and said: "Let me go forth
Without my belt and helmet. I will mark
Who this new worldlord is, who are the chiefs,
And who is in command."
Káús replied:—
"The very work for thee, and mayst thou prosper
Both soul and body. God watch o'er thee ever,
And o'er thy heart's desire and loyal purpose."
Assuming Turkman garb he reached by stealth
The hold and heard the Turkmans' shouts and clamour.
The gallant hero made his way inside,
As 'twere a lion after antelopes,
And saw and marked the chieftains one and all,
Joy mantling in his visage like a rose.
Now when Suhráb was going to the wars
His mother summoned to her Zhanda Razm, V. 475

For once he had seen Rustam at a feast.
His father was the king of Samangán,
His nephew glorious Suhráb. She said:—
"O ardent warrior! be this youth's comrade
That when the hero cometh to Írán
And meeteth with the monarch of the brave,
And when the hosts encounter in the fight,
Thou mayest show my darling son his father."
Now as Suhráb appeared to Rustam's eyes
Enthroned amid the feast with Zhanda Razm
On one hand, with the valiant cavalier
Húmán and that illustrious Lion Bármán
Upon the other, thou hadst said that he
Filled all the throne and seemed a verdant cypress.
His arms were like a camel's thighs, his breast
Was like a lion's and his visage ruddy.
A hundred valiant warriors sat round,
All young, illustrious, and lion-like,
While fifty slaves with bracelets on their arms
Before the heart-delighting lofty throne
Invoked by turns a blessing on his mien,
His stature, sword, and signet-ring. As Rustam
Crouched at a distance watching, Zhanda Razm
Went out for some occasion that he had,
Perceived a warrior like a lofty cypress,
To whom there was no peer among the troops,
And seizing on him roughly questioned him
With sharpness, saying: "Who art thou? Speak out!
Come to the light and let me see thy face."
A sudden buffet from the fist of Rustam
Fell on his neck; he yielded up the ghost.
There Zhanda Razm lay—a corpse; for him
The day of fighting and of feast was over.
Suhráb continued long in expectation,
But Zhanda Razm the Lion came not back.
At length the youth began to ask for him

Because his room was empty. Some went out,
Beheld him vilely overthrown, at peace V. 476
From banquet and from battle, and returned
With clamour, and with sorrow in their hearts.
They told Suhráb that Zhanda Razm was dead.
The youth sprang up and went to him like smoke,
Accompanied by servants, lights, and minstrels,
Beheld him lying dead and stood astound,
Then called his gallant warriors and said:—
"Ye men of wisdom and ye valiant chiefs!
Ye must not rest to-night but whet your spears,
Because a wolf hath come among the flock
And found the dogs and shepherds off their guard.
Among the mighty he hath seized one ram
And cast him thus in scorn, but with God's help,
When my bay trampleth earth, I will unstrap
My lasso in revenge for Zhanda Razm."
He took his seat again and called the nobles.
"Though Zhanda Razm's place beside my throne
Is void," he said, "I have not done with feasting."
As Rustam was returning to the Sháh,
Gív, who was outpost-guard, saw him approach,
Drew, roared out like a maddened elephant,
And with his shield above his head showed fight;
But Rustam knowing who the outpost was
Laughed and returned the shout, whereat the guard, V. 477
Who knew his voice, advanced afoot and said:—
"Where hast thou been afoot and in the dark,
Thou battle-loving chieftain?"
Rustam told
His enterprise and what a lion-man
He had destroyed, while Gív applauded, saying:—
"May charger, mace, and saddle ne'er lack thee."
Then Rustam going to the Sháh informed him
About the Turkmans and their banqueting,
About Suhráb, his stature and his mien,

His arms and shoulders, chest and feet, and said:—
"This is no Turkman born; he is as tall
And upright as a cypress, with no peer
In either land; in short 'tis Sám himself."
Then of the blow on Zhanda Razm's neck
He said: "He came not back to feast or fight."
They talked and after called for harp and wine,
But all the night the troops were ranked in line.

§ 16

How Suhráb asked Hajír the Names of the Chiefs of Írán

Now when the sun held up its golden shield
Fate also raised its head upon the sky.
Suhráb put on his battle-mail and mounted
Upon a charger dark as indigo.
An Indian sword was slung across his breast,
And on his head he wore a royal helmet,
While from his saddle-straps his lasso hung
In sixty coils. His face was stern. He came
And choosing out an eminence surveyed
The army of Írán, bade call Hajír,
And said to him: "An arrow should be straight.
V. 478 In every matter act with honesty
If thou wouldst 'scape mishap. Now answer truly,
Pervert not counsel nor prevaricate.
Wouldst thou be free and well esteemed by others?
Then tell me what I ask about Írán,
And swerve no tittle from the path of truth.
I will bestow on thee abundant treasure,
But if thou liest bonds and pit are thine."
Hajír replied: "Whate'er the prince shall ask
I will reply according to my knowledge.
Why should I speak to thee deceitfully?
Thou shalt be witness to mine honest dealing:

I will not even think a guileful thought.
The best trade in the world is honesty,
The worst thought guile."
Suhráb said: "I shall ask
At large about the chiefs, the Sháh, the folk,
And all the great men of the land as Gív,
Tús, and Gúdarz. Whatever I shall ask
About Bahrám, famed Rustam, and the rest,
Make answer to me as I question thee.
Yon many-hued enclosure of brocade
Encircling tents of leopard-skin; before it
A hundred mighty elephants are tethered;
There is a turquoise throne blue as the Nile,
A flag charged with a yellow sun, the staff
Crowned with a golden moon, the case of purple.
Who is the man thus stationed in the centre?"
Hajír replied: "The Sháh, and at his gate V. 479
Are elephants and lions."
"On the right,"
Suhráb said, "there are many cavaliers
With elephants and baggage. The enclosure
Is black, and round it troops are standing ranked
With tents past count; before it there are lions,
Behind it elephants, while in the front
There is a flag charged with an elephant,
And cavaliers in golden boots stand by."
Hajír replied: "'Tis Tús son of Naudar:
His standard hath an elephant-device."
Suhráb went on: "That red enclosure there,
Where many cavaliers are standing round,
The standard purple, the device a lion,
And in the centre there are sparkling jewels.
Behind it is a multitude of troops,
Who all bear lances and are clad in mail.
Who is he? Let me know the chieftain's name,
And bring not ruin on thyself by guile."

He answered: "That belongeth to Gúdarz—
The glory of the Free—son of Kishwád,
A valiant general in war. He hath
Twice forty sons, all Elephants and Lions.
No elephant, no tiger of the plain,
No mountain-pard, would strive with him in fight."
Suhráb went on: "As to yon green enclosure
In front whereof are stationed many troops,
While in the midst a splendid throne is set
With Káwa's flag before it. On the throne
A paladin is seated, one that hath
The Grace, the neck, and shoulders of a hero,
And seated thus is higher by a head
Than any of the people standing near.
V. 480 Before him is a charger just his match
In height; a lasso droopeth to its hoofs.
Whene'er the charger snorteth thou wouldst say:—
'It is the raging sea!' In front of him
Are many elephants in mail, and he
Is restless. I behold not in Írán
One of his height or such another charger.
There is a dragon, look! upon his standard,
And on the staff-top is a golden lion."
Hajír thought: "If I tell this lion-man
The bearings of the elephantine hero,
Forthwith he will send up the dust from Rustam.
'Tis best to keep him dark and name him not."
He answered: "An ally of ours from Chín
Hath lately joined the Sháh."
Suhráb inquired
His name. Hajír replied: "I know it not,
For I was in this castle at the time."
Suhráb was grieved to find no trace of Rustam,
And though his mother had described the bearings
He would not credit his own eyes. Again
He pressed Hajír to tell and soothe his heart,

But o'er his head was written otherwise—
A sentence never minished or enhanced.
Suhráb next asked him: "Who among the chiefs V. 481
Pitched that enclosure which is most apart,
Where many cavaliers and elephants
Are standing and the clarions are sounding?
Above it is a flag charged with a wolf;
The golden staff-head reacheth to the clouds;
Within there is a throne with slaves before it."
He answered: "That is Gív son of Gúdarz,
He whom the chieftains call 'the gallant Gív,'
The best and greatest of the family,
And captain o'er the more part of the host.
He is the noble son-in-law of Rustam,
And equalled but by few within Írán."
Suhráb continued: "Where the shining sun
Is rising I perceive a white enclosure
All of brocade of Rúman make. Before it
More than a thousand cavaliers are ranged;
The footmen armed with double-headed spears
And bucklers there make up a boundless host.
Their leader sitteth on an ivory throne
Upon a seat of teak. The tent-enclosure
Is of brocade, and many slaves stand ranked."
Hajír replied: "'Tis youthful Faríburz,
Son of the Sháh and crown of warriors."
Suhráb said: "It is fitting, since he is
The Sháh's son and possessor of a crown."
He asked: "Whose is that yellow tent-enclosure
In front whereof a banner fluttereth
With others yellow, red, and violet round it?
The charge upon the hindmost is a boar,
And on the lofty staff a silvern moon."
"His name," Hajír made answer, "is Guráza, V. 482
Who draweth not the rein in fights with lions—
A prudent man descended from Gívgán,

Who never murmureth at pain or hardship."
Suhráb thus sought for traces of his father:
Hajír was reticent and hid the truth.
The Almighty hath disposed the world. Wilt thou
Dispose it? Hath He ceased to superintend?
A fate not of thy choice is written now,
And what He causeth will be in the end.
If thou affectionest this Wayside Inn
'Twill yield thee poison, travail, and chagrin.
The noble hero asked Hajír again
About that one whom he so longed to see,
About that green enclosure and tall steed,
About that warrior and the twisted lasso.
At last Hajír said: "I must keep back naught.
If I tell not the name of him of Chín
It is because I know it not myself."
Suhráb replied: "Thou doest much amiss,
Thou hast not mentioned Rustam, and that chief
Of paladins would show amid the host.
Thou saidst: 'He is the champion, he that guardeth
All provinces and marches.' When Káús
Is warring, with a mighty elephant
To bear his crown and throne, the paladin
Should lead his van what time the war-cry riseth."
Hajír replied: "The lion-taking hero
Must be at present in Zábulistán,
For 'tis the time to feast among the roses."
Suhráb rejoined: "Now answer this—the Sháh
Is bent on war and, while helmed chieftains gather
To give him aid, the paladin in chief
Is merry-making! Young and old would laugh
At such a tale. We made a pact to-day,
And though I love not words I will repeat it:—
V. 483 If thou wilt point me out the paladin
Thy head shall be exalted everywhere;
I will unlock the secret treasuries

And leave thee not a want, but if thou keepest
This secret from me, making mystery
Where there is none, I will cut off thy head.
Consider now which course thou wilt adopt.
Know'st not the saying of the archimage
When speaking of some matter to the king?
'A word spoken is a jewel still
Uncut, still kept in bonds; but, once set free
From bondage and disablement, may fill
The bezel—priceless, glittering brilliantly.'"
Hajír responded: "When my lord the prince
Is weary of his signet, crown, and state,
Then let him seek a warrior in the world
Who overthroweth mighty elephants,
And with his anvil-breaking mace-head robbeth
Two hundred of existence at a blow;
For Rustam when opposed to any one
Will bring his head down from the sky to dust.
No elephant on earth is match for him,
His steed's dust is more black than indigo,
His body hath a hundred strong men's strength,
His head is taller than a lofty tree,
And when he rageth on the day of battle
What is a lion, elephant, or man
Within his grasp?"

High-born Suhráb replied:— V. 484

"Gúdarz son of Kishwád hath evil luck
In that for all his puissance, wit, and prowess
He hath to call thee son. Where hast thou looked
On men of war or heard their chargers' tramp
That thou describest Rustam in such terms
And utterest his praise continually?
Thou fearest fire because the stream is calm,
But when it is in flood the fuming fire
Will soon be quenched, and when the sun shall draw
Its blazing sword night's head will go to sleep."

Hajír unwitting thought: "If I declare
The lion-taker's bearings and inform
This Turkman with such hand and neck and seat,
He will arouse his warriors to fight
And urge along his elephantine steed.
He hath such strength and such a neck and shoulder
That Rustam will be slaughtered in his grasp.
Not one of all our warriors will come
To meet him face to face, and he will seize
The throne of Sháh Káús. An archmage said:—
'It is a better thing with fame to go
From life than live and gratify the foe.'
If it be mine to perish by his hand
Day will not darken nor stream turn to blood.
Three score and sixteen sons—all lion-men—
Hath old Gúdarz beside myself, as Gív,
Who conquereth worlds and breaketh hosts, and is
In every place the leader of the folk,
Bahrám, Ruhhám the exalted, and Shídúsh
The lion-slaying warrior, and they all
Will show me kindness after I am dead,
And in revenge will slay our enemies;
V. 485 But when Gúdarz and all his seventy sons
Beloved—illustrious men and warriors—
Cease from Írán let me too be no more.
I mind a holy archimage's words:—
'When cypress-roots appear the pheasant well
May hesitate at common grass to smell.'"
Then said he to Suhráb: "Why so much heat?
Thy questioning to me is all of Rustam.
Why must thou pick a quarrel with me thus
By asking foolish questions? Just because
I cannot give thee an account of him
Wilt thou behead me? Thou need'st no excuse
For shedding blood; show thy true colours then.
Thou wilt not crush the elephantine chief,

Or get him easily within thy clutches.
Refrain from seeking him in fight, for he
Will surely make the dust fly out of thee."

§ 17

How Suhráb attacked the Army of Káús

Suhráb the chief of warriors, when he heard
These harsh words, turned his back upon Hajír,
And hid his face without reply, astounded
At that dark utterance; then from saddleback
He fiercely struck Hajír a blow back-handed,
Felled him, and went his way, mused much and long,
And made his preparations for the fight.
He girt him with the girdle of revenge,
Took from his princely head the golden crown,
Put on his mail and breastplate joyfully,
And set a Rúman helmet on his head.
That paladin, that binder of the Dív,
Took spear, bow, lasso, and his massive mace,
The blood was boiling in his veins with ardour.
He mounted on his rapid steed, sent up
The battle-cry, and spear in hand rushed out V. 486
Like some mad elephant upon the field.
He came forth bent on fight, he made the dust-clouds
Fly to the moon, then charged the Sháh's enclosure
And made it totter with his spear, while all
The valiant chieftains fled like onagers
Before a lion's claws; not one had courage
To face such foot and stirrup, hand and rein,
Such arm and flashing spear. They met and said:
"Here is an elephantine hero for you—
One that we cannot look on unappalled!
Who is there bold enough to challenge him?"

Anon Suhráb the warrior raised his voice,
Assailing Sháh Káús with scornful words,
And thus he said: "O monarch of the Free!
What business hast thou on the battlefield?
Why dost thou bear the name of Kai Káús
Who canst not stand where Lions fight together?
I wield my spear and all thy troops are cowed.
Upon the night that Zhanda Razm was slain
I swore a mighty oath while at the feast:—
'I will not leave a spearman of Írán,
And I will hang Káús upon the gibbet
Alive.' What mighty man hast thou to meet me?"
V. 487 He spake and waited long in silence. None
Made answer from Írán. Then bending down
He forced out seventy tent-pegs with his spear,
The tent-enclosure tumbled to the ground,
And everywhere the blast of clarions sounded.
Sháh Kai Káús exclaimed in his dismay:—
"O men of noble name and glorious race!
Let some one take the news to Rustam, saying:—
'Our warriors' wits are ousted by this Turkman.
I have no cavalier to fight with him;
None of Írán is bold enough to go.'"
Tús bore the message and told Rustam all,
Who thus made answer: "Every other Sháh,
That called me suddenly, called me at times
To feast, at times to fight, but with Káús
I ne'er see aught excepting fight and travail!"
Then gazing from his tent he found that Gív,
Who had but just arrived, was saddling Rakhsh,
And that Gurgín was crying: "Quick! Make haste!"
Ruhhám was fastening the girth and mace,
And Tús had got in hand the horse's mail.
Each one was crying to another: "Quick!"
The matchless hero heard it from his tent
And thought: "This must be Áhriman's own fight!

So great a hubbub is not made for one."
He put on his cuirass of tiger-skin,
Then girt a royal girdle round his loins,
And mounting Rakhsh set forth. He left Zawára
In charge of throne and troops, enjoining him:—
"Advance not and take no commands save mine."
They bore his standard with him as he went
Intent on fight and angry. When he saw
The limbs and shoulders of Suhráb, his breast
As broad as that of valiant Sám, he said:—
"Go we aside to some fit spot for battle." V. 488
Suhráb began to rub his hands, he turned
Back from the Íránian lines, and said to Rustam:—
"Come then; we mighty men require no help;
The fight between us will suffice, and yet
The field of battle is no place for thee;
Thou canst not bear one buffet from my fist.
Great stature hast thou, mighty limbs and neck,
But they are weak with age."
Then Rustam, gazing
Upon that haughty one with such long stirrups,
And such a hand and shoulder, answered mildly:—
"Fair youth! the earth is hard and cold, the air
Is soft and warm. Old am I, but have seen
Full many a stricken field, and many a dív
Hath perished by my hand, yet saw I never
Myself o'ercome. Wait till we fight together;
If thou survivest fear no crocodile.
Both seas and mountains have beheld how I
Have striven with the famed chiefs of Túrán
In fight: the stars bear witness to my deeds.
My might hath laid the world beneath my feet,
And now my heart doth yearn in ruth for thee;
I would not take thy life. Thou wilt not leave
Behind a Turkman with such neck and shoulders.
I know no peer to thee e'en in Írán."

When Rustam spake Suhráb's heart throbbed. He answered:—
"One question will I put. Vouchsafe to tell me
V. 489 The truth. Inform me of thy parentage,
And make me happy by thy fair reply.
I think that thou art Rustam, that thou art
Sprung from the noble race of Narímán."
The other answered him: "I am not Rustam,
Not sprung from Sám the son of Narímán,
For Rustam is a paladin, while I
Am mean, not having throne and state and crown."
Suhráb despaired, he had had hope before,
The face of day was bright to him no more.

§ 18

How Rustam fought with Suhráb

Suhráb, still musing on his mother's words,
Went spear in hand. They chose a battle-ground
Where room was scant, and fought with javelins
Till points and whipping broke; next, wheeling leftward,
Closed with their Indian scimitars and showered
Sparks from their blades, which shivered 'neath such strokes
As might have heralded the Day of Doom;
Then took their massive maces and fought on
Until their weapons bent beneath the blows.
The chargers staggered and their bards dropped off;
The riders raged beneath their shivered mail;
Both were fordone and hand and arm both failed.
With bodies running sweat, with mouths dust-choked,
And tongues thirst-cracked, at length the champions parted,
The sire in anguish and the son exhausted.

O world! thy doings are a mystery,
The broken and the whole both come from thee!
Love stirred in neither of these twain, no trace
Of wisdom was there, love showed not its face!
The fish in streams, wild asses on the plain,
And beasts of burden know their young again,
But toil and lust forbid a man to know
The difference between a child and foe!
Then Rustam thought: "I never yet beheld V. 490
A Crocodile fight thus. Compared with this
To fight the White Dív was an easy task:
To-day my heart despaireth through a man!
The hand of one who is unpractised yet,
No warrior and not named among the chiefs,
Hath made me weary of my life in sight
Of both the hosts!"
The chargers being rested,
The youthful hero and the man in years
Strung up their bows, but still the coats of mail,
The breastplates, and the tiger-skin cuirass
Received no injury from the arrow-points,
And then each hero, raging at his foe,
Seized on the other by the leathern belt.
Now Rustam, had he clutched a rock in battle,
E'en the Black Stone itself,[1] had torn it out,
But when he seized the belt and would unhorse
Suhráb, the young man's waist felt not the tug,
And Rustam's hand was foiled. He quitted hold,
He marvelled at the prowess of his foe,
And then these lion-quellers, satiate
With battle, bruised, and wounded drew apart.
Suhráb again took from his saddle-bow
The massive mace, and gripping with his legs
Smote Rustam grievously upon the shoulder,
Who though he winced yet bravely bare the pain.

[1] A meteorite built into the wall of the Kaaba at Mecca.

Suhráb laughed out and cried: "O cavalier!
Thou canst not bear the buffets of the brave.
Thy charger, one would say, is but an ass;
As for the rider both his hands are naught.
V. 491 A warrior though cypress-tall is foolish
To play the youth when he is in his dotage."
Each humbled by the other turned away.
They parted, troubled both in heart and mind.
Like leopard sighting prey the mighty Rustam
Went to attack the army of Túrán,
While brave Suhráb assailed the Íránian host
And gave his fleet steed rein. He charged the foe
And many a warrior perished by his hand.
Wolf-like he scattered small and great. The heart
Of Rustam boded ill. "Káús will suffer,"
He thought, "from this brave Turkman just arrived
With mail-clad breast and arms."
He hasted back
To camp with anxious heart. There mid the host
He saw Suhráb—a lion mad for prey—
The ground about him tulip-hued with blood,
His spearpoint, hands, and mail all drenched with gore.
Then Rustam raging like a furious lion
Exclaimed: "Bloodthirsty Turkman! who of all
This host opposed thee? Why hast thou not kept
Thy hands for me instead of coming thus
Like wolf among a flock?"
Suhráb replied:—
"The army of Túrán is holding back
From strife, and doing nothing to provoke it,
V. 492 Yet thou began'st it by assailing them
When none sought battle and revenge on thee!"
"Light faileth," Rustam said. "On its return
A throne and gibbet wait us on this plain,
For all the bright world yieldeth to the sword,
And if thine arms are so familiar

With scimitar and arrow never die!
Come we with vengeful swords at break of day
To learn the Maker's will, but now away!"

§ 19

How Rustam and Suhráb returned to Camp

They parted and the air's face gloomed. Suhráb
Amazed the circling sphere. Thou wouldst have said:—
"Heaven fashioned him of war; he ceaseth not
A moment from the fray; his form is brazen,
His charger iron, and his spirit wondrous."
Suhráb when night fell joined his troops. His loins
Were galled with battle but his breast was iron.
Thus spake he to Húmán: "This day the sun
Arose and filled the world with war and strife.
How fared ye with this gallant cavalier
Who hath a hero's heart and lion's claws?
What did he say and do? He proved my match!
How fared my troops with him? I hold him peerless,
Though old a Lion bent on war and strife."
Húmán replied: "Thou bad'st us tarry here. V. 493
Just as we had made ready for the field
A warrior came and challenged us to combat,
Confronting all this mighty armament.
Thou wouldst have said: 'He cometh fresh from wine
To venture all alone on such a struggle.'
He raised the dust of war on every side
And slaughtered many warriors of our camp,
Then turning round departed at full speed."
Suhráb said: "He hath slain no man of mark
While I have slaughtered many Íránians,
And puddled with their blood the ground to clay,
While ye looked on. However, none opposed me;
'Twas well none did, for had a lion come

He would not have escaped my massive mace.
What is a tiger, pard, or mighty lion
Confronting me who with my spearpoint bring
Fire from the clouds? When warriors behold
My visage in its wrath their mail is shivered.
To-morrow morning ere it is high day
It will be seen which is the better man,
And by the Maker's name—the only God—
I will not leave a foe alive. Now spread we
The board with meat and wine, and cheer our hearts."

When Rustam reached the host he questioned Gív:—
"What did Suhráb the daring warrior?"

V. 494 Gív answered: "We ne'er saw one fight like him.
He rode up to our centre spear in hand,
And raging; there he challenged Tús, who wolf-like
Came forth and mounted. When Suhráb beheld him
Advancing with his lance he roared as 'twere
A lion in its rage, and with bent mace
Struck Tús upon the breast a mighty blow
That made his helm fall off. Tús turned and fled.
Then many others fought but none prevailed,
For only Rustam can contend with him.
I kept the good old rule of one to one.
When no more single challengers went forth
We let him have the field all to himself,
Whereat he left the centre for the right
And flourished in his glory here and there."

Now Rustam sorrowed at the words of Gív
And went to Sháh Káús, who seated him
Upon the throne. Then Rustam told the Sháh
About Suhráb, his stature, and his mien:—
"None ever saw one of his tender years
So brave and lion-like. In height he reacheth
The stars; the earth can not support his bulk;
His arms and thighs are camel-like and larger.
With sword and shaft, with lasso and with mace,

We proved each other lustily in all ways
Until at last I said: 'Ere now have I
Plucked from the saddle many a warrior,'
And laying hold upon his leathern belt
I put the buckle to a mighty strain,
And fancied: 'I shall raise him from his saddle
And hurl him like the rest to dust.' But though
The mountain-tops were rocking in the blast V. 495
That chieftain would not rock upon his seat,
And so I quitted him, for it was late,
The night was very dark, there was no moon;
But we intend to meet again to-morrow
To wrestle. All I can I will, but know not
Which will prevail. Still we shall learn God's purpose,
For victory and conquest are from Him
Who is the Maker of the sun and moon."
Then Kai Káús replied: "God rend our foes
In pieces! I will pray to Him to-night
For victory o'er this vile, malignant Turkman,
Pray that thy withered hopes may spring afresh,
And that thy fame may reach the sun."
Then Rustam:—
"Thy Grace will speed thy liege's whole desire."
He went depressed and vengeful to his camp.
To him Zawára came with downcast soul,
And said: "How fared the paladin to-day?"
But Rustam first would eat, then washed his heart
Of care and charged his brother, saying thus:—
"Be vigilant and cautious. When I go
At dawn to fight that Turkman warrior
Lead out mine army and bring forth my flag,
My throne, and golden boots, and be before V. 496
My tent when bright Sol riseth. If I prove
Victorious in the fight I shall not loiter
Upon the battlefield, while if the matter
Have other ending make no lamentation

And be not downcast. Let not any of you
Go on the field or prosecute the war,
But go hence to Zábulistán to Zál,
Console my mother for my God-sent fate,
And say to her: 'Set not thy heart upon me,
And be not always mourning for my death.
No one abideth in this world for ever,
Heaven had no pretext left to spare me longer.
I have slain lions, pards, dívs, crocodiles
Enough, and razed full many a wall and stronghold,
While no man had the upper hand of me,
Though he that mounteth on his steed and chargeth
Is simply knocking at the door of death.
What though a man outlive a thousand years
One road and one event are for us all.
Bethink thee of Jamshíd the exalted Sháh,
And Tahmúras the Binder of the Dív.
There was no monarch like them here below,
And yet at last God took them. As the earth
Remained not theirs I too must pass away.'
When she hath been consoled thus say to Zál:—
'Abandon not the monarch of the world,
Fight for him valiantly and do his bidding.
497 We all, both young and old, are doomed to die;
No one abideth in this world for ever.'"
They rested after half the night had gone
In talk about Suhráb and him alone.

§ 20

How Suhráb overthrew Rustam

The bright sun shone, the raven night flew low,
Great Rustam donned his tiger-skin cuirass
And mounted on his fiery dragon-steed.
Two leagues divided host from host, and all
Stood ready-armed. The hero with a casque

Of iron on his head came on the field.
Suhráb on his side revelling with comrades
Had thus addressed Húmán: "That lion-man,
Who striveth with me, is as tall as I am
And hath a dauntless heart. He favoureth me
In shoulder, breast, and arm, and thou wouldst say
That some skilled workman laid us out by line.
His very feet and stirrups move my love
And make me blush, for I perceive in him
The marks whereof my mother spake. Moreover
My heart presageth that he must be Rustam,
For few resemble him. I may not challenge
My sire or lightly meet him in the combat."
Húmán said: "Rustam oft hath countered me: V. 498
This charger is like his, except in action."
At sunrise, when they woke, Suhráb arrayed
Himself in mail and mirthful though resolved
Set forward shouting, ox-head mace in hand.
He greeted Rustam smiling, thou hadst said
That they had passed the night in company:—
"How went the night? How is't with thee to-day?
Why so intent on strife? Fling down thine arrows
And scimitar, and drop the hand of wrong.
Let us dismount and, sitting, clear our faces
With wine, and, leaguing in God's sight, repent
Our former strife. Until some other cometh
To battle feast with me because I love thee,
And weep for shamefastness. In sooth thou comest
From heroes and wilt tell me of thy stock,
For as my foe thou shouldst not hide thy name.
Art thou the famous Rustam of Zábul,
The son of valiant Zál the son of Sám?"
Then Rustam: "Young aspirant! heretofore
We talked not thus but spake last night of wrestling.
I am not to be gulled, attempt it not.
Though thou art young I am no child myself, V. 499

But girt to wrestle, and the end shall be
According to the will of Providence.
I have known ups and downs, and am not one
To practise guile upon."

Suhráb replied:—

"Old man! if thou rejectest my proposals . . .!
I wished that thou shouldst die upon thy bed,
And that thy kin should tomb thy soulless corpse,
But I will end thee if it be God's will."

They lighted, tied their chargers to a rock,
And cautiously advanced in mail and casque
With troubled hearts. They wrestled like two lions
Until their bodies ran with sweat and blood.
From sunrise till the shadows grew they strove
Until Suhráb, that maddened Elephant,
Reached out, up-leaping with a lion's spring,
Caught Rustam's girdle, tugged amain as though,
Thou wouldst have said, to rend the earth, and shouting
With rage and vengeance hurled him to the ground,
Raised him aloft and, having dashed him down,
Sat on his breast with visage, hand, and mouth
Besmirched with dust, as when a lion felleth
An onager, then drew a bright steel dagger
V. 500 To cut off Rustam's head, who seeing this
Exclaimed: "Explain I must! O warrior
That takest Lions captive and art skilled
With lasso, mace, and scimitar! the customs
And laws of arms with us are not as yours.
In wrestling none may take a foeman's head
The first time that his back is on the ground,
But having thrown him twice and won the name
Of Lion then he may behead the foe:
Such is our custom."

Thus he sought to 'scape
The Dragon's clutches and get off with life.
The brave youth hearkened to the old man's words.

In part through confidence, in part through fate,
In part no doubt through magnanimity,
Suhráb let Rustam go, turned toward the plain,
Pursued an antelope that crossed his path,
And utterly forgot his recent foe.
When he was far away Húmán came up
As swift as dust and asked about the fight.
He told Húmán what had been said and done,
Who cried: "Alas! young man! art thou indeed
So weary of thy life? Woe for thy breast,
Mien, stature, stirrups, and heroic feet!
The mighty Lion whom thou hadst ensnared
Thou hast let go and all is still to do.
Mark how he will entreat thee on the day
Of battle owing to thy senseless act.
A king[1] once spake a proverb to the point:—
'Despise not any foe however weak.'"
He took the very life out of Suhráb,
Who standing sorrowing and amazed replied:—
"Let us dismiss such fancies from our hearts,
For he will come to fight with me to-morrow, V. 501
And thou shalt see a yoke upon his neck."
He went to camp in dudgeon at his deed.
When Rustam had escaped his foeman's clutch
He was again as 'twere a mount of steel.
He went toward a rivulet as one
Who having fainted is himself again.
He drank and bathed, then prayed to God for strength
And victory, not knowing what the sun
And moon decreed, or how the turning sky
Would rob him of the Crown upon his head.
The tale is told that Rustam had at first
Such strength bestowed by Him who giveth all
That if he walked upon a rock his feet
Would sink therein. Such puissance as that

[1] Zahhák. See vol. i. p. 154.

Proved an abiding trouble, and he prayed
To God in bitterness of soul to minish
His strength that he might walk like other men.
According to his prayer his mountain-strength
Had shrunk, but face to face with such a task,
And pierced by apprehension of Suhráb,
He cried to God and said: "Almighty Lord!
Protect Thy slave in his extremity.
O holy Fosterer! I ask again
My former strength."
God granted him his prayer,
The strength which once had waned now waxed in him.
He went back to the field perturbed and pale
While, like a maddened elephant, Suhráb,
With lasso on his arm and bow in hand,
V. 502 Came in his pride and roaring like a lion,
His plunging charger flinging up the soil.
When Rustam saw the bearing of his foe
He was astound and gazing earnestly
Weighed in his mind the chances of the fight.
Suhráb, puffed up with youthful arrogance,
On seeing Rustam in his strength and Grace,
Cried: "Thou that didst escape the Lion's claws!
Why com'st thou boldly to confront me? Speak!
Hast thou no interests of thine own to seek?"

§ 21

How Suhráb was slain by Rustam

They tied their steeds while fate malignantly
Revolved o'erhead, and when dark fate is wroth
Flint rocks become like wax. The two began
To wrestle, holding by their leathern belts.
As for Suhráb thou wouldst have said: "High heaven
Hath hampered him," while Rustam reaching clutched
That warrior-leopard by the head and neck,

Bent down the body of the gallant youth,
Whose time was come and all whose strength was gone,
And like a lion dashed him to the ground; V. 503
Then, knowing that Suhráb would not stay under,
Drew lightly from his waist his trenchant sword
And gashed the bosom of his gallant son.
Whenever thou dost thirst for blood and stain
Therewith thy glittering dagger, destiny
Will be athirst for thy blood, and ordain
Each hair of thine to be a sword for thee.
Suhráb cried: "Ah!" and writhed. Naught recked he then
Of good or ill. "I am alone to blame,"
He said to Rustam. "Fate gave thee my key.
This hump-backed sky reared me to slay me soon.
Men of my years will mock me since my neck
Hath thus come down to dust. My mother told me
How I should recognise my father. I
Sought him in love and die of my desire.
Alas! my toils are vain, I have not seen him.
Now wert thou fish, or wrapped like night in gloom,
Or quit of earth wast soaring like a star,
My father would avenge me when he seeth
My pillow bricks. Some chief will say to Rustam:—
'Suhráb was slain and flung aside in scorn
While seeking thee.'"
Then Rustam grew distraught,
The world turned black, his body failed; o'ercome
He sank upon the ground and swooned away;
Till coming to himself he cried in anguish:—
"Where is the proof that thou art Rustam's son?
May his name perish from among the great,
For I am Rustam! Be my name forgotten,
And may the son of Sám sit mourning me!"
He raved, his blood seethed, and with groans he plucked V. 504

His hair up by the roots, while at the sight
Suhráb sank swooning till at length he cried:—
"If thou indeed art Rustam thou hast slain me
In wanton malice, for I made advances,
But naught that I could do would stir thy love.
Undo my breastplate, view my body bare,
Behold thy jewel, see how sires treat sons!
The drums beat at my gate, my mother came
With blood-stained cheeks and stricken to the soul
Because I went. She bound this on mine arm
And said: 'Preserve this keepsake of thy father's
And mark its virtue.' It is mighty now,
Now when the strife is over and the son
Is nothing to his sire."
When Rustam loosed
The mail and saw the gem he rent his clothes,
And cried: "Oh! my brave son, approved by all
And slain by me!"
With dust upon his head
And streaming face he rent his locks until
His blood ran down.
"Nay, this is worse and worse,"
Suhráb said. "Wherefore weep? What will it profit
To slay thyself? What was to be hath been."
When day declined and Rustam came not back
There went forth twenty trusty warriors
To learn the issue. Both the steeds were standing
Bemoiled with dust, but Rustam was not there.
The nobles, thinking that he had been slain,
Went to Káús in consternation saying:—
"The throne of majesty is void of Rustam!"
V. 505 A cry went up throughout the host and all
Was in confusion. Then Káús bade sound
The drums and trumpets, Tús came, and the Sháh
Said to the troops: "Dispatch a messenger
That he may find out what Suhráb hath done,

And if there must be mourning through Írán.
None will confront him with brave Rustam dead.
We must attack in force and speedily."

While clamour raged Suhráb said thus to Rustam :—
"The Turkmans' case is altered since my day
Is done. Use all thine influence that the Sháh
May not attack them. They approached Írán
Through trust in me, and I encouraged them.
How could I tell, O famous paladin!
That I should perish by my father's hand?
Let them depart unscathed, and treat them kindly.
I had a warrior in yonder hold
Caught by my lasso. Him I often asked
To point thee out: mine eyes looked ever for thee.
He told me all but this. His place is void.[1]
His words o'er-cast my day, and I despaired.
See who he is and let him not be harmed.
I marked in thee the tokens that my mother V. 506
Described but trusted not mine eyes. The stars
Decreed that I should perish by thy hand.
I came like lightning and like wind I go.
In heaven I may look on thee with joy."

Then Rustam choked, his heart was full of fire,
His eyes of tears. He mounted quick as dust
And came with lamentations to the host
In grievous consternation at his deed.
The Íránians catching sight of him fell prostrate
And gave God praise that Rustam had returned,
But when they saw the dust upon his dead,
His clothes and bosom rent, they questioned him:
"What meaneth this? For whom art thou thus troubled?"

He told the fearful deed, and all began
To mourn aloud with him. His anguish grew.
He told the nobles: "I have lost to-day

[1] "La place *que je lui avais destinée* reste vide."—MOHL.

All strength and courage. Fight not with Túrán:
I have done harm enough."
Zawára came
With breast and raiment rent and body wounded,
Whom Rustam told about his slaughtered son,
And added: "I repent me of my deed,
And have unmeasured retribution. I
Have slain my son now when my head is grey.
He is cut off both root and stem, his loins
Are pierced, and heaven will weep for him for ever."
He sent and told Húmán: "The scimitar
V. 507 Of war is sheathed and thou commandest now.
Watch o'er thy host. This is no day for fight
Or further words with thee because through malice
Thou didst not speak but sear my life and eyes."
Then to Zawára said the paladin:—
"Escort Húmán, brave hero! to the river,
Eschewing every act of violence."
Zawára went forthwith and gave the message,
And he—the warrior that taught Suhráb
The art of war—thus answered: "'Twas Hajír,
That evil-purposed stirrer up of strife,
Who hid the matter of your general,
And when Suhráb sought token of his sire
Spake not but left his mind in ignorance.
The black behaviour of Hajír hath brought
This ill on us. His head should be struck off."
Zawára came back to inform the hero
About Húmán, the host, of what Hajír,
The evil and malevolent, had done,
And how Suhráb had perished by his means.
The hero was distracted at the words,
The world grew dark before his eyes, he quitted
The battlefield and coming to Hajír
Laid hold upon his throat and threw him down,
Then drawing forth a dagger of bright steel

Was minded to behead him, but the nobles [179]
Took part with him and saved him from death's door.
Then Rustam hurried to his wounded son
With Tús, Gúdarz, and Gustaham, while all
The troops, concerned for Rustam, said to him :—
"God will provide a remedy for this,
And make thy sorrow easy."
Rustam seized
A dagger to behead himself, but weeping
Their own hearts' blood the chieftains hung on him.
Gúdarz said: "Will it help thee to send up V. 508
The world in smoke? Though thou shalt do thyself
A hundred harms, how will it soothe thy darling?
If there remaineth time for him on earth
He will remain; do thou remain with him;
But, if the youth is passing from the world,
Think! Who abideth in the world for ever?
We are the quarry, and death hunteth us
No matter whether we wear casque or crown,
But all are borne out when their end hath come,
And afterward we wot not how they do.
Our tears are needed on our own account.
Who is there, chieftain! free from dread of Death?
However long or short the way may be
We scatter when he joineth company."

§ 22

How Rustam asked Káús for an Elixir

Then to Gúdarz said Rustam: "Famous hero
Of ardent soul! bear for me to Káús
A message, tell him what hath chanced, and say
Thus: 'With a dagger have I pierced the reins
Of my brave son. May Rustam's life be short!
If thou at all art mindful of my deeds
Let thy heart feel for me in my distress.

...air in thy treasury,
Which hath the power to make the wounded whole,
Send somewhat graciously to me forthwith,
Together with a cup of wine. My son,
By thy good fortune, may recover yet,
And stand like me a slave before thy throne.' "

The chieftain came like wind and gave the message.
The Sháh said: "Who hath lustre in my sight
Exceeding that of elephantine Rustam?
I do not wish him ill but honour him
509 Exceedingly, yet, if I send the elixir,
Suhráb—an elephantine chief—will live,
Will strengthen Rustam's back, and doubtlessly
Bring ruin on myself. If at his hands
I suffer shall I not avenge myself?
'Who is Káús,' thou heardest him once say,
'And if he be the Sháh who then is Tús?'[1]
Who in this wide world hath such neck and limbs
And Grace? How will he stand before my throne,
Or march beneath the banner of the Sháhs?
He gave me his abuse and took away
My credit with the troops. If his son liveth
A pinch of dust is all that I shall get.
Art thou of high rank and experience
And hast not heard the language of Suhráb:—
'I will behead a thousand in Írán
And hang Káús alive upon the gibbet?'[2]
If he surviveth great and small will quake.
To cherish foes is to invite contempt."

Thereat Gúdarz returned like smoke to Rustam,
And said: "The evil nature of the Sháh
Is like a colocynth in constant fruit.

[1] A kingly perversion of what Rustam really had said, suggesting that he contemplated dethroning Káús and restoring the ancient Pishdádian line in the person of its representative, Tús. See p. 143.

[2] See p. 160.

He hath no equal in the world for harshness,
And never helpeth any one in trouble.
Go unto him in person, be thy part V. 510
To bring the light to his benighted heart."

§ 23

How Rustam lamented for Suhráb

Then Rustam called for an embroidered robe
And, having laid the youth thereon, set off,
But as he went one overtook him, saying:—
"Suhráb hath passed from this wide world, and asketh
No more a palace of thee but a bier."
The father started, sighed, and groaning closed
His eyes, then lighting swift as wind removed
His helm and scattered dust upon his head,
While all the great men also wept and wailed.
He cried in mournful tones: "O warrior-youth
Exalted and a paladin by birth!
The sun and moon, the breastplate and the helm,
The crown and throne, will never see thy peer.
Hath this that hath befallen me—to slay
My son in mine old age—befallen another?
My son—the offspring of the worldlord Sám
The cavalier, born of a noble dame!
I, that have now no peer in all the world
For valour, was a boy to him! Well might
My hands be lopped! May never seat be mine
Save in the darksome dust. What shall I say V. 511
When tidings reach his mother? How shall I
Send any one to break the news to her?
What reason can I give for slaying one
Without offence and darkening his day?
What sire e'er acted thus? I well deserve
The world's abuse. Who ever slew a son
So young and wise and valiant? And his mother!

What will her sire, that honoured paladin,
Say to her in her youth and innocence?
How they will curse the progeny of Sám
And call me lacklove, impious! Who could deem
That at his years my darling would become
Tall as a cypress, set his heart on war,
Array the host, and turn my day to darkness?"
He bade them spread brocade such as kings use
Upon his young son's face—that son who set
His heart on throne and realm and only won
A narrow bier. They bore it from the field,
Then set the camp-enclosure in a blaze
While all the troops cast dust upon their heads.
They burned the tents, the many-hued brocade,
And all the goodly seats of yellow pardskin.
A cry went up and mighty Rustam wailed:—
"The world will see no cavalier like thee
For skill and valour on the day of battle.
Woe for thy valour and thy prudent mind!
Woe for those cheeks of thine, thy mien, thy stature!
Woe's me! this sorrow and heart-rending grief!
He left his mother and his father slew him!"
With royal raiment rent upon his body
And weeping blood he scrabbled in the dust
V 512 Exclaiming: "Zál and virtuous Rúdába
Will utter curses, saying: 'Rustam gained
The mastery and stabbed him to the heart.'
What plea of mine will win their hearts to me?
How will the chieftains bear to hear that I
Have rooted from the garth the straight-stemmed cypress?"
Then all the paladins of Sháh Káús
Sat by the wayside in the dust with Rustam,
And much advised him, but he heeded not.
Such are high heaven's deeds! It hath for us
A lasso in this hand, in that a crown,

And him that sitteth crowned and prosperous
It haleth with the twisted lasso down.
Why should we love this world when we and they
That fare with us alike must pass away?
Though one may reckon on long life he must
Betake him in the last resort to dust.
Now whether heaven acteth knowingly,
Or not, 'tis vain to ask its how and why;
Forbear we then to weep that one should go:
The end thereof is not for us to know.

The Sháh informed about Suhráb drew near
To Rustam with his retinue and said:—
"From Mount Alburz e'en to the reed the sky
Will bear all off. We may not set our love V. 513
Upon this dust, for, though some haste, some linger,
All die at last. Take comfort for the dead,
And hear what sages say. Though thou shouldst dash
The sky upon the earth and burn the world
'Twill not recall the dead. Know that his soul
Is long in heaven. From afar I marked
His breast, neck, stature, and his iron mace
As fate impelled him onward with his host
To perish by thy hands. What remedy?
How long wilt thou bewail the dead?"

He answered:—

"Though he is gone Húmán remaineth still
With other chieftains of Túrán and Chín.
Regard them not as foes but let Zawára,
God willing and the Sháh, conduct them hence."

Káús replied: "Aspiring chief! thy face
Is saddened through this fight, and though our foes
Have harmed me much and sent smoke from Írán,
Yet through thy sorrow is my heart so sore
That I will think upon revenge no more."

§ 24

How Rustam returned to Zábulistán

The Sháh marched homeward with the host, while Rustam
V. 514 Stayed for Zawára's news about the foe,
Then marched at dawn toward Zábulistán,
Where Zál and all the folk went out to meet him
In anguish and distress. They reached the bier.
The nobles scattered dust upon their heads,
They docked the tails of their high-crested steeds,
And rent the brazen tymbals and the drums.
When Zál the son of Sám perceived the bier
He lighted from his steed with golden trappings,
While matchless Rustam went in front afoot
With heart and raiment rent. The warriors
Put off their belts, stooped to the dust before it,
And served as bearers, bending low their heads,
Alas! for him so noble and so brave!
While Rustam in his father's presence lifted
His son's head from the golden broidery,
And cried in anguish: "See how Sám the horseman
Is sleeping sadly on this narrow bier!"
Zál showered tears of blood and plained to God,
While Rustam cried: "Chief! thou hast gone, and I
Am left in shame and wretchedness."
Then Zál:—
"A strange event! His was a massive mace.
He was of note among the mightiest,
And none will bear his like."
He spoke through tears;
His theme was all Suhráb. When Rustam reached
V. 515 His hall he wailed and had the corse set down
In front of him. Rúdába, seeing it
And Rustam's tears, exclaimed: "Alack! thou hero!

Uplift thy head one moment from the bier."
She wailed and heaving deep-drawn sighs exclaimed:—
"O paladin, son of the Lion's Whelp!
None will be born so strong and brave as thou.
Henceforth thou wilt not whisper to thy mother
Tales of thy happy moments, for in sooth
Thou hast departed to the prison-house,
Departed to the mansion of the wretched.
Oh tell not what befell thee from thy father,
And why it was that thus he pierced thy heart!"
Her cries reached Saturn; all that heard her wept.
Dust-smirched and woebegone she sought her bower
While Rustam at the sight wept tears of blood.
Thou wouldst have asked: "Hath Doomsday come, for joy
Hath fled all hearts?"
Again he brought the bier,
Whereon Suhráb the Lion lay, before
The gallant chiefs, and in his father's presence
Drew back the shroud. He showed the chiefs the corse,
And thou hadst said that heaven reeked with sorrow.
All that were present looked on helplessly,
All cheeks were livid, all robes rent, all hearts
Fulfilled with pain, all heads besmirched with dust.
The royal palace was one mighty bier,
And of that valiant Lion in his coffin
Thou wouldst have said: "Tis' Sám with his huge limbs, V. 516
And tired with warfare he hath gone to sleep."
The sire replaced the gold brocade and closed
The narrow bier. He said: "Though I shall make
His tomb of gold and fill it round with musk
'Twill perish with me, but I can no more."
While all went blind with grief he made a charnel
Shaped like a horse's hoof. The bier was formed

Of undried aloe-wood with golden clasps.
The tale of how the paladin had slain
His son went everywhere and all the world
Was full of grief, while Rustam sorrowed long,
But in the end perforce resigned himself.
The world hath many an act like this in mind,
On every soul it setteth many a brand,
For who possesseth sense and wit combined
The treachery of fortune to withstand?
The Íránians hearing burned with grief. Húmán,
For his part, went back to Túrán and told
Afrásiyáb, who was all wonderment
And speculation touching that event.

§ 25

How Suhráb's Mother received the Tidings of his Death

A cry rose from Túrán: "Suhráb hath fallen
Upon the battlefield!" The tidings reached
The king of Samangán, who rent his robes.
V. 517 The tidings reached Tahmína: "Brave Suhráb
Hath perished, stricken by his father's sword!"
She seized her robe and rent it, and her form—
That goodly gem—shone forth. She raised a cry
Of wail and woe, and swooned at whiles. She coiled
Her hair like twisted lassos round her fingers
And plucked it out. The blood ran down her face.
At times she sank fordone. She strewed dark dust
Upon her head, gnawed pieces from her arms,
Flung fire upon her head and scorched herself,
And burned her musky tresses. "Where art thou,"
She cried, "who wast thy mother's soul, but art
Now only dust and blood? I scanned the road,
I said: 'I may have tidings of Suhráb
And Rustam.' Then I mused and said: 'Already

Hast thou been round the world to find thy father,
Hast found him, and art speeding home again.'
How could I know, my son! that news would come
That he had pierced thy liver with his sword?
He had no pity for that face of thine,
Thy stature, mien, and arms, he pitied not
Thy girdlestead but clave it with his blade.
I used to nurse the body of my boy
Through days of brightness and through weary nights,
And now 'tis drowned in blood! A winding-sheet V. 518
Is all the cover of his stainless form.
Whom shall I clasp upon my bosom now?
Who is there that will rid me of my grief?
Whom shall I call upon to take thy place?
To whom impart my pain and misery?
Woe for his soul and body, eye and lustre,
That dwell in dust instead of hall and garden!
O warrior, shelter of the host! thou soughtest
Thy sire and in his place hast found thy grave.
Hope turned in thee to dolorous despair,
And now thou sleepest scorned and miserable
Amid the dust. Before he drew his dagger
And gashed thy silvern side why didst not thou
Show him the token that thy mother gave thee?
Why didst thou not declare thyself to him?
Thy mother told thee how to know thy sire:
How was it that thou didst not trust her words?
Without thee she is as the captives are—
All travail, anguish, misery, and sighing.
Why went I not with thee that wast to be
The warriors' cynosure? He would have known me
Though far away and welcomed both of us,
Cast down his sword and never pierced thy side."
This said she tore herself, plucked out her hair,
And smote her lovely visage with her palms.
She filled the eyes of all the folk with hail,

So grievous were her moans and lamentations.
At length while all hearts ached she fell a-swoon,
V. 519 Fell as one falleth dead upon the ground,
And thou hadst said: "Her blood is turned to ice."
She roused, thought of her son, and wailed afresh,
Her very heart's blood crimsoning her tears.
She fetched his crown, wept o'er it and his throne,
Exclaiming in her grief: "O royal Tree!"
She brought his wind-foot charger forth, that charger
Which he had prized so in his happy days,
And clasped and kissed its head, to folk's amazement,
And nuzzled on its hoofs, while her blood fell
And reddened all the ground. She took his robe
And clasped it to her body like her son,
She fetched his jerkin, coat of mail, and bow,
His spear, his falchion, and his massive mace.
She fetched his saddle with the reins and buckler,
And dashed her head thereon. She fetched his lasso,
And flung its eighty cubits out before her.
She fetched his helm and breastplate, and exclaimed:—
"O warrior-lion!" drew his sword and docked
His charger's mane and tail. She gave the poor
His goods—the silver, gold, and harnessed steeds.
V. 520 She locked the palace, rooted up the throne,
Then brought it down and dashed it to the ground.
She blacked the chambers' doors, sent up the dust
From porch and palace, gave to desolation
The banquet-hall that he had left for battle,
Assumed the weeds of woe all stained with blood,
By day and night lamented him with tears,
Died broken-hearted in a year, and joined
Her warrior-son.

Said eloquent Bahrám:—
"Dote not upon the dead; thy proper care
Is for thine own departure to prepare,
Since here thou canst not stay. So dally not.

Thy father once gave up his place to thee,
And thou must give up thine. Such is our lot,
And 'tis a secret still, a mystery,
Nor wilt thou with thy dazed mind find a key.
To open that closed door may no man know.
Endeavour not therefor, else wilt thou throw
Life to the winds. Our summons to depart
Is from the God and Master of us all;
Then on this Wayside Inn set not thy heart;
The profit of such sojourn is but small."

Now from this history my face I turn:
The tale of Siyáwush is my concern.

PART IV

THE STORY OF SIYÁWUSH

ARGUMENT

The poet, inspired by his theme and conscious of his genius, retells an ancient tale thus :—

Gív and Tús, while hunting, find and quarrel about a damsel. The matter is referred to the Sháh, who marries her himself. From this union springs Siyáwush, who is brought up by Rustam and afterward returns to his father's court, where Súdába, one of his father's wives, tempts him in vain and then accuses him falsely. He clears himself by ordeal and saves his accuser's own life, which had been adjudged forfeit for her wickedness. In time she is restored to favour, and Siyáwush, to escape her wiles, leads an army against Afrásiyáb, who, terrified by a dream, sues for peace. The terms granted by Siyáwush are rejected by the Sháh, and Siyáwush, his honour touched, goes over to Afrásiyáb, by whom he is well received and whose daughter Farangís he marries, having previously married Jaríra, the daughter of Pírán. He attains to great dignities, but incurs the envy of the king's brother, Garsíwaz, by whom he is done to death. His wife Farangís is protected by Pírán and gives birth to Kai Khusrau, with whose childhood the story ends.

NOTE

Firdausí, as we may gather from his prelude, thought highly of his version of this tragic story, which, unlike that of Suhráb, is not a pure episode, but leads directly, though by a long road, to the chief epic climax. It also affords a good example of the poet's treatment of his subject-matter. Various legends are combined with curious results. For instance, the legend of the birth of Siyáwush from a grand-daughter of Garsíwaz is not allowed to militate against or to modify other legends in which ancestor and descendant meet on equal terms, in the full vigour of manhood, as

strangers ignorant of their blood-relationship, as enemies, as villain and victim. Such instances are the surest guarantee that the poet is drawing on epic sources and not on his own imagination. The story further shows how needful it is for a reader of the Sháhnáma mentally to supply for himself the element of time. The account of Súdába's infatuation for Siyáwush[1] reads as if it were a matter of a few days, weeks, or months at most. It is only from a chance remark of hers that we learn that the affair had been going on for seven years!

The temptation of Siyáwush by Súdába, on which so much turns, will suggest many a parallel to the reader.

It should be mentioned, however, that Súdába's pretext for inviting Siyáwush to visit her—the suggested marriage of one of her daughters to him—was a legitimate one to a Zoroastrian.

Súdába's daughter would be Siyáwush's half-sister, and next-of-kin marriages, as they were called, were not only permitted but regarded as a sacred duty by the Magi.[2] Súdába, with the wit of a woman much in love, hit upon a perfectly legitimate motive, and Kai Káús accepted it, as we see, without the least suspicion.

Siyáwush appears as Syávarshána in the Zandavasta, where he is several times mentioned in connection with his murder by Garsíwaz and Afrásiyáb, and the vengeance exacted for it by Kai Khusrau, who, we are told, "prevailed over all; he put in bonds Frangrasyan and Keresavasda, to avenge the murder of his father Syávarshána."[3] Here, as in other cases, the leading motives of the Sháhnáma originate in the Zandavasta.

§ 49. The poet in his description of Gang-dizh perhaps had in his mind the famous stronghold of Kalát-i-Nádirí, which lies about thirty miles to the north of Mashad and not far from the poet's own birthplace, but he follows his authorities, which look at matters from a point of view west of the Caspian, and describes Gang-dizh as being beyond the sea accordingly. Tradition seems to place it in Kházrazm. In the Zandavasta we read of "the castle Khshathró-saoka, that stands high up on the lofty, holy Kangha."[4] In the Díná-í Maínóg-i Khirad, a Pahlaví treatise, Siyáwush is described as the founder of Kangdez, and Kangdez itself is described as lying to the east, on the frontier of Aírán-végó.[5] In the Bundahish it is described as being in the direction of the east, "at many leagues from the bed of the wide-formed ocean towards that side."[6] Now the learned Abú Raihán Muhammad, more commonly known in the west as Albírúní, was a native of Kházrazm and wrote a

[1] § 6 *seq.*
[2] WPT, ii. 389.
[3] DZA, ii. 304. See also pp. 65, 114, 115.
[4] DZA, ii. 67.
[5] WPT, iii. 64, 109.
[6] WPT, i. 119

history of that country. His account is nearly all lost, but in another work of his he tells us that the Khárazmians dated the colonisation of their country from the year 980 before Alexander, *i.e.* from the fourteenth century B.C., and that ninety-two years later the incursion of Siyáwush took place. From this time onward they were governed by monarchs of his race down to the days of king Áfrígh—a man of evil reputation—who built himself a fortress on the outskirts of the city of Khárazm, or made additions to an existing fortress, called Alfír, in the year 616 of the era of Alexander, *i.e.* toward the end of the third century A.D. This Alfír, Albírúní tells us, was built of clay and tiles, and consisted of three forts, one inside another, and all of equal height. Rising above the whole were the royal palaces. Alfír could be seen at a distance of ten miles or more. It was broken and shattered by the Oxus, and was swept away piece by piece every year, till the last remains of it had disappeared by the year 1305 of the era of Alexander, *i.e.* toward the end of the tenth century A.D.[1] It is evident from this account that Alfír was in process of construction or enlargement in the very century in which the Zandavasta was being compiled. The Khárazmians had racial affinities with the Íránians, and the epithet "holy" applied to Kangha in the Zandavasta evidently points to the fact that they were Zoroastrians as well. It may be therefore that the Khshathró-saoka of the Zandavasta, the Kangdez of the Pahlaví texts, the Alfír of Albírúní, and the Gang-dizh of the Sháhnáma all represent one and the same place—the palace-fortress of the ancient capital of Khárazm. Khárazm is, of course, the modern Khiva, and Gang-dizh means the fortress (dizh) of the land of Kangha.

§ 58 *seq.* In the account of the birth and youth of Kai Khusrau we have in essentials the same story as that told by Herodotus[2] some fifteen centuries earlier. Astyages, the king of the Medes, had a daughter Mandane. He had a dream about her which he told to Magi who were learned in such matters. Their interpretation of it alarmed him, and as the safest course in the circumstances he married his daughter to an unambitious Persian of good family named Cambyses. Soon after Astyages had another dream about Mandane. He again consulted the dream-interpreters, who told him that his daughter's son would supersede him on the throne. In consequence of this prognostic he sent for Mandane, who was dwelling among the Persians, and had her closely guarded. When her son Cyrus was born, Astyages summoned Harpagus, a member of the royal house and a most loyal liege, and ordered him to take

[1] SAC, p. 40.

[2] i. 107 *seq.*

the child from Mandane, to kill it, and to bury it. Harpagus, in great distress, carried off the child, who was ready clad in funeral weeds, to his own home, but told his wife that nothing should induce him to make away with the infant himself, for they were akin to each other. Accordingly he sent for one of the herdsmen of Astyages, whose herds were pastured on the mountains north of Ekbatana, in the direction of the Euxine—a tract frequented by wild beasts—and bade him expose the child on some desolate spot that it might soon perish. Now, it so happened that the herdsman's wife had lately had a still-born babe, and when she saw Cyrus she persuaded her husband to expose the dead and allow her to keep the living child. The son of Mandane thus grew up in the house of the herdsman, and his royal birth soon began to assert itself. His playmates chose him for their king, and he used to hold mock court among them. At length an incident brought the matter to the ears of Astyages, who questioned the herdsman and was exceedingly wroth with Harpagus. The interpreters of dreams, however, declared that no further danger was to be apprehended from Cyrus, as the dream had been sufficiently fulfilled by his election to kingship by his playfellows. Accordingly Astyages sent him back to Persia to his parents Cambyses and Mandane. Subsequently Cyrus, incited by Harpagus, rebelled and overthrew Astyages.

In the Sháhnáma we have Afrásiyáb for Astyages, Farangís for Mandane, Siyáwush for Cambyses, Khusrau for Cyrus, and Pírán for Harpagus, while, if the view be correct that the so-called empire of the Medes was in reality the empire of the Manda,[1] one important discrepancy between the Greek and Persian accounts is removed, for Astyages, Mandane, and Harpagus become Túránian instead of Median, and are thus brought into line with Afrásiyáb, Farangís, and Pírán, their representatives in the Sháhnáma.

§ 1

The Prelude

Now, O thou man of wit and eloquence! V. 523
Upon a goodly tale thy skill employ,
For if the words are equal to the sense
The poet's soul will be a source of joy;
But he whose thoughts lack loveliness will thwart

[1] Vol. i. p. 17.

His purpose by his own unlovely thought;
Moreover he will make himself a cross,
And have the disapproval of the wise;
Yet, in that every one is at a loss
To see his faults (thy genius to thine eyes
Is bright) thy work if 'tis to last, confide,
When polished, to the learnéd to decide
Its value; if approved 'twill make its way
And be as water in thine own canal.
I take from legends of a former day
A rustic minstrel's story, and I shall,
Although the tale be old, when I have done,
Make it a tale in vogue with every one.
If length of days shall be vouchsafed to me,
And with long life immunity from ill,
I shall have left behind a fruitful tree,
To go on bearing in the orchard still.
Full many a marvel hath o'erpassed his head
Whose years reach fifty-eight, yet minishéd
Greed is not ever as they onward glide;
I still by rule and omen choose my day.
V. 524 What said herein the archimage, our guide?
"He that is waxen old is old for aye."
Tell on thy tale, be wise and of good cheer,
So long as life endureth persevere.
When thou departest what was here thine own
Shall in God's hand for good or evil be;
Remember! thou shalt reap as thou hast sown
And as thou speakest men will speak of thee.
The gentle speaker heareth in return
Soft words: make speaking gently thy concern.
Now for the rustic minstrel's tale. Heed well
The matter that the poet hath to tell.

§ 2

The Story of the Mother of Siyáwush

Thus said an archimage: One morning Tús
In merry pin left the Sháh's gate at cockcrow,
With Gív, Gúdarz, and other cavaliers,
To hunt upon the desert of Daghwí
With hawk and cheetah. By a river's bank
They stalked or ran down game, and caught or shot
Enough to last them forty days. Near by
A Turkman's camp showed black, and thence a forest
Stretched almost to the marches of Túrán.
Gív led the way with Tús: behind them came
Some brave retainers. Entering the wood,
And roaming thus awhile in quest of quarry,
They saw among the trees a fair-cheeked maiden,
And hurried toward her in high glee. The age
Had not her peer in looks; hers were not charms
To need apologies. In stature she
Was cypress-tall, in looks a moon, to gaze V. 525
On her was perilous. Tús said to her:—
"Bewitching Moon! who showed thee to this wood?"
"My father set on me last night," she said,
"And so I fled from home. He had returned
Drunk from a marriage-feast and, in his frenzy
Perceiving me far off, drew forth his sword
Of watered steel and had beheaded me.
I fled for refuge, and have just come hither."
The paladin then asked her of her kindred.
She told him fully and to this effect:—
"I am akin to Garsiwaz, and trace
My lineage to Sháh Farídún."
He asked her:—
"Why camest thou afoot, for thou hast come
Unmounted and unguided?"

She replied:—
"My steed was wearied out and fell exhausted.
I had uncounted gold, gold crown, and jewels,
But over yonder hill some people robbed me
And beat me with a scabbard. I escaped
In terror and am weeping tears of blood.
My sire no doubt when sober will dispatch
Some horsemen after me forthwith, my mother
Will haste to me, she would not have me quit
These fields and fells."
Now both the paladins
Grew hot of heart for love of her, and Tús,
Lost to all shame, exclaimed: "'Twas I who spied her,
And therefore made such haste."
But Gív replied:—
"O captain of the host! without thy host
Thou art no match for me."
Still Tús insisted:—
"She came exactly in my horse's way."
Gív said: "Nay! Say not so; I led the chase.
V. 526 Tell not a falsehood for a slave-girl's sake:
A man of courage is not quarrelsome."
Their wrangle was so violent that the Moon
Was like to lose her head in the dispute,
Until a noble interposed and said:—
"Convey her to the monarch of Írán,
And bide by his decision."
Both agreed
And went to Kai Káús, who when he saw
The damsel's beauty, fell in love with her
Himself, and said to those two generals:—
"Your journey's travail was cut short for you!
Be she a doe or beautiful gazelle
A quarry such as this is for your lord.
Come let us pass the day in telling how
These warriors with their cheetahs caught a Sun!"

He questioned her: "What is thy lineage,
For thou art fairy-like in countenance?"
"I am of high birth on my mother's side,"
She said, "my father sprang from Farídún.
My father's father is prince Garsíwaz,
Whose tents now occupy yon border land."
Káús said: "Didst thou mean to fling away
Such looks as these, such beauty and such birth?
'Tis meet I place thee in my golden bower:
Thou must be chief of all the Moon-faced there."
She answered: "I preferred thee at first sight
Among the great."
The Sháh then gave each general
Ten noble chargers with a throne and crown,
But sent the Idol to the women's bower,
And gave command to set her on the throne.
Then under her they placed an ivory seat, V. 527
Upon her head a crown of gold and turquoise,
Adorning her with yellow-hued brocade,
With jewels, turquoise, lapis lazuli,
And other presents worthy hers to be:
A ruby yet untouched by man was she.

§ 3

The Birth of Siyáwush

When nine months had elapsed, and jocund spring
Resumed its tints, men said to Kai Káús:—
"Thou hast had fruit of that auspicious Moon:
A glorious infant hath appeared, and now
Thou well mayst set thy throne above the clouds.
A babe of fairy-form is born to her,
In visage like an idol of Ázar,[1]
With face and hair unheard of heretofore,
And all the folk are talking of the child."

[1] Ázarbáiján.

The world-lord named him Siyáwush, and gave
The rolling heaven praise because of him;
Yet they that read the purpose of the sky,
Its good and evil and its when and how,
Saw that the stars were hostile to the boy,
And grieved because they saw his fortune sleeping.
They turned to God for refuge, warned the Sháh
About the fortune of his son, and showed
The path to take, aware that he would suffer
From good and bad. Anon came peerless Rustam
V. 528 Before the Sháh and said: "Mine be the task
To rear this child that is so lion-like;
Since thy retainers are not competent
There is no nurse on earth for him like me."
The monarch, having pondered much thereon,
Entrusted little loath his heart and eyes—
This atheling, the child so loved by him—
To Rustam's charge, who bore him to Zábul
And lodged him in a rosary, instructed
The youth in riding, archery, the use
Of lasso, stirrups, reins, and other gear,
To hold his court, his feasts, and drinking-bouts,
To follow game with falcon, hawk, and cheetah,
To judge in causes, and to rule the kingdom,
Make speeches, combat, and lead forth a host:
All these accomplishments did Rustam teach him,
And took abundant pains which bore their fruit,
For Siyáwush became a peerless prince,
And, as time passed, grew tall and captured lions.
One day he spake to noble Rustam thus:—
"Desire to see the Sháh hath come on me.
Much travail and heart-burning hast thou borne
To teach me all a king's accomplishments:
My father must examine the result
Of elephantine Rustam's tutelage."
The lion-hearted hero made all ready,

And sent posts everywhere. Of horses, slaves,
Gold, silver, signets, falchions, crowns, and girdles,
And various stuffs and linings, he produced
Whate'er he could himself or got elsewhere.
On this wise Rustam furnished forth the youth,
For all men's eyes were fixed on Siyáwush,
And also journeyed with him lest the Sháh
Might be offended. As their custom was
The folk put decorations everywhere V. 529
In their desire to please the paladin,
The townsmen mingled gold and ambergris,
And showered them on the travellers' heads for joy,
The world grew full of mirth and precious havings,
Each mansion's door and roof were decked, the feet
Of Rustam's Arab steeds trod drachms. Men saw
None mournful in Írán; throughout the line
Of march steeds' manes dripped saffron, musk, and wine.

§ 4

How Siyáwush arrived from Zábulistán

When news reached Sháh Káús that "Siyáwush
Is coming in great state," both Gív and Tús
Went forth right joyously at his command
With escort, trump, and drum. The chiefs assembled,
With Rustam on this hand and Tús on that,
To come in triumph to the Sháh, for they
Came with that fruiting Sapling. When he reached
The palace of the Sháh a shout was raised,
And access given. Slaves with censers charged
With goodly perfumes gazed upon the prince
With folded arms. Three hundred filled the court
To every corner, and the noble Cypress
Was in the midst. They showered gold and gems,
And called down blessings on him. Siyáwush,

When he beheld Káús upon his throne
Of ivory and crowned with brilliant rubies,
First offered praise, did reverence, and whispered
To earth awhile. He then approached the Sháh,
Who clasped him closely. Kai Káús saluted
And welcomed Rustam warmly, seated him
Upon the turquoise throne and, lost in wonder,
Called many blessings down upon his son,
V. 530 For in that height, that stature, and that Grace
The Sháh foresaw a future and much fame.
Thou wouldst have said of one so young yet wise :—
"His soul is fed on wisdom." So the Sháh,
With face upon the ground, gave many praises
To God and said: "Great Ruler of the sky,
The Lord of understanding and of love!
All good things come from Thee, but most of all
I thank Thee for my child."
The Íránian chiefs,
Each with his gift, came to the Sháh rejoicing;
They marvelled at the Grace of Siyáwush,
And called a wealth of blessings down on him.
Then by the Sháh's command the noblemen
And captains of the host attended court,
While all the world resorted to his gardens,
His palace, and his hall, with right good cheer.
Men called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
The Sháh's festivities were such as none
Had held before. A sennight passed in joy.
Upon the eighth day he unlocked his treasures,
And gave command to bring all manner forth,
As swords and signet-rings, with thrones and casques,
And Arab steeds with poplar-wooden saddles,
Bards, coats of mail for war, dínárs, and purses
Of drachms, brocade, and jewels great and small,
Except the crown, it was not time for that,
But all the rest Káús gave Siyáwush

With many promises of good to come.
Seven years' probation proved his noble birth
By all his acts, the eighth the monarch bade him
Assume a golden crown and torque and girdle,
And had a patent writ on painted silk V. 531
As royal Grace and precedent required.
Since Siyáwush was worthy of a throne,
And majesty, the Sháh bestowed on him
All Kuhistán, so called of yore, the same
As Má wara 'u'n-Nahr its modern name.

§ 5

The Death of the Mother of Siyáwush

When all was ordered as the Sháh had bidden
The prince's mother passed away. The prince
Came from his throne like one possessed, and raised
His lamentation to the rolling sky.
He rent his clothes, threw dust upon his head,
Mourned o'er her sorely, grievously afflicting
His own sweet soul, mourned greatly night and day,
For many days ne'er smiled, grieved one whole moon,
And sought no respite from his misery.
Now when the nobles heard thereof—such men
As Tús and Faríburz, Gúdarz and Gív,
Born princes or heroic paladins—
They made all haste to come to Siyáwush,
Who as he looked on them groaned grievously;
His tears burst forth afresh, and he unlocked
The portal of the anguish of his heart.
Gúdarz, when he beheld the prince's sorrow,
Gazed on that noble Cypress overwrought,
And weeping said to him: "O royal prince!
Hear mine advice and think no more of grief.
The child of every mother will depart;

Not one of them can 'scape the clutch of fate.
Although thy mother is a memory now,
Mourn not: her spirit is in heaven."
V. 532 By dint
Of many a counsel, many a soothing strain,
He made the prince's heart itself again.

§ 6

How Súdába fell in Love with Siyáwush

Time passed, the Sháh still joyed in Siyáwush,
Till as they sat one day Súdába entered,
Beheld the prince's face, and grew distraught.
Her heart throbbed, "she is wasted to a thread,"
Thou wouldst have said, "or ice before the fire."
She bade one go by stealth to him and say:—
"'Twould cause no wonder if thou shouldest visit
The royal bower anon."
The envoy went,
But noble Siyáwush was wroth and said:—
"Entice me not. I am no chamberer,
Or given to romances and intrigues."
Another day at dawn Súdába sought
The Sháh and said: "O ruler of the host!
The sun and moon have never seen thy peer,
Or any like thy son. Let all the world
Rejoice in him; so send him to thy bower
To see his sisters and thy favourites.
Tell him: 'Go visit oft thy sisters there,
Whose hearts are full, whose cheeks are wet, with yearning.'
Then will we pay him worship, give him gifts,
And bring the tree of service into fruit."
The Sháh replied: "Thou sayest right; thou hast
A hundred mothers' love for him."

He called
For Siyáwush and said: "The blood within
Our veins, and love, will show themselves; moreover
God hath so made thee that thou art beloved
Of all beholders, given thee pure birth; V. 533
None e'er was mother-born as pure as thou;
But what availeth blood-relationship
To those who see thee only from afar?
Thy sisters and Súdába, in affection
A mother to thee, are within the bower.
Go now and visit those secluded ones,
And stay awhile that they may do thee honour."
The prince beheld his father with amazement,
Then mused awhile and strove to clear himself,
Suspecting that his father sought to prove him;
For Kai Káús was knowing and smooth-tongued,
Wise, shrewd of heart, and ready to distrust.
The prince was troubled, communed with himself,
And in the end determined.
"If," he thought,
"I go Súdába will talk much with me,"
Then said: "The Sháh hath given me a patent,
A throne, and crown. From where the lofty sun
Arising maketh dust a thing of price
No king resembling thee in goodness, knowledge,
Demeanour, and pursuits, e'er donned the crown.
Point me the way to sages, men of leading,
And chiefs approved; or show me how to handle
Spear, mace, or bow and arrow, midst the foe;
Or be it king-craft and court-usages,
Or feast and harp, or wine and revellers;
But in the women's quarters of the Sháh
What shall I learn? Shall women point the way
To knowledge? Yet if so the Sháh commandeth
My custom henceforth is to visit them."
The Sháh replied: "Be happy, O my son! V. 534

May wisdom rest upon thee! I have heard
But seldom such fair words. Thy brain will grow
Since thou art thus amenable. Dismiss
All ill surmises from thy heart, away
With trouble, and enjoy thyself. Look in
Upon the children just for once: perchance
It will divert them somewhat."
"I will go,"
Said Siyáwush, "to-morrow and perform
The Sháh's command. Behold I stand before thee
Devoted, heart and soul, to do thy bidding.
As thou requirest so will I behave,
Thou art the world-lord; I am but a slave."

§ 7

How Siyáwush visited Súdába

One named Hírbad, purged heart and brain and soul
From evil, never left the Idol-house,
And kept the key. The Sháh commanded him:—
"What time the sun shall draw the sword of day
Seek Siyáwush and further his commands.
Instruct Súdába to present to him
A gift of gems and musk, and let withal
His sisters and the slaves pour emeralds
And saffron over him."
When Sol o'ertopped
The mountains Siyáwush approached the Sháh
And did obeisance. When they had conversed
Awhile in private Kai Káús instructed
Hírbad, then said to Siyáwush: "Go with him
And be prepared to look on something new."
The twain went off together merrily
Without a thought of care; but when Hírbad

Held up the veil that hung before the door V. 535
The mind of Siyáwush foreboded ill.
The women came before him one and all
In festival attire to gaze at him;
The house was full of musk, dínárs, and saffron,
And at his feet they strewed drachms, gold, and gems;
The floor was covered with brocade of Chín
Enriched with lustrous pearls. Wine, scent, and voice
Of minstrelsy were there, all heads were crowned
With jewels; 'twas like Paradise, replete
With lovely forms and sumptuous furniture.
Now Siyáwush on entering the bower
Beheld a brightly shining, golden throne,
With patterns wrought in turquoise, royally
Draped with brocade. There sat moon-faced Súdába,
Like Paradise itself in hue and perfume,
Sat like the bright Canopus of Yaman,
Her head adorned with ringlets, curl on curl.
Surmounted by a lofty crown her hair
Descended to her feet in musky lassos.
A slave stood humbly by with golden slippers.
When Siyáwush appeared within the veil
Súdába hastened to descend the throne,
Advanced with graceful gait, saluted him,
Embraced him long, long kissed his eyes and face,
And wearied not to look at him. She said:—
"I offer praise to God a hundred ways
All day and three whole watches of the night,
For no one hath a son resembling thee:
The Sháh himself hath not another such."
Now Siyáwush knew well what that love meant,
And that such fondness was not in the way
Of God, and, since it was unseemly there,
Went quickly to his sisters, who enthroned him
With many a blessing on a golden seat.
He stayed awhile, then went back to the Sháh. V. 536

The bower was full of talk: the women said:—
"Behold the head and crown of courtesy!
'He is not,' thou hadst said, 'like other men:
His soul diffuseth wisdom.'"
Siyáwush
Came to his father's presence and spake thus:—
"I have beheld the veil and what it hid.
All good things in the world are thine, no need
For thee to vindicate the ways of God
Who dost in treasure, scimitars, and troops
Surpass Húshang, Jamshíd, and Farídún."

The Sháh joyed at the words. He decked his palace
Like jocund spring, had wine and harp and things
Prepared, and banned the future from the heart.

That night he went among his dames and talked
Thus with Súdába: "Hide not what thou thinkest
About the judgment and the courtesy
Of Siyáwush, his stature, looks, and speech.
Dost thou approve of him and is he wise?
Deserveth he what others say of him?"

Súdába answered: "Sháh and people never
Saw thy like on the throne, and who is there
To match thy son? Why speak with bated breath?"

The Sháh said: "If he is to live till manhood
We must protect him from the evil eye."[1]

She said: "If my words please, and if thy son
And I are minded that I should bestow
A wife upon him out of his own kindred,
Not from the great ones that are round about—
A consort who shall bear to him a son
Such as he is himself among the mighty—
Then I myself have daughters like to thee,
Begotten of thy seed, of thy pure stock;
Or should he take a child of Kai Árash,
Or Kai Pashín, she would give thanks with joy."

[1] Open praise, especially of the young, was regarded as unlucky.

He said to her: "It is my wish. My name V. 537
And greatness are dependent on the issue."
Next morning Siyáwush approached the Sháh,
And called down blessings on the crown and throne.
The monarch caused all strangers to depart
And, speaking with his son in privacy,
Said thus: "I have in me a secret longing,
Inspired by God, the Maker of the world,
That thou shouldst leave a memory of thy name,
And that a king should issue from thy loins,
That as my face refreshed at seeing thee,
Thy heart should be enlarged at sight of him.
I had thy horoscope to this effect
From archimages that can read the stars,
That from thy loins a king shall come and be
Thy monument. Now choose thyself a wife
Among the great from those within the veil
Of Kai Pashín or bower of Kai Árash;
Make all things ready and bestow thy hand."
He said: "I am the Sháh's slave and I bow
My head before his counsel and behest.
His choice for me is good, whoe'er she be;
The world-lord is a monarch o'er his slaves.
Would that Súdába heard it not! her words
Are otherwise, she hath no mind thereto;
I cannot talk to her of this affair,
And have no business in that bower of hers."
The Sháh smiled at the words of Siyáwush,
Not witting of the quag beneath the straw,
And said to him: "Thy wife must be thy choice.
Súdába least of all need be considered,
Her words are full of loving-kindliness;
She tendereth thy welfare."
Siyáwush
Was gladdened by the words, and reassured
Began to speak the world-king's praise and pay

Him reverence, falling down before the throne,
Yet privily Súdába with her schemes
Still vexed and troubled him, for well he knew,
And his skin burst: "This is her notion too!"

§ 8

How Siyáwush visited the Bower the second Time

V. 538 Another night thus passed and starry heaven
Turned o'er dark earth. Súdába radiant
Sat on her throne and donned a diadem
Of rubies. Then she summoned all her daughters,
Arrayed, and seated them on golden thrones.
Before her stood young Idols: thou hadst said:—
"It is a paradise." The moon-faced lady
Said to Hírbad: "Go say to Siyáwush:—
'Afflict thy feet and show thyself to me.'"
Hírbad made speed to give that lover's message
To Siyáwush who, hearing, stood distraught,
And oft invoked the Maker of the world.
He sought in various ways but found no help;
He trembled, and his legs shook under him;
Then went to visit her and saw her state,
Her face, and diadem. She with her head
And tresses decked with gems rose at his coming,
Gave up the throne of gold to him and, standing
Slavelike, displayed her Idols—gems uncut.
"Behold this throne-room," thus she said, "and all
These handmaids with their golden coronets!
They all are youthful Idols of Taráz,
Whom God hath formed of modesty and charms.
If any one of them delighteth thee,
Survey her looks and form from head to foot."
While Siyáwush was glancing lightly round
There was not one who dared to catch his eye,

And as they talked they said: "The moon itself
Would not presume to gaze upon this prince."
When each, in speculation on her chance, V. 539
Had gone back to her seat, Súdába said:—
"Why dost thou keep thy purpose to thyself?
Wilt thou not tell me what is thy desire,
O thou whose looks are fairy-like with Grace!
For all are struck who catch a glimpse of thee,
Preferring thee to any? Ponder well
Which of these beauties is the worthiest."
But Siyáwush was moved and answered not,
For thoughts like these arose in his pure heart:—
"Far better hold my pure heart's funeral rites
Than take a consort from among my foes.
I have been told by famous warriors
Of all the doings of Hámávarán,[1]
How he entreated the Íránian king,
And how he raised dust from the Íránian chiefs.
This treacherous Súdába is his daughter,
And will not leave our kindred skin or marrow."
He opened not his lips to make reply.
The fairy-faced one raised her veil and said:—
"If one should see the new moon and the sun
Here upon this new throne, it would not be
A marvel if the moon should be despised,
And thou shouldst press the sun in thine embrace.
No wonder if the man that seeth me
Upon the ivory throne, with rubies crowned
And turquoise, should not look upon the moon,
But think all other Beauties beautiless.
If thou wilt make a compact with me now,
Turn not away but set my heart at rest,
One of my youthful daughters present here
Will I make stand before thee like a slave.

[1] *i.e.* the king of Hámávarán—so *King John*, Act I. Sc. i.: "Now say, Chatillon, what would France with us?"

So make a compact with me now by oath,
And disregard no jot of what I say,
That, when the Sháh departeth from the world,
Thou wilt be his memorial with me,
Wilt never suffer me to come to harm,
But hold me dear as life. And now behold!
V. 540 I stand before thee and I give to thee
Myself and my sweet life. I will fulfil
Whate'er thou asketh me—thy whole desire—
And let my head be taken in thy toils."
She hung upon his neck, gave him a kiss,
And of a truth forgot her modesty.
He blushed; the very lashes of his eyes
Were red with shame. He thought: "From this dív's work
Now may the Lord of Saturn keep me far!
I will not treat my sire disloyally,
Nor will I make a league with Áhriman.
If I speak coldly to this wanton dame
Her heart will seethe; she will grow hot with rage,
Make practice of some secret sorcery,
And cause the world-lord to believe in her.
'Tis best to speak her fair and keep her full
Of tenderness and longing."
Then he said:—
"Thou hast not any equal in the world,
And art the rival of the moon itself
In beauty: thou art for the Sháh alone.
As for myself thy daughter will suffice;
None other must be mine. Consent to this,
Propose it to the monarch of Írán,
And mark the answer that thou wilt receive.
I will demand her and will covenant,
And give a pledge before thee with my tongue,
That till her stature equalleth mine own
I will not think of any one besides.

For what thou askest further—since my face
Inspireth in thy soul a love for me—
God's Grace hath made me thus, O thou most fair!
Conceal thy secret; speak of it to none:
For me too silence is the only course.
Thou art the chief of ladies and a queen,
And I will think of thee as mother only."
He spake these words and rose to go, but love
Still filled her wicked soul. When next Káús,
The monarch, visited the women's bower, V. 541
Súdába looked and saw him. She appeared
Before the Sháh with news of what had passed,
And spake thus of the case of Siyáwush:—
"He came and looked all round the hall. I made
A bevy of the black-eyed Idols there.
The hall was such with all the fair-faced girls
That thou hadst said: 'Love raineth from the moon!'
But, save my daughter, he approved of none:
No other fair was precious in his eyes."
The Sháh was so rejoiced that thou hadst said:—
"The moon itself hath come to his embrace!"
He oped his treasury's door: a wealth of gems,
Brocade of cloth of gold, and golden girdles,
As well as bracelets, crowns, and signet-rings,
With thrones and torques such as the noble wear,
And divers kinds of treasures were displayed,
So that the world was filled with things of price.
The Sháh then bade Súdába: "Keep all these
For Siyáwush. When he hath need of them,
Give them to him and say: 'This gift is small;
Thou shouldest have two hundred times as much.'"
Súdába looked in wonder. Full of guile
She thought: "If Siyáwush complieth not,
Then he may take my life and welcome too.
Each practice good and evil, which they use

By stealth or openly throughout the world,
Will I employ; and, should he slight me, bring
A charge accusing him before the king."

§ 9

How Siyáwush visited the Bower the third Time

Súdába sat enthroned, adorned with earrings
And chaplet of wrought gold upon her head.
She called the prince and said, as they conversed:—
"The Sháh hath set these treasures forth, and none
Hath seen such crowns and thrones. The sum of gifts
V. 542 Is past all reckoning: to carry them
Thou wouldst require two hundred elephants,
And I will give to thee my daughter too.
Now look upon my face and head and crown:
What pretext hast thou to reject my love,
And slight my face and person? I am dead
Not seeing thee; I cry out, toss, and suffer:
The light of day is hidden by mine anguish,
My sun is turned to lapis-lazuli.
And now for seven years this love of mine
Hath made my face to run with tears of blood.
Make me a happy woman—none shall know—
Vouchsafe to me a day of youth again.
More than the great king hath bestowed on thee
Will I prepare thee—thrones, crowns, diadems;
But if thou turn aside from my behest,
And if thy heart come not to my relief,
I will destroy thy hope of ever reigning
And make both sun and moon turn black before thee."
"Now God forbid," he said, "that I should give
Religion to the winds for passion's sake,

That I should treat my sire disloyally,
And be a coward and a fool at once!
Thou art his wife—the sunlight of his throne—
And shouldst not perpetrate a crime like this."
She rose in wrath and hate, clutched him and cried:—
"I told thee my heart's secret, but thine own
Was hidden! In thy folly thou dost aim
To ruin me and show the wise my shame."

§ 10

How Súdába beguiled Káús

She rent her robes and tore her cheeks. A cry
Rose from her bower, her clamour reached the street.
The palace was all hubbub; thou hadst said:— V 543
"'Tis Resurrection-night!" News reached the Sháh,
Who hurried from the imperial golden throne
Toward the bower in his solicitude,
And when he found Súdába with rent cheeks,
And all the palace full of babblement,
He questioned every one in deep concern,
Not knowing what that Heart of stone had done.
Súdába wailed and wept before him, tore
Her hair, and told him: "Siyáwush approached
My throne. He caught me in his arms and cried:—
'My soul and body brim with love for thee.
Oh! why art thou so cold to me, my fair!
For thou art all I long for, thou alone?'
This is the truth—I am constrained to tell thee:—
'Twas he that threw the crown from my black locks,
And rent the robe upon my bosom thus!"
The Sháh was troubled, asked her many questions,
And thought: "If she saith sooth, and if she hath

No evil end in view, I must cut off
The head of Siyáwush: that will unlock
These bonds of villainy."
What saith the sage?
"Not lust but blood our thoughts must now engage."
The inmates of the bower, those well advised
And noble servants faithful to their lord,
He bade withdraw and, sitting on the throne
Alone, called for Súdába and his son,
And wisely said to him: "I needs must know
This secret. 'Twas not thou but I that wrought
The ill. I suffer for my thoughtless words:
Why did I call thee to the women's house?
Now I am grieved that thou art thus involved.
Let me have all the truth, show me its face,
And say what passed."
v. 544 The prince related all,
And how he had been wrought on by Súdába.
She cried: "It is a lie. Of all the Idols
It was my person only that he sought;
I told him what the king of earth proposed
To give him publicly and privily,
Told him about my daughter and the crown,
The precious things, brocade, and treasure-hoards.
I told him: 'I will add as much again,
And give my daughter all that I possess.'
He said to me: 'I do not want the goods,
And do not mean to see thy child. Of all
The world,' he said, 'I need but thee—no more.
No wealth or personage availeth aught
Without thine own self.' Then he tried to force me,
And handled me with hands as hard as stones.
I would not grant his wishes. All my hair
He tore and caused these scratches on my face.
I am with child, O monarch of the world!
By thee, but he was near to killing it

With all his struggles, and the world was strait
And dark before me."
Then the great king thought:—
The testimony of them both is worthless,
And this is not a case for instancy,
Because a heart in straits perverteth wisdom.
I needs must first investigate the matter,
And when my heart is calm it will bear witness;
I shall discover which is in the wrong,
And which of them deserveth punishment."
He sought all means of finding out the truth,
And first he smelt the hands of Siyáwush,
His breast, his arms, his head, and all his person.
A scent of wine, rose-water, and fine musk
Was on Súdába, but on Siyáwush
Was none, nor any sign that he had touched her.
The Sháh was troubled, he disgraced Súdába,
And sorely vexed said to himself: "No course V. 545
Remaineth but to put her to the sword."
Then he bethought him of Hámávarán,
How tumult, strife, and battle would ensue;
Next, how, when he was lying there in bonds
And none of all his kin and friends was near,
Súdába was his handmaid day and night,
And faced the trouble uncomplainingly.
His next thought was: "She loved me wholly once:
I must forgive her everything," and then
That he had children by her, and he counted
The anguish of the children no light thing.
But Siyáwush was blameless in the case,
The monarch recognised his probity,
And said to him: "Be not concerned hereat;
Be prudent and consider well thy going.
Talk not about this thing, tell it to none;
The matter must be kept from every one."

§ 11

How Súdába and a Sorceress devised a Scheme

Súdába, conscious that she was disgraced
And that the Sháh's heart was estranged from her,
Sought in her evil case some remedy,
And set anew the tree of her revenge.
She had a woman in the bower, adept
In charms and spells, deceit and artifice,
And one moreover who was great with child,
Near to the time of her delivery.
Súdába told her all and sought her aid,
But said: "First give a pledge of thy good faith."
Súdába took her pledge, gave her much gold,
And said: "Make mention of this thing to none.
Prepare a drug that thou mayest make abortion,
Remain concealed, and keep my secret close.
It may be that my coil of many lies
May gain some credit through this babe of thine,
For I will tell Káús: 'This is my child,
Thus murdered by the hand of Áhriman!'
V. 546 This, it may be, will baffle Siyáwush;
So seek a way to compass it. If thou
Refusest then my lustre with the Sháh
Is dimmed: I shall no more approach the throne."
The woman said to her: "I am thy slave,
And bow my head to thy command and will."
When it was night the woman took the drug
And gave birth to a brood of Áhrimans—
Two children as they had been dív-begotten:
What should a sorceress and a dív produce?
Then, saying nothing to her servitors,[1]
Súdába had a golden salver brought
Whereon she laid those brats of Áhriman,

[1] Reading with P.

And shrieked and flung herself upon a couch.
She hid the woman and retired to bed:
Her wailing reached the palace from her chamber.
Then all the slaves within the palace came
In haste before Súdába, they beheld
Two infants lying dead upon the salver,
And cries rose o'er the palace and o'er Saturn.
The sound of wailing reached and woke Káús
Who listened trembling, asked, and heard how fortune
Had dealt with his fair spouse. Sleepless and anxious
He rose at dawn, went in and saw Súdába
Prostrate, the women frantic, and two babes
In evil plight, flung on a golden salver!
Súdába rained the water from her eyes,
And said: "Behold this bright sun—Siyáwush!
I often told thee of his evil deeds,
But thou didst foolishly believe his words."
The heart of Sháh Káús was filled with doubt,
He went his way, remained a while in thought,
Then said: "What remedy shall I apply?
I must not treat the case with levity."

§ 12

How Káús inquired into the Matter of the Babes

Káús then summoned all the astrologers V. 547
Before him, welcomed them, assigning each
A golden throne, and spake about Súdába,
And of the warfare with Hámávarán,
That they might have a knowledge of her case,
And understand her conduct thoroughly;
He also spake at large about the children,
But kept his own suspicions to himself.
They then took planispheres and astrolabes,
And having spent a sennight on the business

Said: "How can wine be in a cup which thou
Hast filled with poison? These are spurious children,
Not from this mother and the monarch's loins:
We should have found them on the planisphere
With ease if they had been of royal race,
But know that heaven revealeth not their secret,
Nor is this wonder of the earth."
They told
The Sháh and court of that foul, wicked woman.
Súdába wailed and cried aloud for justice,
She called upon the world-lord for redress,
And said: "I was the comrade of the Sháh
When he had suffered and had lost the throne.
My heart is tortured for my murdered babes,
And ever and anon I swoon away."
V. 548 The Sháh replied: "O woman! hold thy peace!
Why dost thou utter such offensive words?"
He gave commandment that the troops on guard
Should search the city and the neighbouring parts,
And bring the wicked woman to the court.
The experienced searchers soon discovered her,
Haled the unhappy woman through the streets,
And carried her in shame before the Sháh,
Who questioned her with kindness, held out hopes,
And made her promises for many days,
Howbeit she confessed not anything.
The noble Sháh was still dissatisfied,
And gave command to bear her forth and use
All means and work by spells, and in the end
To cut her down the middle with a saw
If she persisted, as is common justice.
They bore her from the palace of the Sháh,
And threatened her with sword and stake and pit.
The sorceress answered: "I am innocent.
What can I say before this noble court?"
They told the monarch of the woman's words,

And added: "God alone doth know the truth."
The great king bade Súdába come to him;
The readers of the stars re-said their say:—
"Both babes are clearly children of the witch,
Begotten from the loins of Áhriman."
Súdába said: "They know a different tale,
But dare not speak for fear of Siyáwush,
Who privily hath tied them down to silence.
The lions quake in troops for fear of him, V. 549
This chieftain of the elephantine form,
Who hath the strength of eighty elephants,
And stayeth at his will the river Nile!
A noble host, a hundred thousand strong,
Take flight before him in the ranks of war!
How shall I stand against him? In good sooth
Mine eyes will evermore weep tears of blood.
What have the readers of the stars to do
Save his command and seek his approbation?
While as for thee—thou mournest not thy babes,
Albeit they are thine as much as mine.
If thou believest such a foolish charge
I leave the question to the other world."
The sun withdraweth from the river Nile
Less water than Súdába shed in tears.
The Sháh was sorely troubled at her speech;
He joined with her in weeping bitterly,
And then, and with a broken heart, dismissed her.
He brooded constantly upon the matter,
And said: "I will investigate it throughly,
And find out what the bottom of it is."
He summoned all the archmages of the realm,
And spake about Súdába. One replied:—
"The monarch's grief will not remain a secret.
If thou wouldst clear up what hath been alleged
On each side, throw a stone and break the pitcher,
Because, however dear his son may be,

The Sháh's heart will be still disturbed by thoughts,
While this king's daughter of Hámávarán
Hath made thee doubtful on the other side.
Such being then the statements of the pair
Let one of them be made to pass through fire,
Because high heaven ordaineth that no harm
Shall in this way befall the innocent."

The world-lord called Súdába, seated her
With Siyáwush to parley on the case,
And said at last: "My heart and my shrewd mind
Trust neither of you; fire will show the truth,
And quickly make the guilty infamous."

V. 550 Súdába answered: "What I said is true;
I showed the Sháh two babes untimely born:
What greater outrage can there be than mine?
'Tis Siyáwush that ought to right himself:
He sought to ruin me and did the wrong."

The king of earth then asked his youthful son:—
"What seemeth good to thee as touching this?"

He answered: "Such a charge is worse than Hell!
I would pass o'er a mountain all aflame,
'Twere baseness not to rid me of this shame."

§ 13

How Siyáwush passed through the Fire

The thoughts of Kai Káús ran on them both;
He said: "If either prove a profligate
Will any henceforth call me Sháh? Moreover
My son and wife are blood and brain to me;
Whom then will this perplexing business profit?
Still it is best to purify my heart
From foul surmise and take this dreadful course.
How well the moralizing monarch said:—

'If thou art faint of heart play not the king!'" [1]
He gave instructions to his minister
To have a hundred caravans of camels
Brought from the plain. These went to gather firewood,
While all the people of Írán looked on,
Till two huge mountains rose that might be seen
Two leagues away; so should a key be found
To loose the bonds of bale, so much he yearned V. 551
To learn the truth amid this fraud and wrong.
When thou hast heard the story thou wilt find
Thyself disposed to shun all womankind;
Seek none of them except the virtuous; she
That worketh ill will bring disgrace on thee.
They piled two mounts of firewood on the plain
While all the folk looked on. A path was left
Such that a horseman armed might hardly pass
Between the piles. This done, the glorious Sháh
Bade pour black naphtha over all the wood.
Came ten score men to light and blow the fire,
And thou hadst said: 'The day is turned to night.'
When first they blew there was a mass of smoke,
But presently the tongues of fire rose fast;
The earth became more radiant than the sky,
The people shouted and the flames ascended.
All that were on the plain were scorched and wept
To see the cheery face of Siyáwush,
Who came before his sire with golden helmet,
And raiment all of white. His mien was tranquil,
His face all smiles, his heart all hopefulness;
His black steed's hoofs sent dust up to the moon.
The prince then sprinkled camphor o'er himself,
So bodies are prepared for burial,[2]

[1] Farídún. See vol. i. p. 188.

[2] "Alp-Arselan determined not to survive defeat. He made a display of pious resignation to his fate, . . . by clothing himself in a white robe, or shroud, perfumed with musk."—MHP, i. 211.

And lighting from his charger did obeisance.
The Sháh was shame-faced and his words were kind.
"Be not discomfited," said Siyáwush,
"That fortune taketh such a turn as this.
I am dishonoured: such a state is ruin.
If I am innocent I shall escape,
While if in fault the Maker will not heed me;
V. 552 But by the power of God who giveth good
I shall not feel the heat."
As he drew near
The flames he prayed the Judge that hath no needs:—
"Grant me a passage through this mount of fire,
And free me from my sire's misprision."
Thus
He testified the anguish of his soul,
Then urged his black steed on like smoke. A wail
Ascended from the city and the waste,
For all the people grieved at what was done.
Súdába heard the wailing on the plain,
Went to the palace-roof, descried the blaze,
Wished ill to him, and babbled feverishly.
The people fixed their eyes upon Káús;
Their tongues wagged freely and their hearts were wroth.
Meanwhile the prince so handled his black charger
That thou hadst said: "His steed took to the fire."
From every side the flames closed o'er his head,
And none could see his helmet or his horse,
While all the plain wept tears of blood and asked:—
"How will he ever issue from the flames?"
The noble hero nathless reappeared,
With rosy cheeks and smiles upon his lips.
A roar went up as men caught sight of him:
They cried: "The young Sháh cometh from the fire!"
He came with horse and raiment such that thou
Hadst said: "He beareth jasmine in his breast."

Had flame been water he had not been wetted,
His garments would have holden none of it;
For when all-holy God doth so vouchsafe
The breath of fire is even as the wind.
The horsemen of the host urged on their steeds,
While all the people on the plain threw drachms
Before him; there was universal joy
Among the mighty and the mean alike
As each to other gave the gladsome tidings:— V. 553
"God hath shown mercy to the innocent."
Meanwhile Súdába in her frenzy plucked
Her hair, wept bitterly, and tore her cheeks.
When all unsmirched, unsinged, unstained, unled,
The guiltless Siyáwush approached, his sire
And all the warriors of the host alighted;
But Siyáwush with cheek upon the ground
Gave thanks to God that he had been delivered
Out of that burning mount, and had confounded
His foes' device. Then said the Sháh: "Brave youth,
Of stainless lineage and ardent soul!
None but a holy mother bringeth forth
A son like thee, and such should rule the world."
Then clasped he Siyáwush against his breast,
Excused his own ill conduct, and in state
Moved palace-ward. He took his seat rejoicing,
And placed the royal crown upon his head.
He had wine brought, the minstrels called, and granted
The prince whate'er he would. The Sháh prolonged
Those revels for three days: till they were o'er
No lock or key was at the treasury-door.

§ 14

How Siyáwush begged Súdába's Life of his Father

Káús the fourth day sat upon the throne
Of kings; an ox-head mace was in his hand.
Fierce in his wrath he had Súdába summoned
Before him, told her what had passed, and said:—
"Thou art a shameless woman! Thou hast wrought
Enough of ill and grieved me to the heart.
What part is this that thou hast played throughout
In treacherously seeking my son's life,
In causing him to be exposed to fire,
And practising such witchcraft? No excuses
Will now avail thee; go and get thee ready;
Thou art not fit to live. The punishment
For such a crime as this is to be hanged."
V. 554 She said: "O Sháh! forbear to heap up fire
Upon my head. If I perforce must lose it
In vengeance for the wrong which I have . . . suffered,
Command . . . I am resigned. Yet put revenge
Away. Let Siyáwush declare the truth,
And quench the fires within thee. He hath used
All Zál's own sorceries herein, and therefore
The fierce flames harmed him not."
She said withal
To Siyáwush: "Thou usest witchcraft still!
Shall not thy back of impudence be bent?"
The great Sháh asked the Íránians: "For the evil
That she hath done by stealth, what shall I do?
How shall I punish her?"
All did obeisance,
And said: "The punishment for her is death:
She ought to suffer for her evil deeds."
He bade the deathsman: "Hang her in the street

Upon the gibbet and be pitiless." [1]
At her abandonment the women wailed,
And Sháh Káús was sorrowful of heart;
He strove to hide it but his cheeks were pale.
"Let not thy heart," said Siyáwush, "be troubled,
But pardon for my sake Súdába's fault;
She may be warned and walk advisedly."
"For if," he thought, "she perish by his hand
He will be sorry for it in the end,
And see in me the author of his grief." [2]
The Sháh, who had been seeking some excuse
For mercy, answered him: "I grant thee this
Because I see that right was on thy side."
When Siyáwush had kissed his father's throne V. 555
He rose upon his feet, went to the door,
Brought back Súdába, and escorted her
Home to the palace by the Sháh's command,
Where all the women ran to her again,
And did obeisance.
Now in time the heart
Of Sháh Káús so warmed to her that he
Could not forbear to eye her face in love,
While, for her part, by secret sorceries
She worked on him to ruin Siyáwush
According to the evil of her nature.
The Sháh became mistrustful through her talk,
But spake not aught thereof to any one.
When such events are happening men require
Faith, knowledge, wisdom, and the sense of right,
For in proportion as they keep in sight
The fear of God they reach their heart's desire.
Expect not foolishly that thou shalt find
Balm in a place that fate hath filled with bane,
And if Creation be not to thy mind,

[1] More literally, "and frown."
[2] "Let not . . . grief." The order of the couplets is as in C.

It is not in thy charge. Thy wrath restrain.
Besides the manner of the turning sky
Is not to show its visage openly.
Here saith our guide: "Of all affections none
Hath greater influence than kindred love,
And he who hath achieved a worthy son
Must from his own heart woman's love remove,
Because with her the heart and tongue ne'er meet:
Look for her head if thou wouldst find her feet."

§ 15

How Káús heard of the Coming of Afrásiyáb

The Sháh was deep in love when news arrived:—
"Afrásiyáb hath come with five score thousand
Picked Turkman cavaliers."
V. 556 He grieved to quit
The banquet-hall for war, but called his lieges,
And said: "Of fire and water, earth and air,
In sooth God did not make Afrásiyáb,
But otherwise, who swore so great an oath,
And promised fairly with his tongue, yet now
Is gathering his men of war like dust,
And turning from his oath and covenant!
I must go seek revenge and dim his day,
Perchance destroy his influence in the world;
Else, sudden as the arrow from the bow,
He will array his host, o'ercome Írán,
And waste no little of its fields and fells."
"What is an army for," the archmages said,
"If thou must go in person to the fight?
What need to give such riches to the winds,
And ope the portal of so great a hoard?
Twice in thy haste thy throne's illustrious seat
Hast thou delivered to thine enemies;

Choose some good paladin renowned in war
To take thy place and execute revenge."
The Sháh replied: "I see none here that hath
The rank or might to meet Afrásiyáb,
And therefore like a vessel o'er the water
Must I set forth myself. Depart, that I
May order matters with my counsellors."
Then Siyáwush considered in his heart,
Made of his soul a very wood of thoughts,
And said: "I will conduct this war myself;
I will entreat the Sháh and ask this boon.
Perchance All-righteous God will set me free
Both from Súdába and my sire's distrust:
To snare so great a host will bring me fame."
He girt himself, went to Káús, and said:— V. 557
"I am of rank to fight Afrásiyáb,
And will bring down his horsemen's heads to dust."
The Maker's purpose was that Siyáwush
Should perish in Túrán by vile men's plots
When his ill day should come. The Sháh consented
To his request with joy, bespake him fair,
Bestowed on him new dignities, and said:—
"My gems and treasures are at thy disposal,
And thou mayst say the army is thine own."
The monarch summoned elephantine Rustam,
And said to him with many gracious words:—
"An elephant hath not such strength as thou,
The Nile is not so bounteous as thy hand.
Thou art of world-renown and slow to speak,
Thou who wast fosterer of Siyáwush!
When mines of jewels are bound down with iron
They open when thou bindest up thy loins.
Now Siyáwush hath come with belted waist
And, like a savage lion, talked with me:
His object is to fight Afrásiyáb.
Go with him, keep him underneath thine eye;

When thou art watching I can go to sleep,
But when thou restest I must be alert.
Thine arrows and thy scimitar safeguard
The world: thou towerest o'er the moon in heaven."
The peerless Rustam said: "I am thy slave;
To hear is to obey, for Siyáwush
Is as mine eye and soul, his crown's top heaven
To me."
The Sháh applauded him: "May thy
Pure soul and wisdom ne'er part company."

§ 16

How Siyáwush led forth the Host

V. 558 A clang of trump and kettledrum arose
As Tús, the illustrious captain of the host,
Arrived, and troops assembled at the court.
The Sháh unlocked his treasures and dínárs,
He sent the keys of all his magazines
Of arms, of armour, and of stuffs uncut
To Siyáwush, and said: "My house and goods
Are thine, equip thee as thou thinkest best."
Then from his famous cavaliers Káús
Chose him twelve thousand gallant warriors,
While from the neighbourhood of Kúch and Párs,
Balúch and from the desert of Sarúch
And warriors of Gílán, he chose for war
Twelve thousand infantry and buckler-men.
All that were hero-born throughout Írán,
The gallant, wise, and noble, all who had
The stature and the years of Siyáwush,
With courage, vigilance, and self-command,
Some also of the mighty men of name—
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwarán,—
And five archmages of the Íránians

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To bear the flag of Káwa to the field,
These he commanded to go forth together
Beyond the borders to the desert-plain:
Thou wouldst have said: "There is no room still left
On earth for horses' hoofs to stand upon."
The flag of Káwa lifted to the sky
Shone like a moon amid the troops. Káús
Went with them past the frontier, while the dust
Raised by the host rolled swiftly. He reviewed
The warriors with their bridal bravery
Of elephants of war and tymbal-din;
The noble monarch blessed the host and said:—
"O men of name whose steps are glorious!
Good fortune be your sole companion:
May darkness fall upon your foemen's sight.
Be it yours to go with health and favouring stars, V. 559
And come back triumphing and glad."
The prince
Then set the drums upon the elephants,
Bestrode his steed, and bade his warriors mount,
While Sháh Káús with tearful eyes went forward
One day's march with him. Then the twain embraced,
Both of them weeping like a cloud in spring.
They poured down tears of blood and cried aloud
In their distress, for as they went along
Their hearts gave witness to them that thenceforth
They should not look upon each other more.
Thus fortune ever changeth, and our gain
Therefrom is sometimes balm and sometimes bane.
Káús turned toward his throne, and Siyáwush
Marched with his warlike army from Írán
Toward Zábulistán to visit Zál
With Rustam of the elephantine form;
And there with Zál, the favourite of fortune,
He spent some time with wine and minstrelsy.
At whiles he drank with Rustam and at whiles

Consorted with Zawára, sat rejoicing
Upon the throne of Zál or drew the reed-beds.
A month so passed. Then leaving Zál he marched
With Rustam as his paladin, and warriors
Drawn from Zábul, Kábul, and Hind. Moreover
He summoned famous chiefs from every quarter
Until he reached the desert of Harát.
These furnished footmen not a few. He made
Their leader Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And marched toward Tálikán and the Marvrúd.
Thou wouldst have said: "The heaven greeteth him."
Anon he came to Balkh, and injured none
E'en by a bitter word.[1]

On the other side
Bármán and Garsíwaz led on their power
As 'twere a tempest. Sipahram commanded
The rear, Bármán the van. To them there came
News of the youthful chief: "A mighty host—
Famed warriors all—hath issued from Írán."
V. 560 The captain of the host despatched by night
A messenger to tell Afrásiyáb:—
"A great and gallant host hath come. Its head
Is Siyáwush, and there are other princes.
The marshaller is elephantine Rustam,
Whose hands bear one a sword and one a shroud.
If now the monarch so commandeth me,
I will array the host and offer battle;
But do thou gather troops and tarry not,
Because the wind is blowing up the flames."
The bearer of the tidings and his guide,
As they were bidden, urged their dromedaries
Like fire, while Siyáwush made no delay
And marched his army on like wind to Balkh.
The Íránian host drew near; it was not well
To wait an answer from Afrásiyáb,

[1] See vol. i. p. 74.

And Garsiwáz the warrior looking round
Perceived no course except to offer battle.
So when the army of Írán came up
The fight began about the gates of Balkh,
Where in three days were two great battles fought.
The fourth day Siyáwush, the army's Lustre,
Sent infantry against each several gate;
The mighty army entered into Balkh,
While Sipahram fled o'er the stream, and then
Toward Afrásiyáb with all his men.

§ 17

The Letter of Siyáwush to Kai Káús

The prince and army having entered Balkh,
He wrote on silk with spicery and musk
In fitting style a letter to the Sháh,
Beginning with the praise of the Almighty:— V. 561
"From Him are triumph and success Who is
The Lord of sun and circling moon, and giveth
Crown, throne, and casque their lustre, whom He will
Exalting or dejecting, ordering
Without a why or wherefore, though 'tis wise
To acquiesce. From that just Judge who made
The world, who made the seen and the unseen,
May every blessing be upon the Sháh,
All good attend him to the last. I came
To Balkh with joy and triumph through the Grace
Of him who hath the crown and throne—the world-lord.
We fought three days, the fourth God favoured us;
Bármán and Sipahram fled toward Tirmid,
Like arrows from the bow. I am encamped
On the Jíhún, my glorious helm prevaileth.

Afrásiyáb is with his host at Sughd,
While we are still upon the Íránian side;
But, if the Sháh shall bid me, I will go
Across the river and attack the foe."

§ 18

The Answer of Kai Káús to the Letter of Siyáwush

The letter reached the Sháh. It raised his crown
And throne to Saturn, and he prayed to God
That this young Tree might come to bearing fruit;
Then wrote with joy this letter of reply,
Like shining spring or jocund Paradise:—
"Now through the Maker of the sun and moon—
The World-lord who bestoweth crown and throne—
Mayst thou for ever have a joyful heart,
One painless and untroubled, and therewith
Be thine the victory, and thine the Grace,
The cap of power and throne of majesty.
Thou leddest forth an army to the war
With prosperous fortune and a righteous cause,
V. 562 And though thy lip still savoureth of milk
The whippings of thy bow burst in the fight!
May thy bright heart attain its every wish,
And may thy person ever keep its prowess!
Since thou hast won a victory repose
Is needed for a season, but disband not,
Proceed still further, and improve the occasion,
Because this Turkman is a cunning knave,
A man of high birth but an Áhriman,
Albeit he possesseth crown and power,
Affronting with his head the sun and moon.
Be not in any haste to challenge fight;
Afrásiyáb will come to fight with thee,
And, if he cross Jíhún, will trail his skirt

In blood."
He sealed this, called the messenger,
And gave it with injunctions to return.
The messenger sped over hill and dale,
And came to Siyáwush who, when he saw
The letter, was rejoiced and kissed the ground,
Put off the bondage of anxiety,
And carefully observed the Sháh's commands,
Not swerving from his duty as a liege.
Thereafter Garsíwaz, the lion-man,
Approached the monarch of Túrán, like dust,
And told this grievous and unwelcome tale:—
"The chieftain Siyáwush arrived at Balkh
With Rustam as his marshaller, with troops
Past count, and many men of name and leading.
They had full fifty men to one of ours—
Proud warriors, wielders of the buffalo-mace.
Their footmen were like fire, and had shield, quiver, V. 563
And shaft. The eagle soared not o'er their dust.
They had no drowsy heads, and this we proved
Three days and nights, and then our troops lost heart;
But with the Íránians he who needed rest
Retired forthwith from where the brave were fighting,
And after having slumbered rose refreshed
To make him ready for the fight again."
Afrásiyáb raged like a fire. He quitted
The stead of his tranquillity and slumber;
He glared at Garsíwaz, and thou hadst said:—
"Afrásiyáb will sunder him in twain!"
Then in a fury that he could not master
He cried aloud and drave his brother out.
Anon he bade a thousand of the lords
Be summoned and a festival prepared.
They put up hangings over all the waste,

And decked all Sughd with ornaments of Chín:
The day thus passed away with happiness.
Now when the Eye that lighteth earth had gone
From sight, they hasted to take sleep and rest
Except the king, who tossed about distrest.

§ 19

How Afrásiyáb had a Dream and was afraid

As night advanced Afrásiyáb cried out,
And shook upon his bed like one with ague,
While slaves sprang up and sounded the alarm.
V. 564 Whenas the tidings came to Garsíwaz:—
"The glory of the kingdom is obscured,"
He hasted to the presence of the king,
Beheld him lying on the dusty floor,
Embraced him, questioned him, and said: "Come tell
Thy brother all."
He answered: "Ask me not,
Speak not to me till I regain some wits,
But take and clasp me to thy breast awhile."
Anon on coming to himself he saw
A world of lamentation and of hubbub.
They lighted candles and he took his seat,
Still shaking like a bough, upon the throne.
Then said to him aspiring Garsíwaz:—
"Unlock thy lips and tell us this strange thing."
He answered: "None will see a vision such
As I have looked upon this darksome night:
I have not heard of such from young or old.
I saw in sleep a desert full of serpents,
The sky all eagles and the ground all dust,
And so parched up that thou hadst said: 'The heaven
Hath not looked on it since the world began.'
Upon one side my tent-enclosure stood,

And round it was a host of warriors.
A dust-storm rose and laid my standard low,
Blood surged around, the tents and tent-enclosure
Were overthrown, while of my countless troops
The heads were lopped, the bodies spurned aside.
Came like a blast an army from Írán,
What spears they bore and what artillery!
There was a head impaled on every spear,
Another was in every horseman's lap.
A hundred thousand of them sable-clad,
And wielding spears, came charging at my throne.
They drave me from the place where I was sitting,
Made my hands fast, and hurried me along.
I looked around me well and many a time, V. 565
But none of mine own kin was present there.
A haughty and illustrious paladin
Bore me before Káús the Sháh in haste.
A throne was there; its summit reached the moon,
And on the throne was seated Sháh Káús,
The hero, while a youth with moonlike cheeks
Was seated near to him—a youth whose years
Had not yet reached fourteen, who, when he saw
Me standing there before his presence bound,
Came rushing at me like a thundering cloud,
And clave me to the middle with his sword.
I shouted loudly in mine agony,
And with the crying and the pain awoke."

"The king's dream," answered Garsíwaz, "accordeth
To that which his well-wishers would desire.[1]
Thy purposes, thy crown, and throne shall stand,
The fortunes of thy foes be overthrown.
We need a man that can interpret dreams,
One who hath pondered much this kind of lore.
Now let us call the wise, all who may be
Skilled in astrology and grammarye."

[1] Garsíwaz suggests that dreams go by contraries.

§ 20

How Afrásiyáb inquired of the Sages concerning his Dream

From far and near the learnéd in this lore
Assembled at the court to hear the questions.
The king gave audience, placed them in due rank
Before him, spake of matters great and small
With each, and then addressed the company,
The priests, the sages, and astrologers:—
"Tell no one openly or as a secret
This dream of mine, or what I now shall say.
I will not leave the head upon the trunk
Of him who breatheth aught of this affair."
He gave them gold and silver past compute
That they might feel assured, then told his dream.
V. 566 The sages, having heard the monarch's words,
Asked in alarm protection at his hands,
And said: "We cannot read this dream aright
Unless the king with his own mouth shall promise
That he will do us justice when we tell
What seemeth us."
He promised not to harm
Or to impute the ill to them. Their spokesman,
One shrewd exceedingly and skilled to deal
With delicate affairs, said: "King of the world!
I will reveal this secret. From Írán
An army cometh mighty and alert,
The chiefs are brave, the leader is a prince
With many world-experienced counsellors,
Who by his horoscope, though not a Sháh,
Will wreck our land. If now the king shall fight
With Siyáwush earth will be like brocade,
And not a Turkman will survive; the king
Will grieve at having fought with him, for though
Thy hand will slay him, realm and throne will cease

Within Túrán, and earth be filled with strife,
Revenge, and combat on account of him.
Thou shalt bethink thee that my rede is true
What time thy lands lie waste for lack of people.
Although the king become a flying bird
He cannot pass the sky, which as it turneth
Is full at whiles of hate, at whiles of love."
The king grew sad and hasted not to fight,
But told to Garsíwaz the secret, adding:—
"None will seek vengeance if I fight him not; V. 567
Thus both shall live, and men will cease from strife
And woe; Káús will not desire revenge
Upon me, and the earth will not be troubled.
Instead of war and quest of world-wide rule
Be all my dealings peaceful. I will send him
Gold, silver, crown and throne, and precious gems,
For Minúchihr divided earth amiss
And took too small a portion, wherefore I
Will give up some assigned to me at first,
And then mine ills will haply pass from me,
Else will my soul, I fear me, fade away.
When I sew up the eye of fate with treasures
It well may be that heaven will grant me peace.
I only wish for that which is mine own,
And let the harvest be as heaven hath sown."

§ 21

How Afrásiyáb took Counsel with the Nobles

Now when the sky had half revolved, and when
The shining sun displayed its face once more,
The mighty men betook themselves to court
With covered heads to offer their respects.
Afrásiyáb convoked the experienced sages,
And thus addressed them: "It hath been my lot
To see no desert but that made by war,

And many great ones of the Íránians
Have perished by my hand upon the field.
What cities have been turned to hospitals!
What beds of roses into brakes of brambles!
V. 568 What uplands have I made my battle-grounds!
My troops have left their traces everywhere.
It is because unjust kings rule the world
That good of every kind is vanishing.
No onagers are breeding in their season
Upon the plains; hawks rear a sightless brood;
Milk faileth in the udders of the game;
The water in the springs is turned to pitch,
And they are drying up throughout the world;
Musk-bags no longer yield the scent of musk;
All that is right is frayed by villainy,
And population faileth everywhere.
My heart is satiate of strife and outrage:
Fain would I walk the path of godliness.
Then be we just and wise again; let pleasures
Stand in the place of misery and travail.
For our part let us give the world some respite;
Death should not come upon men unawares.
The more part of the world is at my feet:
My court is in Írán and in Túrán,
For see how many of the mighty men
Bring heavy tribute to me year by year!
Now if it be your minds I will dispatch
An embassy to Rustam, and forthwith
Knock at the door of peace with Siyáwush,
And send him every kind of precious gift."

The chieftains gave their answers one by one:
All were for peace and amity. They said:—
"Thou art the monarch and we are thy slaves,
With hearts devoted to perform thy hest."

The councillors dispersed with minds intent
On justice, with no thought of strife and turmoil.

Then said Afrásiyáb to Garsíwaz:—
"Make all thy preparations for the journey
With speed, and tarry not upon the road.
Choose out two hundred horsemen from the host,
And carry precious things to Siyáwush
From all the divers treasures in our hoard.
Take Arab steeds with golden furniture
And Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
A crown of jewels that a king might wear, V. 569
A hundred camel-loads of carpeting,
And take two hundred slaves both boys and girls.
Say thus to him: 'I have no quarrel with thee.'
Hold converse with him and bespeak him thus:—
'I do not set my face against Írán.
All from the bank of the Jíhún to Chín
Is mine, my home is Sughd—a realm distinct.
In truth it is through Túr and valiant Salm
That all the world is thus turned upside down,
And since the innocent Íraj was slain
Our warriors' brains have lost their wits. Írán
Is not divided from Túrán, but wars
And feuds prevented friendship. Now I trust
That God will give good days and joyful news.
He raised thee from the country of Írán,
And giveth thee the friendship of the brave.
Let thy fair fortune dower the world with peace,
Let war and every evil disappear.
Now Garsíwaz hath come to add his wits
To thine, and as the valiant Farídún
Erst shared the world among his gallant sons,
So be it now. Let us adopt his rede,
And turn our feet from battle and revenge.
Thou art a Sháh thyself; speak to the Sháh:
Perchance his warlike purpose may relax.'
Speak also unto elephantine Rustam
In fair words, plying him with arguments,

And, that the business may be carried through,
Give gifts to him like those to Siyáwush,
Except a golden throne; no Sháh is he;
Thrones are above a paladin's degree."

§ 22

How Garsíwaz came to Siyáwush

So Garsíwaz with those rich gifts, which made
V. 570 Earth's face look gay, sped on to the Jíhún,
And there chose one to go to Siyáwush,
And say thus: "Garsíwaz hath come in state,
Hath crossed the river in a single day
By boat, and hastened on the road to Balkh."
The envoy came and gave the prince the message.
Then Siyáwush called elephantine Rustam,
Discussed the matter from all points of view,
And ordered Garsíwaz to be admitted,
Rose when he came and welcomed him with smiles,
While Garsíwaz afar off kissed the ground,
With downcast looks and terror in his heart.
The prince, first seating him below the throne,
Asked eagerly about Afrásiyáb,
And Garsíwaz beholding as he sat
The prince on his new throne, his head, and crown,
Spake unto Rustam thus: "Afrásiyáb,
As soon as he had tidings of thy coming,
Dispatched at once a keepsake to the prince,
And I have brought it with me on my way."
He bade his followers to bring the gifts
And pass along in front of Siyáwush.
All from the city's gateway to the court
Were horses, drachms, boy-slaves, and troops. None knew
The tale of diadems, dínárs, high thrones,
Of slave-boys all with caps and girdles on,
And women-slaves with bracelets and gold torques.

The prince was gratified and smiling gazed
Upon them as he heard the embassage;
But matchless Rustam said: "Come, let us feast
A week and then proceed to the reply,
For this request must be considered well,
And there are many to advise withal."
Far-sighted Garsíwaz on hearing this V. 571
Did lowly reverence and kissed the ground.
They draped a mansion with brocade for him
And requisitioned cooks; but Siyáwush
And Rustam of the elephantine form
Withdrew and sat to canvass all the case,
For Rustam had suspicions through the haste
Of Garsíwaz; they hurried out their scouts
And took precautions. Then said Siyáwush:—
"Come, let us bring this mystery to light:
What motives can they have for seeking peace?
Look for an antidote for this their bane—
Think of the names of five score noble men,
Close blood-relations of Afrásiyáb;
These let him send to us as hostages
To clear the dark suspicions in our minds.
Seest not how fear of us oppresseth him,
And how he taboreth beneath the blanket?[1]
This done we must send one to tell the Sháh;
May be he will abandon thoughts of war."
"This is the proper method," Rustam said,
"In this way only will a pact be made."

§ 23

How Siyáwush made a Treaty with Afrásiyáb

At daybreak Garsíwaz appeared at court,
With covered head and girdle round his loins,
And having been admitted kissed the ground,

[1] *i.e.* attempts to hide what is obvious.

And did obeisance unto Siyáwush,
Who said: "How was it with thee yesternight
Amid this great encampment and such din?"
And added: "As for this affair of thine,
I have considered fully thy proposal,
V. 572 And in our object we are both agreed—
We both would wash out vengeance from our hearts.
Send then this answer to Afrásiyáb:—
'Cease now to muse revenge. He that hath seen
The sequel of wrongdoing should recoil
From acting wrongfully. The heart adorned
With wisdom is as 'twere a hoard of gold
And goods. If bane be not beneath these sweets,
And thou intendest neither wrong nor hurt,
Then, since thou wishest for a stable league,
Dispatch to me by way of hostages,
And as security for thy good faith,
A hundred members of thy family,
All warriors known to Rustam, who will give
The list of names to thee; and furthermore
Whatever cities thou hast in Írán
Surrender, keep within Túrán thyself,
Repose from wars and those that seek revenge,
And let right only be between us two:
It is not well to favour savage pards.
I will dispatch a letter to the Sháh: '
He may perchance recall the host in peace."
Then Garsíwaz dispatched a cavalier
Swift as a blast, and said: "Court not repose,
But hasten to Afrásiyáb and say
From me: 'I have proceeded diligently,
And have obtained the whole of what I sought;
But Siyáwush demandeth hostages
If thou wilt have him turn away from war.'"
The messenger arrived and told the king
What Siyáwush and noble Garsíwaz

Had said, and when the king had heard the words
He was exceeding troubled and in doubt.
He thus bethought him: "If a hundred men V. 573
Of mine own kin are taken from the host,
We shall be worsted on the battlefield
For want of those devoted to my cause;
While if I say: 'Demand no hostages,'
Mine overtures will seem to him dishonest.
I e'en must send the hostages if he
Insisteth thereupon. May be these ills
Will pass away from me: in any case
I shall be better wise than otherwise."
The monarch out of those whom Rustam named
Selected some five score of his own kin,
And sent them unto Siyáwush, bestowing
Upon them many gifts and benefits.
He then bade sound the drums and clarions,
He struck the royal tent, evacuated
Bukhárá, Sughd, and Samarkand, and Chách,
The land and ivory throne of Sipanjáb,
And led his troops upon the way to Gang
Without excuses, pretexts, or delays.
As soon as Rustam heard of this retreat
His mind was eased, he sought the prince and said:—
"All now is well, let Garsíwaz depart."
Then Siyáwush gave orders to prepare
A present—armour, crown, and belt, a steed
Of Arab blood with golden furniture,
Besides an Indian falchion in a scabbard
Of gold. When Garsíwaz beheld them, thou
Hadst said: "He seeth the moon upon the ground."
He went his way with blessings on his tongue:
Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth earth along."

§ 24

How Siyáwush sent Rustam to Káús

Then Siyáwush sat on the ivory throne,
And hung the crown above it. He considered
Whom he should send, what man of courteous speech
V. 574 Whose words had scent and hue, a cavalier
Of valour and a favourite with the Sháh.
Then Rustam said: "On such a topic who
Would dare to speak? Káús is still the same,
His petulance increaseth: what if I
Approach him and make this dark matter clear?
I will rend earth at thy behest. I see
In going naught but good."
Then Siyáwush
Rejoiced, and spake no more of messengers,
But sat with Rustam and discussed the matter,
Then called a scribe and had a letter written
On silk. There first he praised the Judge from whom
He had his fortune, strength, and excellence—
"The Lord of understanding, time, and power,
The Nourisher of wisdom in the soul.
None can transgress His ordinance. The man
Who disobeyeth Him can look for naught
But loss, for He is Author both of wealth
And right. From Him who fashioned sun and moon,
Who illustrateth fortune, throne, and crown,
Be blessings showered upon our sovereign—
The lord of earth, the chosen of the great,
Whose purview reacheth all things good and ill:
May his tall form be wisdom's pedestal.
I came to Balkh this jocund spring, rejoicing;
But when Afrásiyáb had news of me
The sparkling liquor darkened in his cup:
He saw that he was in a strait; the world

Was black and fortune fallen. His brother came
With gifts and many fair slaves richly dight V. 575
To me to seek protection from the Sháh.
Afrásiyáb will yield the crown and throne
Of kings, content with his own realm; observe
His station; never tread Írán's dark soil;
But wash all strife and vengeance from his heart,
And send as hostages a hundred kinsmen.
Great Rustam now hath come with this request—
That as the Sháh's face is a pledge of love,
He will show love toward Afrásiyáb."
The peerless Rustam reached the royal court
In fitting state with flag and retinue,
While loyal Garsíwaz with all dispatch
Went to the presence of Afrásiyáb,
Gave him a full account of Siyáwush,
And said: "He hath no match among the kings
For beauty, mien, address, and common sense,
Good feeling, modesty, and energy:
Brave, affable, a gallant cavalier—
'His breast is wisdom's home,' thou wouldest say."
The monarch smiled and said: "To scheme, my friend!
Is better than to fight. The dream alarmed me,
Foreboding, as I saw, my fall from power;
So in distress I turned to artifice
In order to relieve me of my woe:
I schemed to work with coin and treasury;
Thus everything hath turned out well for me."

§ 25

How Rustam gave the Message to Káús

Now on his side like flying dust came Rustam,
The Lion-man, with folded arms before
The Sháh, who met, embraced him, and inquired V. 576

About the prince, the progress of events,
The warriors, the battles, and the host,
And wherefore he had come. Then Rustam gave
The letter, first extolling Siyáwush;
A ready scribe then read it, and the face
Of Sháh Káús was pitch-like: "I allow,"
He said, "that he is young and all unversed
In ill—no wonder—but thou art a man
Experienced, and hast witnessed good and bad
Of all kinds: thou hast not thy peer on earth,
And Lions grow adept by fighting thee.
Hast thou not seen Afrásiyáb's ill deeds—
How he hath robbed us of food, rest, and sleep?
I should have gone myself but I forbore,
Although it was my wish to fight with him.
I went not, for men said: 'Go not thyself:
Remain here that the young prince may command.'
When God had meant that vengeance should be taken,
And ills had asked a recompense of ill,
Ye sought to gain a heritage thereby,
And that it was which occupied your hearts.
Afrásiyáb hath led your wits astray
By riches plundered from the innocent.
A hundred hapless, misbegotten Turkmans,
Who do not even know their fathers' names!
He will think little of such hostages:
They are to him as water in a stream.
If ye have dealt unwisely I am not
Sick of the toils of war; I shall dispatch
V. 577 A man endowed with wisdom and resource,
To bid the young prince: 'Put those Turkmans' feet
In fetters; burn the valuable things,
Retain not one, send me the men in bonds,
And I will take their heads off. Lead thy host
Intent on fight up to the foemen's gate,
At once relax all discipline, and loose

Thy troops like wolves among the sheep; while thou
Revengest, and thy soldiers sack and burn,
Afrásiyáb will come to fight with thee,
For ease and peace will yield him no delight.'"
Then Rustam said: "O Sháh! be not so moved
Because of this. First hear what I shall say;
And then—the world is under thy command.
Thou saidst: 'In fighting with Afrásiyáb
Cross not the river hastily, but wait
Till he attacketh, for he will not linger.'
Accordingly we waited his advance,
But from the first he oped the door of peace;
It would be vile to haste to fight with one
Intent on peace and mirth; and thy well-wishers
Would never wish the Sháh to break a compact.
When Siyáwush obtained his victories
He charged like some brave crocodile. What wouldst thou
But signet, crown, and throne, the Íránian treasure,
And safety? These thou hast; shun wanton strife;
Wash not a clear heart in a turbid stream.
Suppose that when Afrásiyáb consented
He inly purposed to break covenant:
We on our side are ready for the fight V. 578
With scimitars and lions' claws. Then thou
And noble Siyáwush upon the throne
Of gold shall laugh with gladness in Írán,
While I will lead a small force from Zábul,
And leave Túrán no throne or royal seat,
But with the mace wherewith I fight will make
The sunlight gloomy to Afrásiyáb;
For he and I have often fought, and he
Will scarcely care to try another bout.
Require not then thy son to break the treaty,
Enjoin not what amounteth to a crime.
Why should I hide the purport of my words?

Thy son will never break his promises,
And this deed that the Sháh is contemplating
Will horrify that most illustrious prince.
Dim not his fortunes or it cannot be
But that thine heart will suffer agony."

§ 26

How Káús sent Rustam to Sístán

Káús, the mighty Sháh, was filled with wrath
And raged at Rustam with dilated eyes:—
"So then the truth is out at last! 'Twas thou
That prompted this to root up from his heart
Revenge! Thine aim was ease and not the glory
Of signet, crown, and throne. Abide thou here,
And Tús shall mount the drums as general.
I will dispatch a horseman with a letter
Writ in harsh terms to Balkh. If Siyáwush
Will not obey he shall resign the host
To Tús and come back with his own retainers.
V. 579 He shall receive fit treatment at my hands
For thwarting me, and nevermore will I
Call thee my friend or have thee fight my battles."
Then Rustam cried in dudgeon: "Heaven may hide
My head! If Tús be valianter than Rustam
Then know that Rustam is a nidering."
He left the presence frowning angrily,
And with his forces hasted toward Sístán.
The Sháh anon called Tús and bade him lead
The army forth. Tús coming from the presence
Commanded that the troops should be equipped
With drums and trumpets, be prepared to start,
And put all thoughts of peaceful home apart.

§ 27

The Answer of Káús to the Letter of Siyáwush

Káús then warned a courier, called a scribe,
And set him by the throne to write a letter
Of wrath and strife, as 'twere a poplar shaft.
He first gave praises to Almighty God—
"The Lord of peace and war, the Lord of Mars,
Of Saturn, and the moon, of good and ill,
Of Grace and throne. The turning heavens obey V. 580
His hest, and everywhere His love extendeth.
May health and fortune be for ever thine,
O youth! together with the throne and crown.
Although thou hast forgotten mine instructions,
And foolishly neglected to attack
The foe, yet thou hast heard how he entreated
Írán when he prevailed; side not with him
In wantonness; frown not upon this court;
Let not thy head be snared through youth as thou
Wouldst 'scape destruction from the turning sky.
Send me those hostages bound hand and foot.
It is no wonder if Afrásiyáb
Hath duped thee, if I judge him by his conduct
Toward myself; oft through his glozing words
Have I turned back from fight. Now I said naught
Of peace, and thou hast disobeyed for dalliance
With pretty slaves; while as for Rustam, he
Ne'er hath enough of precious gear and treasure.
Thou hadst no thought of war: thine only thought
Was to succeed to the imperial crown.
Seek with thy sword the gate of full contentment,
For provinces are glories to a king.
As soon as Tús the general reacheth thee
He will dispose all matters great and small.
Set all the hostages without delay

In heavy chains upon the backs of asses.
It is high heaven's purpose that thy life
Should perish by this peace. Then will Írán
Hear of the evil and our prosperous times
Be troubled. Go, prepare thee for revenge
And war, admit no further parleyings.
When, in the course of war and night-attack,
Thou turnest darksome dust to a Jíhún,
V. 581 Afrásiyáb will not resign his head
To sleep, but come to fight; else if thou lov'st them,
And wouldst not have them call thee treaty-breaker,
Resign the host to Tús and come back hither:
Thou art no man for glory, war, and strife."
They sealed the letter, and the messenger
Received it and departed. Siyáwush,
On hearing words so unacceptable,
Called in the messenger and questioned him
Till all was clear. The man detailed the words
Used by the Sháh to Rustam, and described
How Rustam raged against the Sháh and Tús.
Then Siyáwush was much displeased with Rustam,
And musing o'er his father's act, the Turkmans,
And war's vicissitudes, exclaimed: "A hundred
Brave cavaliers, the kinsmen of the king,
Such famous men, our friends and innocent!
If I shall now dispatch them to the Sháh,
He will not ask or think about their case,
But hang them all alive upon the gibbet.
How shall I justify myself to God?
Ill will befall me through my father's acts;
If I so madly fight Afrásiyáb
Without a cause I shall incur God's wrath,
And people will cry shame. If I return
To court, surrendering the host to Tús,
That also will bring evil on my head.

I see ill right and left, and ill in front;
Súdába too will do me naught but ill,
And I have not an inkling of God's will!"

§ 28

How Siyáwush took Counsel with Bahrám and Zanga

Then Siyáwush called from the host Bahrám V. 582
And Zanga son of Sháwarán for counsel,
And having put forth strangers made both sit
Before him. They had shared his confidence
Since Rustam had departed from the host.
Then Siyáwush: "Ill fortune ever heapeth
Ill on my head. My sire's affection seemed
A tree all leaf and fruit; Súdába's wiles
Have made it, one may say, a biting bane.
Her bower became my prison, smiling fortune
Drooped, and as time went on her love bore fire.
Then I preferred war to inglorious feasts,
So I might shun the Crocodile's embrace.
Our good friend Garsíwaz was then at Balkh
With many troops, Afrásiyáb at Sughd
Was threatening us with five score thousand sabres.
We sped as 'twere a blast to seek the fray,
But when they left the province, sending gifts
And hostages, the archimages held
That we should quit the field. Now if the Sháh
Is merely fighting for aggrandisement
He may have war and territory too,
But why such wanton bloodshed, such revenge
Stirred up in others' hearts? The brainless head
Will ne'er know good from bad. Kubád came, died,
And left the world; from that time all was lost.
My deeds please not Káús, who fain would harm me, V. 583
Requiring me to fight without a cause.

I fear that I shall perish through mine oath,
But still we must not turn from God, or fear
To follow our forefathers' steps. The Sháh
Would rob me of both worlds, and yield me up
To Áhriman! If we should fight again
Who can foretell the fortune of the day?
Would I had died, or never had been born,
Since I am fated to endure such bale
And taste of every poison in the world;
And yet the tree hath not attained full growth
Whose fruit is venom and the leafage loss!
Such are the treaty and oaths sworn by God
That, if I swerve from what is right, disaster
Will come on every side; I shall be blamed
Deservedly. The world hath heard that I
Have treated with the monarch of Túrán.
Will God approve or fortune profit me
If I desert the Faith and fight again—
A fall from heaven to earth? I will go look
For some retreat to hide me from the Sháh.
Meanwhile the ordering of this bright age
Is in His hands Who is the Judge of all.
Do thou, famed Zanga son of Sháwarán!
Prepare for toil; haste to Afrásiyáb;
Give not thy head to sleep. The hostages,
And all the precious things—dínárs, crowns, thrones—
V. 584 Convey to him and tell him what hath chanced."
He charged Bahrám son of Gúdarz: "To thee,
Famed man! have I resigned the host and march,
Drums, camp, and elephants. Remain till Tús
The general shall arrive, then give to him
The treasures and the troops in perfect order,
Accounting unto him for everything."
Bahrám was sorely troubled when he heard,
While Zanga son of Sháwarán wept blood,
And cursed the country of Hámávarán.

The two sat there together full of grief,
Distracted by the words of Siyáwush.
Bahrám said: "Nay, not so: thou canst not live
Without thy sire. Write to the Sháh and ask
To have the elephantine hero back;
Then, if Káús still biddeth thee, fight on;
'Tis but a trifle if not trifled with.
Or wouldst thou rest? It may be done with ease;
To beg thy father's pardon is no shame.
If thou wilt send the hostages to him
His heart and gloomy soul will smile; if thou
Art so concerned about them let them go,
There is no hostage for thyself. This letter
Commandeth war, and all may yet be well,
For if Káús doth bid us we will fight,
And bring our foes to straits. Think not vain thoughts,
But capture him by complaisance, and cause not
Bad times for us now that the tree of power
Is fruiting; fill not eyes and crown and throne
With blood, and shrivel not the royal tree.
Ill will befall throne, crown, host, camp, and court
Without thee, for the brain-pan of Káús V. 585
Is as a Fane of Fire, his war and letter
Are both absurd; but if heaven's purposes
Oppose my rede, why say I more?"

The prince
Refused the counsel of those two wise men,
So heaven willed. He said: "The Sháh's command
Is higher than the sun and moon to me;
Yet none from straws to elephants and lions
May brave God's word, and he that disobeyeth
Hath troubled wits and is beside himself.
Must I put forth my hand for shedding blood,
And lead two kingdoms into war? Besides
He is aggrieved about the hostages,
And will demand again what I refused;

While if I quit the field, returning home
Without a fight, the Sháh will be incensed
And in his fury harm me. If your hearts
Are troubled by my action heed me not;
I will be mine own guide and messenger,
And quit the camp-enclosure on the waste.
When one is no partaker in my gains
Why should he take to heart my pains?"

When thus
He spake the souls of those two chieftains withered;
They wept at dread of parting and consumed
As in fierce fire; they saw the evil eye
Of fortune secretly upon the prince,
That they would never look on him again,
And wept his case. Said Zanga: "We are slaves:
Love for our leader filleth both our hearts.
V. 586 Now may our souls and bodies ransom thee,
And may our loyalty endure till death."

The gentle, prudent prince replied to Zanga:—
"Go tell Afrásiyáb of what hath chanced.
Say: 'Through this peace my lot is one of war:
Thine are the sweets, the pang and poison mine,
Yet will I keep my covenant with thee
Albeit I shall lose the throne of might.
God is my refuge, heaven my covering,
The ground my throne. I rashly disobeyed
And cannot face the Sháh. Give me a cistern
Where God appointeth and I may not hear
Aught of the evil nature of my sire,
But find for once a respite from his ire.'"

§ 29

How Zanga went to Afrásiyáb

So Zanga, with a hundred noble horsemen,
Bore from the prince's court the hostages,

And all the goods that Garsíwaz had brought.
When Zanga reached the Turkman monarch's city
A shout ascended and the watch espied him.
A noble warrior Tuwurg by name
Went forth to welcome him. At audience
Afrásiyáb arose, embraced him warmly,
And set him by the throne, where he presented
The letter and delivered all the message.
Afrásiyáb was much disquieted
And, having ordered fitting entertainment
For Zanga, called his captain of the host,
Who came like smoke. Now when Pírán arrived [1] V. 587
The monarch cleared the room and spake with him
About Káús and his intemperate words,
His evil nature and his warlike projects.
Afrásiyáb looked grave, his heart was full
For Siyáwush. He told of Zanga's coming,
And asked: "What remedy shall I employ,
How make a league in this embarrassment?"
Pírán replied: "O king! live happily
While time shall be. Thou art more wise than we are,
In treasure and in manhood mightier;
In apprehension, kindness, understanding,
And counsel, none hath wit to supersede thee.
All that have power to benefit this prince
Will grudge not toil and treasure. I have heard
That there is no chief like him in the world
In stature, countenance, and gentleness,
In culture, counsel, and propriety.
His prowess and his wisdom too exceed
His noble birth. No monarch hath begotten
Another such; words cannot do him justice.
He is a prince illustrious and right royal.
If he possessed no virtue but this one—

[1] From this point Pírán, "a verray parfit gentil knight," plays an important part in the poem. Cf. vol. i. p. 55.

That he hath quarrelled with his sire to save
Our hundred nobles' lives, given up the throne
And crown to meaner men, and gone his way,
'Twould not be politic to let him pass
From us. Besides Káús is hoary now;
The time hath come for him to quit the throne;
V. 588 But Siyáwush is youthful, hath the Grace,
And will succeed. The nobles would condemn thee,
And Siyáwush himself would be aggrieved.
If now the king in wisdom shall see fit
Let him dispatch to this wise youth a letter
Entreating him as men entreat their children;
Prepare him here a dwelling, entertain him
With fitting honour, give him a princess
To wife, and let him be esteemed and cherished.
If he remain thy realm will be in peace,
If he go home thy fortune will be bettered,
For he will be in favour with the Sháh,
And honoured by the nobles; both the hosts
May rest, God making him the instrument.
It would be worthy of the Maker's justice
To rectify the age in this regard."

The monarch listened to Pírán and, seeing
What would result, took time to estimate
The good and ill thereof; he then rejoined:—
"Thou counsellest well. Among the chosen chiefs
And veterans thou art incomparable;
Yet have I heard an adage to the point:—
'If thou shouldst make a lion's whelp thy pet,
And foster it however tenderly,
Still, when its teeth and claws are grown, regret
Will be thy lot. The brute will turn on thee.'"

Pírán said: "Let the king of warriors look
With wisdom on this matter. Can ill nature
Befit one who hath not inherited
The ill nature and perverseness of his sire?

Dost thou not see that Kai Káús is old V. 589
And must depart? Then Siyáwush will take
The wide world, wealth untoiled for, hall and palace;
Thus wilt thou gain both realms, their crown and state:
The man that getteth them is fortunate."

§ 30

How Afrásiyáb wrote to Siyáwush

Afrásiyáb, when he had heard this, took
A wise resolve, called an experienced scribe
And spake to him at large about the matter.
The scribe first dipped his pen in ambergris,
Then wrote the Maker's praise, acknowledging
His might and wisdom: "Since He is above
Both time and place how can His slaves' thoughts reach
To Him—the Lord of wisdom, sense, and soul,
Whose justice is the provand of the sage?
His benediction be upon the prince—
The lord of helm and mace and scimitar,
The lord of modesty and reverence,
Pure from wrongdoing both in heart and hand.
From wary Zanga son of Sháwarán
Have I heard all thy message, and my heart
Is troubled that the world-lord is enraged
So much against thee; but what seek the wise,
Whose fortunes are awake, save crown and throne?
Here everything hath been prepared for thee,
E'en to the royal dignity and treasures,
For all Túrán will do thee reverence,
And I for my part long to have thy love.
Then thou and I will be as son and sire—
A sire who is a slave before his son.
Know that Káús hath never shown affection
For thee like mine, for I will ope my heart, V. 590

My hoards, and hand, provide thee with a home,
Protect thee like a son, and leave thee here
As my memorial. Shouldst thou go elsewhere
I should be blamed by high and low alike;
And thou wilt find the going difficult,
Except by Providence and Grace divine,
For yonder thou must lose the sight of land,
And cross the sea of Chín. If no constraint
Is put on thee by God come as a friend.
Troops, treasure, gold, and city all are thine,
And thou shalt need no pretext for departing,
For when thou wouldst be friendly with thy sire,
I will provide thee crown and throne and girdle,
With soldiers to escort thee to Írán,
And bear thee company myself for love.
The quarrel with thy father will not last;
At his age he will soon be sick of strife.
If fire appeareth after sixty-five
It cometh hardly from the damps of age.
Írán and host and treasure will be thine,
And crown with sovereignty from clime to clime;
Moreover I have sworn by holy God
To labour, soul and body, for thy welfare.
I will not harm thee by myself or others,
Or wrong thee even in thought."

He sealed the letter,
Then bade his good friend Zanga gird his loins
To go with speed, and gave him many gifts
Of gold and silver, and a steed caparisoned
With massive gold. When Zanga gave his tidings
V. 591 The prince was glad and sorry too to make
His foe a friend. Would fire give cooling breezes?
A foe, however kind thou mayest be,
Will in the end display his enmity.

§ 31

How Siyáwush gave up the Host to Bahrám

Then Siyáwush wrote thus to Kai Káús
To tell him all: "Though young I want not wits.
While I have done no wrong, the world-lord's temper
Hath burned my heart within me. First Súdába
Occasioned trouble; I was forced to traverse
A mount of fire; my heart's blood bathed my cheeks,
And in the wastes the deer wept sore for me.
Then went I forth in shame and woe to face
The claws of Crocodiles. Both kingdoms now
Enjoy repose, yet is the Sháh's heart like
A sword of steel; my doings please him not,
And if I bind or loose 'tis all the same.
Since he is weary of me I will cease
To trouble him. Ne'er may his heart lack joy.
As for myself I seek the Dragon's breath
In sorrow, doubtful what the turning sky
Intendeth for me—whether hate or love."
Then said he to Bahrám: "Now give thy name
Fresh glory in the world; I leave with thee
The baggage and the camp, the cavaliers,
The treasure, elephants, and kettledrums.
When noble Tús shall come, resign thy charge
To him, be vigilant and fortunate."
He chose three hundred doughty cavaliers,
Had brought to him such money as he needed, V. 592
With jewels fit for kings, a hundred steeds
With golden furniture, a hundred slave boys
With golden belts, and had a reckoning made
Of weapons, beasts, and girdles. Then he summoned
The nobles, spake in many gracious words
To them, and said: "Pírán hath crossed the river,
Sent by Afrásiyáb on secret business

To me, because his people trust in him.
I go to meet him; ye must tarry here.
Look to Bahrám for orders and obey
Him loyally."
The chiefs all kissed the ground
Before the glorious Siyáwush.
At sunset,
When air grew dark and earth ungenial,
The prince, his face obscured by tears, marched forth
Toward Jíhún with all his company.
When he had reached Tirmid, doors, roofs, and streets
Were full of scent and colour like the spring
Up to the gates of Chách: thou wouldst have said:—
"It is a bride with crown and necklaces."
At every stage were carpets laid and viands
Prepared, the whole way to Káchár Báshí,
Where he dismounted and remained a while.
When Tús reached Balkh they told him bitter news:—
"The son of glorious Kai Káús hath gone
To join the leader of the Turkman host."
Tús called in all the troops and marched them back
V. 593 To court. The news made Kai Káús turn pale;
He mourned and heaved a deep, cold sigh; his heart
Was full of fire, his eye of tears for wrath
With Siyáwush and with Afrásiyáb;
But, doubtful if the sky would prove a friend
Or enemy, he put away his anger,
And thought no more of warfare and revenge.
On hearing: "Siyáwush hath crossed the river
With troops to us, his envoy hath arrived,"
Afrásiyáb bade all the chief estates
Go forth with kettledrums to welcome him.
Pírán chose out one thousand of his kin
To meet the prince with gifts, apprised the host,
And gat him ready four white elephants.
One bore a turquoise throne backed by a flag

Of tree-like size, surmounted by a moon;
The flag was gold-embroidered violet silk;
Upon the golden throne were three gold seats,
And each of them was covered with brocade.
There were a hundred noble steeds whose saddles
Were jewelled gold. The host, thou wouldst have said,
Was like the earth when graced by heaven's love.
When Siyáwush had heard: "A company
Hath come," perceived the banner of Pírán,
And heard the sound of elephants and steeds,
He hurried forth, embraced Pírán, inquired
About the king and kingdom, and exclaimed:—
"Why hast thou vexed thy soul by coming hither,
O captain of the host? My heart's first wish V. 594
Was to behold thee safe and sound."
Pírán
Kissed his fair, charming face, his head and feet,
And thus addressed the Maker: "Thou know'st all things,
The open and the secret. Hadst Thou shown me
His soul in dreams, in sooth mine agèd head
Had been made young."
He said to Siyáwush:—
"Now that I see thee radiant and robust
I offer praises to Almighty God.
Afrásiyáb will be a father to thee,
The chiefs this side the stream will be thy slaves.
Above a thousand of my kin will wait
On thee with earrings in their ears, my treasures
Are all thine own; be ever hale and happy.
Draw not a single breath of discontent,
For men and women are alike thy slaves,
And, if thou wilt accept my hoary head,
I too will gird my loins to do thee service."
They went with joy, discussing divers matters,
While through the city there were sounds of harp

And rebeck; sleepy heads were roused; the soil
Was blackened with fresh musk; the Arab steeds
All spread their wings. When Siyáwush saw this
Tears rained from both his eyes, his thoughts were troubled,
For he recalled the hocktide in Zábul
When it was decked up to Kábulistán,
And he had gone as guest to Rustam there
With all the famous men for company,
And how the folk had showered down gold and gems,
And sifted musk and ambergris o'erhead.
He thought about Írán and heaved a sigh,
His heart burned with the memories of home.
V. 595 He turned his head to hide this from Pírán,
Albeit that chieftain marked the grief and pain:
He understood the thoughts of Siyáwush,
Grew sorrowful himself and bit his lips.
They lighted at Káchár Bashí to breathe
Awhile. Pírán scanned Siyáwush, and marked
With wondering eyes his speech, breast, neck, and shoulders,
Invoked God's name, and said: "Illustrious prince!
Thou art the memory of sovereigns,
And hast three things that not a prince beside
Possesseth. First, thou makest men discern
The nature of the seed of Kai Kubád;
While secondly, thou hast adorned thy tongue
With such uprightness and such goodly speech;
And thirdly, one would say: 'Thy face distilleth
Thy love on earth in showers.'"

The prince replied:—

"O venerable sage who sayest sooth,
World-famed for thy sincerity and love,
Far from unkindness and from Áhriman!
If thou wilt make a covenant with me
I know that thou wilt keep it, and will make

This land my home in love and confidence
In thee, my friend! and, if my sojourn here
Is well, I need not weep for what I did:
If otherwise command me to depart,
And point me out the way to other realms."
Pírán replied: "Have no such thought. Since thou
Hast left Írán, in no wise hasten from us,
And lose our monarch's love. Though his repute
In this world is not good, he is a man
Of God, hath wisdom, prudence, and high rede,
And turneth not in lightness to bad ways.
He is my blood-relation[1] too; with him V. 596
I have, as paladin and counsellor,
High rank, abundant treasures, thrones, and troops.
Above a hundred thousand cavaliers
Obey me here. Twelve thousand of my kinsmen
Stand day and night before me. I have land,
Flocks, lassos, bows, steeds, implements of war,
And hoarded treasure; I need no man's aid.
Let all this be thy ransom if thou wilt
Abide with us. I swear by Holy God
That I will serve thee both with heart and soul.
I will not suffer any ill to thee. . . .
But no man knoweth high heaven's purposes."
The prince rejoiced, his heart was freed from care.
They sat and ate, and grew like sire and son,
Then in high spirits sped along the road
To Gang—the Turkman monarch's fair abode.

§ 32

The Interview of Siyáwush with Afrásiyáb

On hearing: "Glorious Siyáwush hath come,"
Afrásiyáb descended to the street V. 597

[1] Afrásiyáb and Pírán were cousins.

Afoot with girded loins right eagerly.
The prince beholding him got off his horse
And ran to meet the king. The two embraced,
And kissed each other's head and eyes. Then said
Afrásiyáb: "Now evil is asleep
Throughout the world; henceforward war and tumult
Will cease; the deer and pard will drink together.
The world was troubled by brave Túr, but now
Our realms are sick of strife; while they were filled
With turmoil the world's heart had no repose;
Peace is restored by thee; the age hath rest
From battle and hot blood, all in Túrán
Are now thy slaves, all hearts are full of love
For thee; in soul and body I am thine;
Pírán the general is thy kinsman too.
I will regard thee with a father's fondness,
And ever show to thee a face all smiles."

Then Siyáwush with many blessings answered :—
"May justice be the fortune of thy race.
Praise to the Lord, the Maker of the soul,
From Whom are peace and battle and revenge."

The monarch, hand in hand with Siyáwush,
Sat on the throne of might, and as he gazed
Upon the prince, said: "None can equal him
On earth in stature, looks, and kingly Grace."
V. 598 Then to Pírán: "Káús is old and witless
To lose sight of a son so tall and gifted
As this. I marvelled, when I first beheld him,
How any man with such a son could look
At aught besides."

He made choice of a palace,
Laid cloth of gold for carpets, set a throne
Of gold with feet like heads of buffaloes,
Bedecked the palace with brocade of Chín,
And furnished it throughout, then bade his guest
Go thither and abide in full content.

When Siyáwush arrived before the hall
Its dome reached Saturn, he went in and sat
Upon the golden throne, his wise soul wrapped
In thought, until the monarch's board was spread,
And he was summoned; there they talked together,
And entered on a course of happiness.
The banquet o'er they went with harp and minstrel
To hold a drinking-bout. They sat and quaffed
Until the world grew dark and heads became
Bemused with wine, then Siyáwush went home
With glee, and in his cups forgot Írán.
Afrásiyáb gave heart and soul to him,
And could not sleep for thinking. That same night
He said to Shída:[1] "When the morn shall come, V. 599
And Siyáwush hath risen, go to him
With mine own kinsmen and the paladins
Of highest rank, take with you noble steeds
Caparisoned with gold, and other gifts."
Accordingly the warriors presented
To Siyáwush gold coins and royal gems
With courteous greetings, and the king too sent
Him many gifts. Thus was one sennight spent.

§ 33

How Siyáwush displayed his Prowess before Afrásiyáb

One night the king spake thus to Siyáwush:—
"To-morrow morning let us play at polo;
I hear that none among the warriors
Can face thy mall on thine own ground."
"O king!"
Said Siyáwush, "be fortunate and ever
Beyond the reach of ill! Kings look to thee
For teaching; who surpasseth thee? Day shineth
When I behold thee, from thee I accept
Both good and ill."

[1] His son.

Afrásiyáb replied:—
"My son! be ever glad and conquering.
Thou art a prince, the glory of the throne,
A royal crown and backbone of the host."
V. 600 They went out laughing to the Ground at morn
In gallant trim. Then said Afrásiyáb
To Siyáwush: "Let us be opposites,
Select our partners, and make up our sides."
He answered: "What will hand and mall avail?
I cannot play against thee. Take some other
As thine antagonist, I am thy partner—
One of thy horsemen on this spacious Ground."
The monarch was delighted at his words,
Esteeming those of others only wind.
"Nay, by the life and head of Sháh Káús,"
Said he, "thou shalt be friend and opposite.
Display thy prowess to the cavaliers,
So that they may not say: 'He chose amiss,'
But give thee praise while I laugh out with wonder."
Then Siyáwush replied: "'Tis thine to bid:
The cavaliers, the Ground, and malls are thine."
Afrásiyáb selected for his side
Kulbád,[1] Púlád, Pírán, Jahn, Garsíwaz,
With Nastíhan the gallant, and Húmán,
Who would drive balls from water. Then the king
Sent over to the side of Siyáwush
Rúín, illustrious Shída, and Arjásp
The mounted Lion, and Andarímán
The doughty cavalier.[2] Said Siyáwush:—
"Ambitious king! will any of these dare
To face the ball? They side with thee, while I
Shall have to play alone and watch them too.
So with the king's leave I will bring to help me
A few Íránian players on the Ground
V. 601 In order that both sides may play the game."

[1] Cf. p. 119. [2] For most of the above names see vol. i. p. 92.

The monarch heard the words, gave his consent,
And from the Íránians Siyáwush chose seven
Well skilled. The tymbals sounded, dust arose,
While what with cymbal-clash and clarion-blare
Thou wouldst have said: "The ground is all a-quake!"
Afrásiyáb hit off and drove the ball
Up to the clouds just as it should be struck.
Then Siyáwush urged on his steed and smote
The ball, or ever it could reach the ground,
So stoutly that it disappeared from sight.
Thereat the exalted monarch bade his men
To give another ball to Siyáwush,
Who as he took it kissed it, and there rose
A flourish from the pipes and kettledrums.
He mounted a fresh steed, threw up the ball,
And drove it out of sight to see the moon.
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky attracted it."
There was not on the ground his peer, and none,
Had such a beaming face. The monarch laughed,
The nobles grew attentive and exclaimed:—
"We never saw a rider like this chief!"
The famous monarch said: "Of such a kind
Is each one gifted with the Grace of God;
But Siyáwush hath bettered all report."
The attendants set a throne beside the Ground,
The monarch beaming sat down with the prince,
And told the company: "The Ground and balls V. 602
Are at your service."
Then the Íránians played
A match with the Túránians. Dust flew up
With shouts as these or those bore off the ball;
But when the Turkmans played too angrily
In their endeavours to obtain a goal,
And when the Íránians intercepted them
So that the Turkmans' efforts were in vain,
Displeased with his own people Siyáwush

Cried to them in the olden Persian tongue:—
"Is this a playground, or would ye cause strife
In our dependent and precarious state?
When ye are near the limits look aside
And let the Turkmans have the ball for once."
His horsemen rode more gently after this
And did not heat their steeds, then as the Turkmans
Were shouting for a goal Afrásiyáb
Perceived the purpose of the words, and said:—
"I have been told by one of mine own friends
That Siyáwush hath no peer in the world
For archery and might of neck and shoulder."
Thereat the prince uncased his royal bow;
The monarch, having asked to see it first
That one of his own kin might prove its strength,
Regarded it with wonder, and invoked
Full many a royal blessing, then presented
The bow to Garsíwaz the sworder, saying:—
"Bend thou this bow and string it."
That malignant
Failed, to his great amazement. Siyáwush
V. 603 Took back the bow and sitting on his knees
Bent it and strung it, smiling. Said the king:—
"With this one might shoot over sky and moon!
I too in days of youth had such a bow,
But times are changed, and no one in our lands
Would dare to grasp this bow when war is toward,
Save Siyáwush, and he with such a chest
And arms would wish none other on his charger."
They placed a target on the riding-ground,
And Siyáwush, who challenged none to shoot,
Bestrode his wind-foot charger like a dív,
Gripped with his legs, and shouted as he went.
In sight of all the chiefs his arrow hit
The bull's eye. Then he set upon his bow
Another shaft, of poplar wood, four feathered,

And in the same course hit the second time.
Next wheeling to the right he hit the target
Just as he would. This being done he flung
The bow upon his arm, approached the king,
And lighted from his steed. The monarch rose:—
"Thy skill," said he, "is witness to thy race."
Returning to the lofty palace thence
They went with happy hearts as bosom-friends;
There took their seats, arranged a drinking-bout,
And summoned skilful minstrels to attend.
They quaffed no little wine, grew glorious,
And drank the health of Siyáwush. The king
While sitting at the board arranged a gift—
A horse and trappings, throne and diadem,
Uncut stuffs, such as none had seen before,
Gold coins, and silver coins in bags, turquoises,
With many girl and boy slaves, and a cup V. 604
Which brimmed with shining rubies. Then the king
Commanded to count up those precious gifts,
And certain of the dearest of his kinsmen
To bear them to the house of Siyáwush.
Thus said he to his troops: "In everything
Regard the prince as if he were your king."

§ 34

How Afrásiyáb and Siyáwush went to the Chase

Afrásiyáb said to the prince: "Come with me
Some day a-hunting to refresh our hearts,
And banish all our troubles in the chase."
"Whene'er thou wilt," he answered, "whereso'er
Thy heart disposeth thee to lead the way."
One day they went. The king took hawks and cheetahs,
And many of Írán and of Túrán

Of all conditions hastened to the meet.
The prince spied onager upon the plain,
And, sped from his companions like the wind,
With reins held lightly and feet firmly pressed
He galloped o'er the hollows and the hills,
And, having cloven an onager in halves,
Made them the silver and his hands the scales,
And found the two sides equal to a grain.
The king and all his train watched eagerly,
Exclaiming: "What a noble swordsman this!"
And one man to another called and said:—
"Ill from Írán hath come on us erewhile,
And our brave leaders have been put to shame:
Now is the time to fight against the Sháh."
But Siyáwush still chased his onagers
And spread destruction over all the plain.
He galloped over valley, hill, and waste,
Employing arrow, spear, and scimitar.
V. 605 Where'er he went he piled a heap of game,
And killed enough for all the company.
Thence to the palace of Afrásiyáb
They took their way with gladness in their hearts.
The monarch in his pleasures and his griefs
Held intercourse with none but Siyáwush,
Confided not in Jahn and Garsíwaz,
Or other such; he took no joy in them,
But passed with Siyáwush his days and nights
In merriment. Thus while a year went by
They shared all griefs and pleasures equally.

§ 35

How Pírán gave his Daughter to Siyáwush

One day Pírán conversed with Siyáwush
And in the course of talk said: "In this land
What man surpasseth thee? Our monarch's love

Doth make him talk of thee e'en in his sleep.
Know that thou art to him as jocund spring,
His idol, and the solace of his griefs.
Great art thou and the son of Kai Káús;
Thy many virtues raise thee to the moon;
Yet since thy sire is old, and thy heart young,
See that thou lose not the imperial throne.
Thou art a king both here and in Írán—
A noble monument of former monarchs—
Yet see I none, among thy blood-relations,
That looketh on thee with abundant love!
Throughout Túrán I find none fit to be
Thy peer, thy partner, or antagonist.
Thou hast no brother, wife, or sister; thou
Art like a single rose-branch in a coppice.
Look for a consort worthy of thyself,
And cease to sorrow and regret Írán;
It will be thine when Kai Káús is dead,
And thine will be the crown and warriors' throne.
The curtains of the king conceal three maidens,
All richly dight, such that the moon itself
Perforce must gaze upon, and Garsíwaz
Hath also three of noble race on both sides V. 606
Through Fárídún related to the Sháh,
With crowns and high estate. I too have four—
Slaves if thou wilt. The eldest-born—Jaríra—
Unmatched among the fair shall be thy handmaid."
Then Siyáwush: "I give thee thanks. Henceforth
Regard me as thy son. She is the meetest
Because for me alliance with thy house
Is best. She will rejoice my soul and body:
I want none else; herein thou layest on me
A life-long obligation."
When Pírán
Left Siyáwush he hasted to Gulshahr,
And said: "Prepare Jaríra's wedding outfit

In favour of the exalted Siyáwush.
Shall not we joy to-day when we receive
The grandson of Kubád as son-in-law?"
Gulshahr led forth her daughter, having set
A coronet upon the maiden's head,
Arrayed her with brocade, gold, drachms, dínárs,
Adorned and scented her like jocund spring,
And then presented her to Siyáwush.
They thus espoused her to the prince, and set her
Like a new moon upon the throne. None knew
V. 607 What wealth she brought, how many golden seats
Inlaid with gems. When Siyáwush beheld
Her face she pleased him, and he laughed for gladness.
He joyed in her by night and day: his heart
Forgot Káús.
Thus heaven revolved awhile,
And ever as time passed the atheling
Increased in rank and favour with the king.

§ 36

How Pírán spake to Siyáwush about Farangís

The good Pírán said to the prince one day:—
"Thou knowest that the king our sovereign lord
Exalteth o'er the dome of heaven his crown,
And that by night and day thou art his soul,
His heart and intellect, his might and wisdom;
If thou shouldst be allied to him by marriage
Thou wouldst increase in greatness with each breath.
Now since my daughter hath become thy wife
I tender all thy interests great and small,
And though Jaríra hath much charm, and thou
Didst choose her out of all, it would become thee
To take a jewel from our monarch's skirt.
Of his fair daughters Farangís is best:

Thou wilt see nowhere else such face and hair.
She bettereth the cypress-tree in stature;
Her musky tresses form a sable crown;
Her parts and knowledge pass her loveliness,
While wisdom standeth as a slave before her.
Thou mayst well ask her of Afrásiyáb.
Where is a beauty like her in Kashmír,
Or in Kábul? The noble king will be V. 608
Thy kinsman, and thy Grace and throne will shine.
With thy permission I will speak to him,
And thus win from him favour for myself."

Then Siyáwush gazed on Pírán and said:—
"God's word must be fulfilled; none can withstand
Heaven's secret purpose. If I may not go
To see Írán, the face of Kai Káús,
Or Zál who was a foster-sire to me,
Or matchless Rustam—mine own jocund Spring—
Bahrám or Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Or Gív, Shápúr, or other mighty men,
If I must needs be severed from their sight,
And have to choose a home within Túrán,
Do as thou sayest and arrange a match,
But speak not of it save in privacy."

While thus he spake he heaved a deep, cold sigh,
And filled the lashes of his eyes with tears.
Pírán made answer: "Every man of wisdom
Will let his circumstances rule his action.
Thou canst not scape the turning of the sky V. 609
Whence come our retributions, wars, and loves.
Grant that thou hadest friends within Írán:
Thou didst commend them unto God and leave them.
Thy house and home are here; the Íránian throne
Is not at present to be made thine own."

§ 37

How Pírán spake with Afrásiyáb

Píran, thus having learned the prince's wishes
On all points, rose, proceeded to the court
In merry pin, dismounted, was admitted,
And stood awhile before Afrásiyáb,
Until the king, who loved him well, spake thus:—
"Why standest thou before me this long while?
What wish hast thou on earth? What is thy purpose?
My host, my treasures, and my gold are thine,
For me thou profitest in every thing.
If I have any prisoner in bonds,
Whom 'twould be grief and danger to release,
Yet will I take from him my chains and wrath,
And for thy sake turn anger into wind.
Ask what thou wilt—a great thing or a small,
E'en sword or signet, throne or diadem."
The sage replied: "May this world praise thee ever!
As for myself, I have wealth, treasure, host,
And, by thy fortune, sword and crown and throne.
I bring in private for the royal ear
A long suit on behalf of Siyáwush,
Who said: 'Say to the monarch of Túrán:—
"I have grown blithe of heart and covet fame.
Thou like a sire hast reared me on thy breast
Till joy hath caused my fortune to bear fruit.
Extend thy kindness, make a match for me,
For I depend on thee in weal and woe.
V. 610 Thou hast a daughter now behind thy curtains
Well worthy of my palace and my throne:
Her mother named her Farangís, and I
Shall find my pleasure in deserving her."'"
Afrásiyáb grew grave, tears filled his eyes.
He said: "Concerning this I have already

Told thee my views, and thou didst not approve them.
A sage of lofty rede once said to me:—
'O thou that fosterest a lion's whelp!
Why lay upon thy soul a fruitless task?
Thou toilest to complete his excellence,
But at his fruiting thou wilt cease to bear.
His fosterer will be the first to feel
His claws when he is strong enough to fight.'
Again, in presence of the mighty men,
Archmages learnéd in astrology
Took observations with their astrolabes,
And all gave utterance to the same effect
That my child's son would do me wondrous hurt,
Destroy my throne, my treasure, provinces,
My host, and palace, and that I should find
No place of refuge; he would seize the realm,
And by his deeds bring evil on my head.
Why should mine own hand plant a tree whose fruit
Is bane with colocynth for leaves? A child
Sprung from Káús and from Afrásiyáb V. 611
Would prove a fierce flame or an ocean-wave.
I know not whether love will take the prince
Back to Írán, or fix all his regards
On us; but why drink poison wittingly?
One must not lightly take a serpent's breath.
While he remaineth he shall be a brother
To me, and if he goeth to Írán
I will dispatch him to his sire in state
On such wise as the All-just shall approve."
Pírán replied: "O king! Let not thy heart
Be grieved hereat. Those born to Siyáwush
Will be possessed of wits, reserved, and shrewd.
Trust not what readers of the stars may say,
Deal with his case according to thy wisdom,
For from this noble pair a prince will spring,
Whose head will be exalted to the sun

As king both in Írán and in Túrán.
Then those two kingdoms will repose from strife.
The seed of Farídún and Kai Kubád
Will ne'er produce a more illustrious Plant,
While, if the sky shall purpose otherwise,
No taking thought will make it love him more.
What is to be will be beyond all doubt;
No caution minisheth what is to wax.
See what a glorious enterprise is this!
Ask what thou wilt of fortune and 'tis thine."
Afrásiyáb replied: "Ill cometh never
Of thine advice. I order as thou wishest;
Depart and carry out thy kindly purpose."
Pírán bent low, did reverence, gave great praise,
And so departed, came to Siyáwush,
And told him all. That night the joyful pair
Sat o'er their wine and from their souls washed care.

§ 38

The Wedding of Farangís and Siyáwush

V. 612 Now when the sun upon the turning sky
Displayed its head as 'twere a golden shield,
Pírán the chief girt up his loins and mounting
A swift steed rode toward the prince's palace
To wish him joy of his high dignity,
And said to him: "Prepare thyself to-day
For welcoming the daughter of the king,
And if thou hold'st me worthy of the office
I will myself make ready to escort her."
The prince was moved and blushed. He loved his wife,
The daughter of Pírán, as his own heart
And soul, but said: "Go, do whate'er thou wilt:
Thou knowest that from thee I have no secrets."

Pírán on hearing this went to his home
With heart and soul intent upon the business.
The door-key of the store-house where he kept
His uncut stuffs Pírán gave to Gulshahr,
Who was the chief wife of the paladin—
A lady much esteemed and bright of mind.
They chose the best things in the treasury—
A thousand lengths of cloth of gold from Chín,
With emerald-studded plates, cups of turquoise
Filled with fresh aloe-wood and musk-deer's glands,
Two crowns of jewels worthy of a king,
Two bracelets with two earrings and one torque;
Of carpets likewise sixty camel-loads,
Three sets of raiment made of cloth of gold
With patterns traced in gold of ruddier hue,
With divers kinds of jewels sewn therein;
Of gold and silver thirty camel-loads,
With salvers and apparel made in Párs,
A golden throne, four seats, three pairs of shoes
With emeralds patterned on a golden ground,
Two hundred servants bearing golden cups V. 613
(Thou wouldst have said: "The house will not contain
them!"),
Three hundred servants wearing crowns of gold,
About one hundred kinsmen of the king,
Each with one tray of musk and one of saffron:
These with Gulshahr together with her sisters,
In golden litters curtained with brocade,
Went in procession with the precious things.
The lady took a hundred thousand coins—
Dínárs—to fling among the crowd. They brought
The goods to Farangís and blessed her too.
Gulshahr then kissed the ground and said to her:
"The planet Venus mateth with the Sun."
Pírán, for his part, and Afrásiyáb
Were instant on account of Siyáwush.

They gave the bride as custom and their Faith
Required, and had the contract duly witnessed.
As soon as they had finished pact and plight
Pírán dispatched a message to Gulshahr
Like smoke that she should go without delay
To Farangís to take her to the prince.
Thereon Gulshahr told happy Farangís
That she should go that night to Siyáwush,
And ornament his palace with a Moon.
She spake. They decked the bride at once and ranged
Her musky tresses o'er her rosy cheeks.
Then like a new moon Farangís approached
That youthful prince, the wearer of a crown.
V. 614 They joyed in one another and their love
Grew ever greater as the moments sped.
For one whole week slept neither fowl nor fish,
And no man went to rest; the earth became
A very garden through its whole extent
With sounds of minstrelsy and merriment.

§ 39

How Afrásiyáb bestowed a Province on Siyáwush

Thus passed the sennight, then the king prepared
Great gifts of Arab steeds, sheep, coats of mail
Withal, helms, maces, lassos, and dínárs,
With purses full of drachms, suits of apparel,
And things both great and small. They drew a list
Of lands and cities 'twixt the sea of Chín
And their own march; the region was in length
A hundred leagues, its breadth no man could measure.
For all that sovereignty in royal fashion
They made the patent out on painted silk,
Which with a golden throne and golden crown
The king sent to the house of Siyáwush.

He next prepared the hall of banqueting,
And those that came to it from far and near
Found wine, and tables ready spread, and cooks;
Folks eat, and whatsoever each could carry
He took away with him to his own home:
The monarch's guests thus passed a week in joy.
He opened wide the dungeons' bolted doors, V. 615
Exulting as the favourite of fortune.
The eighth day Siyáwush with brave Pírán
Approached the king at dawn for leave to go
To their own homes. Both offered compliments,
And said: "O gracious worldlord! may thy days
Be ever joyous and thy foes' backs bent."
Thence they returned rejoicing and their talk
Was all about the monarch of the world.
Thus for a year in justice and in love
The circling heaven turned and brought no care;
Then from the presence of the monarch came
A friendly messenger to Siyáwush,
And said: "The king saith: 'O illustrious chieftain!
I have bestowed upon thee all the realm
From here to Chín: go round and view the lands.
In any city where thou findest ease,
Contentment, and no more to be desired,
Abide in gladness and prosperity;
Stint not thy soul one moment of delight.'"
Then Siyáwush, rejoicing at his words,
Struck up the pipes and drums, and packed the loads.
A host accompanied him on the way
With arms and treasure, signet-ring and crown.
They fitted many litters and arranged
The curtains for the ladies. In one litter
The prince placed Farangís and, having loaded
The baggage-train, led forth the company.
They went with merriment toward Khutan V. 616
With all the famous men escorting them,

Because Pírán, that general favourite,
Was of that state, and Siyáwush had promised
To spend a month with him. The days were passed
In banqueting or in the hunting-field
Until the month was ended; then there rose
The din of drum at cock-crow, and the prince
Went to his realm, preceded by Pírán,
And followed by his troops. The news got wind,
And all the nobles sought their overlord.
They set forth from their homes with joyful hearts,
And, as the custom was, bedecked the land,
And there was such a bruit within that realm
That thou hadst said: "The earth is raised to heaven."
Such were the din and blast of clarions
That thou hadst said: "All hearts leap from their seats."

They found one day a cultivated tract:
It was a goodly and well favoured site,
On one side mountains, on another sea.
Upon a third side was a hunting-ground,
Secluded, full of trees and rivulets—
A place to make the old heart young again.
Then to Pírán spake Siyáwush and said:—
"See what a noble site these fields afford!
Here will I fashion me a goodly seat
To be my heart's delight, a spacious city
Containing palace, hall, and pleasure-grounds;
I will exalt the buildings to the moon,
And make them worthy of the crown and throne."

Pírán replied: "O thou of goodly rede!
Accomplish all that thy heart purposeth.
V. 617 If thou shalt bid, according to thy plans
I will erect a moon-attaining seat;
I ask thee not for treasure or for lands,
And for thy sake reck not of time or place.
And Siyáwush rejoined: "O blesséd one

Thou bring'st the tree of greatness into fruit.
Thine are my weal and wealth; I notice first
In every place thy toil on mine account.
I will erect a city on this ground
Such that beholders shall remain astound."

§ 40

How Siyáwush built Gang-dizh

I open now the door of history—
  The charming record of the days of yore—
To speak of Gang-i-Siyáwush to thee,
  The city, and the city's ancient lore.
Praise be to Him by Whom the world was wrought,
  The Maker of the unknown and the known,
The Lord of being and not being; aught
  Besides hath peers, but God is One alone.
Praise to the Prophet, and to those who bore
  Him company our praises be addressed,
And since the righteous flourish here no more
  Speak not of taking this world for thy rest.
Where are the heads and crowns of kings of kings?
Where are the gallant, noble athelings?
Where are the doctors and the scientists?
Where are the labour-bearing annalists?
Where are the modest fair who charmed the sight, V. 618
  And gently uttered words of graciousness?
Where is the nestling of the mountain-height,
  Inured to scorn, discomfort, and distress?
Where he that touched the cloud-rack with his head,
  And whither is the lion-hunter gone?
They have but bricks and dust to form their bed,
  And he that sowed good seed is blest alone.
From dust we come and shall return to dust,
And all is dread, distraction, and distrust.

The world will outlast thee; its mysteries
How wilt thou ken? 'Tis full of instances;
Shall we ignore them? Six and sixty years
Hast thou been scheming: turn thy face away
From toil and emulation. Thy compeers
Left thee in multitudes while thou didst stay
A greedy hand upon the world to lay,
And shalt thou not at last be e'en as they?
List to the story of a bygone day.
Since earth is void of those illustrious men
Why should ambition's crown be sought by thee?
In their days justice ruled the world, and then
Earth flourished under their supremacy.
So listen to the tale that I shall tell
About Gang-dizh, and see thou mark it well,
Because the world hath not in any part
Another place so grateful to the heart
As that which Siyáwush built up of yore,
And no small travail in its structure bore.
There is a wilderness across the sea—
An arid waste. Beyond it is a land
Inhabited, whose cities furnish thee
With all provision ready to thy hand.
V. 619 Thou wilt perceive a mountain farther on
Unmatched in loftiness, and thereupon
Gang-dizh. It is no hurt for thee to know
That 'tis one hundred leagues around below,
And eyes that look aloft are dazed anon.
Explore and thou wilt still be at a loss
To find the way of access to the place;
The rock is three and thirty leagues across,
Presenting everywhere a solid face.
If only one man harnessed for the fray
Were stationed for each league, to find a way
A hundred thousand men would not avail
On barded steeds and clad themselves in mail.

A spacious city next will meet thine eye
With rose-beds, gardens, open space, and hall,
Stream, river, and hot baths, while minstrelsy,
Perfume, and brilliant hues pervade it all.
The hills are stocked with game, the plains with deer.
Once having seen it thou wilt tarry here,
And in thy rambles o'er the higher ground
Will pheasants, peacocks, partridges be found.
No winter's frosts to summer's heats succeed,
There is no lack of food, repose, or mirth,
Thou wilt not see a single invalid;
In short it is a paradise on earth.
The water here is wholesome, clear, and bright,
The whole champaign in vernal garb is dight.
Its length and breadth have thirty leagues extent
According to the Persian measurement,
And one league and a half in altitude:
'Twould weary any one to scale the height,
And when the place is from the summit viewed
None ever saw a scene more exquisite.
When Siyáwush had visited the place
He chose it out of all Írán to bear
His name, and built of marble, stone, cement, V. 620
And some material to us unknown,
A wall above one hundred cubits high
And eight and thirty broad; the hold out-ranged
Both shaft and catapult, but thou shouldst see
The place itself, for one that hath not seen it
Will, thou wouldst say, be angry with the poet.
The prince endured much hardship thereabout
All for the sake of greatness, throne, and crown,
And made himself in that delightful spot
A charming seat with palace, hall, and park.
He planted many trees, and made the place
Like Paradise, and for its flowers chose
Narcissus, tulip, hyacinth, and rose.

§ 41

How Siyáwush discoursed with Pírán about the Future

The noble Siyáwush went with Pírán
One day to see the place whereof the sight
Would make the agéd young. It was delightful,
With treasuries everywhere fulfilled with wealth;
And this imperial seat pleased Siyáwush
More than all other seats of kings and nobles.
When they were leaving Siyáwush was sad,
V. 621 And asked the astrologers: "Will this abode
Secure me Grace and fortune, or shall I
Regret what I have done?"
They all replied:—
"This place will not prove very fortunate."
The prince was angry with the astrologers;
His heart was full of pain, his eyes shed tears;
His hand relaxed his swift-paced courser's reins,
And hot tears trickled down. Pírán exclaimed:—
"My lord! what is the cause of this distress?"
"High heaven," he said, "hath filled my heart and soul
With pain and trouble, since what I amass,
My home, and treasury, will be my foe's
At last. Ill will be ill and I shall die.
The fairest spot in this world is Gang-dizh
Where by the Grace of Him Who giveth good
My wisdom and my fortune have not slept,
And I have raised the summit to the Pleiads.
Still am I busy gathering works of art,
But when the place is decked, and precious things
Abound, mine own enjoyment will be short;
Another will be seated in this palace.
The joy is not for me, or for my child,
Or hero of my race. My life will close
Ere long; I shall not want a hall or palace.

Afrásiyáb will have this for his throne,
And death will overtake me for no fault
Of mine. Such is the mystery of heaven
With its vicissitudes of joy and grief!"
Pírán replied: "My lord! encourage not V. 622
Vain thoughts, Afrásiyáb safe-guardeth thee,
And on thy finger is a royal signet.
I also, while my soul is in my body,
Will strive to keep my faith to thee unbroken;
I will not let the wind pass over thee,
Or breezes tell the hairs upon thy head."
Then Siyáwush: "O honourable man!
I see that honour is thy one desire.
Thou knowest all the secrets that I have,
Thou who art shrewd of heart and sound of limb!
Now will I tell thee by the Grace of God
What I have learned of heaven's purposes,
And advertise thee what will be hereafter
When I am gone from halls and palaces,
So that thou mayst not, seeing such, exclaim:—
'Why were they not disclosed to Siyáwush?'
Pírán, thou warrior exceeding wise!
Hear what I say; no lengthy time will pass
Ere by the hand of our shrewd-hearted monarch
I shall, though guiltless, cruelly be slain.
Another will possess this crown and throne.
Thou wilt prove just and true, but heaven's purpose
May not be thwarted. By a slanderer's words,
And evil fate, my blameless head will suffer.
Írán will be in conflict with Túrán,
Revenge will make life wretched, and the earth
Will be in travail through its length and breadth;
The scimitar of feud will rule the age.
Thou wilt see many standards from Írán
Approach Túrán—red, yellow, black, and violet—
With ravaging and bearing off of spoil,

And scattering of treasures. Provinces
In plenty will be trampled underfoot
Of horses, and the streams of water fouled.
V. 623 The monarch of Túrán will then repent
Both of his words and works, but penitence
Will not avail when homesteads are in flames.
Both here and in Írán will be the din
Of war, and my blood will convulse the world.
Thus hath the Almighty written in the sky
By Whose decree seed sown will bear its fruit. . . .
Come, let us give ourselves to joy and feast:
When it is time for us to pass we pass.
Why set thy heart upon this Wayside Inn?
Why toy with treasure? Why complain of toil?
Our wealth will be another's. Why should one,
Because he is a king, enrich his foe?"

Whenas Pírán had heard and taken thought
His heart was filled with trouble at these words.
He said: "I have brought evil on myself
If this that he hath spoken be the truth.
I drew him to the country of Túrán,
And scattered through the world the seeds of feud.
I drew him to Túrán by mine own efforts,
And gave to him a province, crown, and wealth,
Not recking of the king's repeated warnings."

And then his loving heart suggested this:—
"Who hath revealed to him these mysteries—
The motions and the purpose of the sky?
He surely must be thinking of Írán,
Of Kai Káús, and of the imperial throne;
It is the memory of happier days."

Pírán with these words solaced his own heart,
And entered on no prudent policy.
V. 624 The two discussed the future all the way,
Then lighting from their steeds they ceased from talk,

And, having had a golden table dressed,
Wine, harp, and minstrelsy were in request.

§ 42

How Afrásiyáb sent Pírán into the Provinces

They thus passed seven days in merriment,
Discoursing of the monarchs of the world.
The eighth day came a letter from the king
To bid Pírán: "Choose from the warriors
A host and go toward the sea of Chín.
Thence cross the marches to the river Sind,
Demand the tribute from the provinces,
And over-run the borders of Khazar."
Then from the portal of the paladin
Shouts rose, while drums and tymbals shook the ground,
And troops from all sides gathered round Pírán—
A mighty army eager for the fray.
Whenas the troops had mustered at his gate
He bade farewell and marched, while Siyáwush,
Rich in dínárs and goods of every kind,
With well appointed steeds, remained behind.

§ 43

How Siyáwush built Siyáwushgird

A cameleer brought from Afrásiyáb,
In hottest haste about the time of sleep,
To Siyáwush a letter full of love,
And blazoned like the starry sky: it ran:—
"Since thy departure I enjoy no pleasure,
My thoughts permit me not a moment's peace.
Moreover I have sought thee out a seat,
Such as thou wilt approve, within Túrán.

Though it be pleasant whither thou hast gone,
V. 625 And griefless there, yet quit thy realm and bring
The heads of evil-wishers to the dust."
The chieftain packed the baggage and set forth
With all speed as the king commanded him.
A thousand female camels with red hair
They loaded up with various merchandise.
He made a hundred camels carry treasures
And drachms, while forty others bore dínárs.
Ten thousand swordsmen went along with him—
Picked horsemen from Írán and from Túrán—
Preceded by the baggage-train and litters
With lovely ladies in their bravery.
Of rubies and turquoises fit for kings,
Or torques and diadems inlaid with gems,
Of ambergris, of aloe-wood, and musk,
Of spicery, brocade, and silken cushions,
From Párs and Chín and Mizr were thirty loads.
The leader and his noble retinue
Proceeded till they came to blithe Bahár.
When he arrived he pointed out a site
Two leagues in length and breadth. Thereon he built
A city famous for its rosaries,
Its lofty palaces, and orchard-grounds.
He limned within the hall full many a picture
Of kings, of battle, and of banqueting,
And painted there Káús with mace and armlets,
Crowned on his throne, with elephantine Rustam,
With Zál, Gúdarz, and all that company.
Elsewhere he limned Afrásiyáb, his army,
Pírán, and Garsíwaz the vengeful one.
That pleasant city was the talk of all
Good men both in Írán and in Túrán.
V. 626 At every corner was a cupola,
Whose summit reached the clouds. There minstrels sat

And sang while chiefs and warriors kept guard
Around. Siyáwushgird the common voice
Called it; that city made all hearts rejoice.

§ 44

How Pírán visited Siyáwushgird

Now when Pírán returned from Hind and Chín
All men were talking of the glorious city,
For, founded on the auspicious day of Ard,
Siyáwushgird was famed throughout Túrán.
He heard of palace, orchard, garden, hall,
Plain, streamlet, hill, and dale, and longed to see
What Siyáwush had done with that fine site.
Pírán took with him all his retinue—
A thousand wise and valiant warriors—
Men fit to share with him in the rejoicings.
On his approach the prince went with the host
To welcome him. Pírán on catching sight
Of Siyáwush alighted, as did Siyáwush,
Who clasped him closely. Coming to the city
They went around what erst had been a thorn-brake,
But then lamp-bright with palace, hall, and pleasance.
The chief Pírán went everywhere, invoked
Full many a blessing on the prince, and said:—
"If Grace and royal height and wisdom too
Were not thine own in this thine undertaking
How could results like these have been achieved?
Be this thy monument among the brave
And noble till the Resurrection-day,
And may thy sons and sons' sons live rejoicing— V. 627
World-lords triumphant and magnanimous."
Pírán surveyed part of that jocund city,
Then reached the hall and grounds of Siyáwush,
And in high spirits and ambitious hopes

Proceeded to the home of Farangís.
The daughter of the king met, greeted him,
And proffered him a handsel of dínárs.
When, seated on the throne, he looked around,
And saw the crowds of servants standing by,
He uttered many words of thankfulness,
And praised the Maker; then they fell to feasting
With wine, cup-bearers, meats, and minstrelsy,
And thus they passed a sennight wine in hand,
Now blithe and joyous-hearted, now bemused.
On the eighth day Pírán produced the presents
Brought from abroad, and other fitting gifts
Of rubies, royal jewelry, dínárs,
Brocade, crowns all inlaid with precious stones,
And steeds with golden furniture, the saddles
Of poplar-wood, their pummels leopard-skin.
He gave a coronet to Farangís,
With earrings, bracelets, and a jewelled torque,
Then went upon his way toward Khutan
In order to attend his sovereign.

On reaching home he spake thus to Gulshahr:—
"Whoe'er hath seen not jocund Paradise,
And known what things Rizwán[1] hath planted there,
Should see this splendid place, this paradise
Of thrones and palaces, where Siyáwush,
V. 628 The wise and glorious, sitteth like the sun
Inside the palace of the blest Surúsh.
Allow thyself the pleasure of a visit;
The lord is goodlier than his city; thou
Wouldst say: 'He lighteth up the Occident!'
See Farangís—all loveliness and lustre,
As 'twere a two weeks' moon beside the sun."

Swift as a bark that speedeth o'er the sea
He went thence to Afrásiyáb, and told
What he had done, what tribute he had brought,

[1] See p. 39, *note*.

How he had battled in the land of Hind,
And laid ill-doers' heads upon the dust.
The monarch asked how Siyáwush had prospered,
And of his city, province, crown, and throne.
Pírán replied: "Whoever shall behold
The springtide-gaiety of Paradise
May in good sooth mistake this place for that,
And this illustrious monarch for the sun.
I saw a city such that none will see
Its like on earth in Chín or in Túrán.
What with its wealth of gardens, halls, and streams,
Thou wouldst have said: 'There wisdom mixed with mind!'
One must dismiss fault-finding where is naught
To blame. When from afar I saw the palace
Of Farangís 'twas like a hoard of jewels
As bright as light. If now Surúsh should come
From Paradise he would not have the Grace,
The majesty, the common sense, the splendour,
And ordered usance of thy son-in-law,
Who is as good as thy glad heart would wish.
Both realms too rest from strife and stir, like men V. 629
Restored to reason. Mayst thou ever have
The rede of princes and the heart of sages."
The monarch gladdened at the words on hearing
That this his Bough of promise was in bearing.

§ 45

How Afrásiyáb sent Garsíwaz to Siyáwush

Afrásiyáb made known to Garsíwaz
Pírán's account without suppressing aught,
And said: "Go blithely to Siyáwushgird,
And scan it well. The heart of Siyáwush
Is on Túrán; he thinketh not of home

Now that he hath farewelled the throne and crown,
Farewelled Gúdarz, Bahrám, and Kai Káús.
He looketh not to Rustam son of Zál,
Nor taketh mace or battle-ax in hand,
But hath erected, where was once a field
Of thorns, a city like the jocund spring,
Hath raised a lofty dwelling-place therein
For Farangís, and holdeth her in honour.
Prepare to visit noble Siyáwush,
Say little when thou seest him on the throne,
But judge him from a monarch's point of view
At chase, at wine, on mountain or on plain,
And in assemblies, show him all respect
Before his nobles and exalt his name.
Prepare for him exceeding many gifts
Of horses and dínárs, of crowns and girdles,
V. 630 As well as jewelled thrones, brocade of Chín,
And armlets, maces, swords, and signet-rings,
With carpeting and trinkets of all kinds.
See what thou findest in the treasury,
And take besides a gift for Farangís.
Go thou with naught but praises on thy tongue,
And, shouldst thou find a joyous, smiling host,
Abide two sennights in that jocund city."
Thereat the noble Garsíwaz selected
A thousand cavaliers, men of repute,
To go with all speed to Siyáwushgird.
The prince when news arrived went forth with troops
To welcome Garsíwaz; the two embraced
And Siyáwush inquired about the king,
Then going back provided for his guests.
Next morning early Garsíwaz drew nigh
And brought the monarch's message and the gifts.
When Siyáwush saw what Afrásiyáb
Had sent him he was like a rose in spring;
Then mounting on his proudly stepping steed,

And followed by the Íránian cavaliers,
Took Garsíwaz about the place, and when
He had shown all went to his home again.

§ 46

The Birth of Farúd the Son of Siyáwush

At that time came to Siyáwush like wind
A cavalier who brought good tidings, saying:—
"The daughter of the captain of the host
Hath borne a babe as 'twere the shining moon—
A glorious child, whom they have named Farúd,
And when Pírán at night received the news
He bade me and another cavalier:— V. 631
'Go bear the joyful tidings to the prince.'
The mother also of the precious babe—
Jaríra, chief among the high-born dames—
Commanded from her couch the slaves to smear
The infant's hand with saffron, and to take
The impression on this letter's back, and said:—
'Bear this to Siyáwush, whose wish is granted,
And tell him: "Stricken though I be in years,
Yet notwithstanding God hath made me glad."'"
Then Siyáwush thus answered: "May this babe
Ne'er leave the seat of majesty unfilled!"
And gave the messenger so many drachms
That he who bare them wearied of the weight.
When Garsíwaz had heard the news he said:—
"Pírán to-day is equal to a king."
They sought the house of Farangís with joy
And told her those glad tidings. Garsíwaz
Beheld her sitting on her ivory throne,
A crown set with turquoise was on her head,
While many slaves with golden caps were standing
With moon-like cheeks in presence of the Moon.

She came down from her throne and, greeting him,
Inquired about his longsome journey's toil;
But Garsíwaz was wroth, was wholly changed,
And thus he thought: "Let but a year pass thus
And Siyáwush will care for nobody;
Throne, kingdom, host, and treasure will be his."
He writhed but hid his feelings, and exclaimed
With pallid cheeks to Siyáwush: "Thou hast
The fruit of toil, enjoy the gains for life!"
They took their seats within the golden hall
Upon two jewelled thrones of gold, rejoicing
In fortune; minstrels and cup-bearers came,
V. 632 And Garsíwaz, amid the joy and din
Of minstrelsy, forgot his own chagrin.

§ 47

How Siyáwush played at Polo

Now when the bright sun made the distance clear,
And showed its face from heaven to all the land,
The prince went from his palace to the Ground
To play at polo. Garsíwaz came up
And drove the ball, which Siyáwush pursued
And caught it fairly with the polo-stick,
While his opponent only found the dust.
The ball struck by the prince was seen no more:
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky hath drawn it up!"
Then to his eager followers he said:
"I leave the ball and sticks and Ground to you."
Whenas the warriors came upon the Ground
The Íránians in the tussle took the ball,
While Siyáwush rejoiced at their success,
And looked as 'twere a noble cypress-tree.
He bade a golden throne be set and contests
With javelins to take place, both princes sitting
Upon the throne to watch the combatants.

The cavaliers rushed on the Ground like dust
And, dart in hand, began to strive for honour.
Then Garsíwaz spake thus to Siyáwush:—
"O king renowned, the Memory of kings!
Thy prowess is still greater than thy birth:
Vouchsafe to let the Turkmans witness it:
Display before them just for once what thou V. 633
Can'st do in javelin-play and archery."
The prince, who laid his hand upon his breast
At this, arose and mounted on his horse.
They bound together coats of mail five thick—
Coats any one of which would tire a man—
And set them up at one end of the Ground,
While all the troops stood looking. Siyáwush
Took up a royal spear wherewith his father
Fought in Mázandarán and slaughtered lions.
He went upon the Ground, this spear in hand,
And plied his reins like some mad elephant.
He pierced the coats of mail and bore them off,
The links and joints alike had given way.
The charge thus made he raised his spear erect
And flung the coats of mail about at will.
Then valiant Garsíwaz and other horsemen
Went on the Ground with their long javelins,
And many gathered round those coats of mail,
But found not one whose fastenings had not yielded.
The prince then called for four shields of Gílán,
With two cuirasses also of bright steel,
And likewise for his bow and poplar shafts.
With six thrust through his belt and three in hand
He set another on his bow and gripped
His saddle firmly. Then in sight of all
He shot the ten shafts, piercing every time
The shields and both cuirasses. Old and young
Applauded and invoked the name of God.
"Thou hast, O prince!" said Garsíwaz to him,

"No equal in Írán or in Túrán.
Come now! Let us two go upon the Ground
Before this company, there let us grasp
Each other's leathern belt as warriors
Would do in battle. I have not a peer
Among the Turkmans, thou wilt see few steeds
V. 634 Like mine, and thou in the Íránian host
Art matchless both in prowess and in stature.
If I shall take thee from thy charger's back,
And throw thee to the ground, acknowledge me
Superior both in prowess and in might,
While if thou layest me upon the earth
I wheel no more upon the battlefield."
But Siyáwush made answer: "Speak not thus.
Thou art a prince, a Lion of the fray;
Besides thy charger is a king to mine,
Thy helmet is Ázargashasp to me.
Make choice of some one else out of Túrán
To strive with me, but not by way of fight."
Then Garsíwaz: "O seeker of renown!
No harm will come of pastime such as this."
But Siyáwush replied: "It is not well:
I cannot fight thee. Two opposed in sport
Fight on in earnest; anger filleth them
Although they smile. Thou art the monarch's brother,
And tread'st the moon beneath thy horse's hoofs;
I will perform thy bidding but not break
Our good relations by an act like this.
Call from thy friends some Lion of the fray,
Let him be mounted on this swift-paced steed,
And if thou art resolved that I should fight,
And lay the heads of proud ones in the dust,
I will endeavour not to be disgraced
Before thy presence, O illustrious prince!"
Ambitious Garsíwaz was flattered, smiled,
And thus addressed the Turkmans: "Noble men!

Who is there fain to make his mark on earth?
Who will be matched with Siyáwush and lay
The chief of all the nobles in the dust!"
The Turkmans heard him and their lips were locked.
At length Gurwí the son of Zira said:—
"I am prepared to fight if Siyáwush
Hath no antagonist."
The prince's face V. 635
Was full of frowns and sternness at the words,
But Garsíwaz said unto him: "O prince!
No warrior in our host can match Gurwí."
Then Siyáwush: "I hold it but a trifle
To fight with any noble but thyself:
Two warriors should be chosen out of these
To strive with me upon the battlefield."
There was another noble hight Damúr,
Who had no equal in Túrán in strength.
He, when he heard the words of Siyáwush,
Came and made ready swift as smoke for fight.
They wheeled about, and Siyáwush began
By snatching at the girdle of Gurwí,
And holding by the buckle lifted him
And flung him on the plain, but used no mace
Or lasso. Then he turned upon Damúr
And, catching him about the neck and body
In firm embrace, unhorsed him with such ease
That all the chiefs were lost in wonderment.
The prince thus bore him safe to Garsíwaz;
Thou wouldst have said: "He carrieth a bird!"
Then, having lighted down and disengaged,
He sat down laughing on the golden throne;
But Garsíwaz was wroth at that exploit;
His heart was sullen and his cheek was pale.
They hied them homeward from their golden seats,
"Raised," thou hadst said, "o'er Saturn in the ascendant,"
And all the famous men and fortunate

Assembled for a week with harp and wine.
Upon the eighth day they prepared to go,
And Siyáwush in spite of what he knew
Yet wrote a letter to Afrásiyáb,
Full of submission and kind interest,
And gave unstinted gifts to Garsíwaz;
Anon the Turkmans left that noble city
Rejoicing, and conversed about the land
And most accomplished prince; but Garsíwaz
V. 636 The vengeful said: "Mishap hath come to us,
For from Írán the king hath summoned one
Who causeth us to sit in blood disgraced.
Fierce Lions like Damúr and like Gurwí—
Both battle-loving warriors—became
Thus abject, helpless, and contemptible
When clutched by one foul-hearted cavalier.
He will push matters further, and I fail
To see in our king's actions head or tail."

§ 48

How Garsíwaz returned and spake Evil before Afrásiyáb

He went thus minded to the Turkman court
Without repose or sleep. Afrásiyáb
Asked many questions which his brother answered
And gave the letter; this the smiling king
Perused with joy. The famous noble marked
The brightened features of Afrásiyáb,
And sunset found him all revenge and anguish.
All night he writhed and when its pitch-hued robe
Was riven by clear day his vengeful head
Still slept not, and he sought Afrásiyáb.
They sat and talked in private. Garsíwaz
Said to his brother: "Siyáwush, O king!
Hath wholly changed, the envoys of Káús

Come often secretly, he correspondeth
With Rúm and Chín, and drinketh to his father.
Moreover he hath gathered many troops, V. 637
And soon will vex the king's soul. Had not Túr
Become so fierce he had not wronged Íraj,
But now our hearts resemble fire and water
Opposed; thou wouldest, but in vain, unite them,
And keep the tempest hidden out of sight.
Had I withheld this trouble from thy knowledge
I should have smirched my name before the world."

The king was grieved and said to Garsíwaz:—
"The bond of blood between us moveth thee.
We will take counsel with ourself three days
For more assurance; if the case be clear
It shall be thy part to undo the coil."

The fourth day Garsíwaz appeared at court
With helmet on and tightly girded loins.
The monarch called him to an interview,
Talked much about the case of Siyáwush,
And said: "O thou memorial of Pashang!
Whom have I in the world at hand but thee?
I must disclose the secret of my mind;
Observe what thoughts occur to thine. My heart
Was troubled at that evil dream, my brain
Affected somewhat, yet I kept from war,
And Siyáwush for his part hurt me not.
When he farewelled the throne of might he made
My love the weft across his wisdom's warp.
He was obedient and I used him well.
I gave to him a province and my treasure,
But kept my griefs and sorrows for mine own.
I bound him to me by the ties of blood,
Foregoing thoughts of vengeance on Írán,
And did not grudge my treasures or my child, V. 638
But trusted him with both my precious Eyes.
Now, after all these pains and benefits,

And sacrifice of province, crown, and wealth,
For me to purpose ill to Siyáwush
Would raise no little outcry. If I do
An injury however slight to him
The mighty men will cry out shame on me,
And I shall be a butt for every one.
Of beasts the lion hath the sharpest teeth,
His heart is not afraid of scimitars,
And if a whelp of his shall be aggrieved
He will lay all the meadow desolate;
Moreover if we persecute the guiltless
How shall the Judge of sun and moon approve?
I know none else that I can take to me,
Yet now I will dismiss him to his father.
So, if he seeketh throne and signet-ring,
He will not make our coasts the scene of strife."
But Garsíwaz: "O king! treat not so lightly
This grave affair. If he departeth home
He will bring desolation on our coasts,
For when an alien is made a kinsman
He learneth all thy secrets great and small.
A sage once spake a proverb as to this:—
'Domestic storms that burst externally
Will prove but travail and distress to thee,
And dissipate wealth, fame, and family.'
v. 639 Dost thou not know that he who reareth leopards
Will get no recompense but pain and strife?"
Afrásiyáb, when he had mused awhile
And thought that Garsíwaz had spoken rightly,
Repenting of his own advice and conduct,
And owning that his policy had failed,
Thus answered Garsíwaz: "From this affair
I see no good appear in any way.
Let us be patient till the turning sky
Shall make its aspects known. In everything
Delay is better than precipitance;

Wait till the sun hath shone on this awhile;
I shall discern God's purpose, and to whom
The bright cheek of revolving heaven is turned,
And then if I recall him to the court
I shall discover what his secret is.
All will no doubt be clear in course of time,
And if his villainy be manifest,
So that my heart must needs be pitiless,
No one will blame me afterward, for naught
But evil fitly recompenseth evil."

Then vengeful Garsíwaz: "Discerning king,
Whose words are righteous! Siyáwush possesseth
Grace, stature, maces, swords, and god-like hands;
He will not come to court without a host,
But make both sun and moon turn dark to thee.
He is much changed, his crown is raised to heaven,
And Farangís thou wouldst not recognize,
But say: 'This world can give her nothing more.'
Thy troops will all go over to his side,
And when there is no flock there is no shepherd.
An army having seen a king like him,
So generous, so beaming, and so wise,
Thenceforth would never have thee for their king;
The Ram would be his throne and thine the Fish.
Moreover wilt thou call on him to quit
The noble city and the prosperous seat
That he hath built, and bid him: 'Be my slave, V. 640
Content with meanness and obscurity?'
None seeth lions couch with elephants,
Or flames upon the surface of a stream.
If one should take a lion's whelp unsuckled
As yet, should bring it up on milk and sugar,
And nurse it on his bosom constantly,
It will revert to nature when full-grown
And fear no furious elephant's assault."

The monarch's heart was straitened at his words;

He grew despondent, anxious, and distressed,
But judged it best to pause, for prudent men
Win in the end, while those of windy pate
Obtain no praise. A wise man spake this saw :—
"A tempest that hath not been unforeseen
Thou mayst encounter with untroubled mien,
While Feather-brains will be in evil plight
Albeit cypress-tall and men of might."
Unrest and talk went on; their hearts were full
Of vengeance for the wrongs of ancient days,
For ever and anon came Garsíwaz—
The villain full of malice—to the king,
Concocting lying tales of Siyáwush,
And stirring the Túránian monarch's heart,
Until he was possessed by care and vengeance.
One day the king in private conference
With Garsíwaz declared his purposes,
And said: "Thou must go hence. Hold intercourse
With Siyáwush for long, then speak him fairly
From me, and say: 'Thou in thy happy home
Hast no desire to look on any one;
V. 641 But my heart resteth not for love of thee.
Arise! Come hither, thou and Farangís,
Awhile, because we yearn to look upon thee,
With thy shrewd mind so full of excellence.
We too have game upon our hills, we too
Quaff wine and milk in cups of emerald.
Thus let us pass a season and be glad,
And, when thou longest for thy prosperous city,
Go thou with singing and with happiness.
Why are the wine and cup denied to us?
Think not about thy throne of majesty,
But straitly gird thy loins and come to me.'"

§ 49

How Garsíwaz returned to Siyáwush

The crafty, vengeful Garsíwaz made ready.
When he drew near Siyáwushgird he bade
A fluent speaker: "Go to Siyáwush
And say: 'Famed son of an aspiring sire!
By our king's life and head, and by the life,
The head, and royal crown of Sháh Káús,
Leave not thy throne to meet me on the way,
Because thou art so great in dignity,
In fortune, Grace, crown, throne, and lineage,
That every wind should have to gird its loins
To make thee quit that royal dwelling-place.'"
The messenger approaching kissed the ground
And told the words of Garsíwaz; the heart
Of Siyáwush was pained, he sat and mused
Awhile, then said: "Here is some mystery!
I know not what my good friend Garsíwaz
Hath said about me to Afrásiyáb."
When Garsíwaz arrived the prince went out
Afoot to him, asked of the king's affairs,
Of throne and crown and host, and Garsíwaz
Then gave the message which made Siyáwush V. 642
Rejoice, and thus he said: "For his dear sake
I would not turn away from swords of steel.
Lo! I will bind my girdle on to go,
And link my rein to thine; but we will tarry
Within this pleasance arabesqued with gold
Three days and hold a revel, for this world
Is fleeting by in pain and toil. Alas
For him whose little life is passed in sorrow!"
Revengeful Garsíwaz writhed when he heard
The prudent prince's words: "If Siyáwush,"
He thought, "departeth with me to the king,

With his astuteness and his lion-strength
The prince will trample on my bow, my words
Will tarnish, and the king will deem my plan
A fraud; I must devise a scheme to urge
The heart of Siyáwush to evil courses."
He fixed an earnest gaze on Siyáwush
In silence, while his eyes shed tears of gall
To further his intent. The prince beheld
Those swimming eyes as of one greatly moved,
And gently said: "My brother! what is this?
Is it a nameless grief, or hath the king
By his unkindness caused thy tears to flow?
Lo! I will go along with thee and fight
Thy battle with the monarch of Túrán,
Will find out why he useth thee so ill,
And treateth thee as his inferior,
While if it is an open enemy
That causeth thee insufferable grief
And trouble, lo! I am thy friend in all,
And will provide thee with the means to fight.
But if the royal favour is bedimmed,
Not by thy fault but through some slanderer's lies,
Or one hath ousted thee, confide in me,
V. 643 That I may make all well, assuage thy griefs,
And purge the monarch of his faults herein."
But Garsíwaz replied: "O man of fame!
It is no question with me of the king,
Nor am I troubled by a foe. My courage
And wealth dispense with schemes. I mused on questions
Of race, and called to mind true tales of old;
The wrong began with Túr who lost the Grace,
And made feud with Íraj, who did not brawl.
Beneath Afrásiyáb and Minúchihr
Túrán hath been like water and Írán
Like fire; they mingled not but broke away

From wisdom's bonds; Afrásiyáb is worse
Than Túr; this wild bull still is in his hide.
In truth thou knowest not his evil moods,
But wait until a little time hath passed.
First judge him by the guiltless Ighríras,
His brother in full blood, whom he destroyed
With his own hand in very wantonness,
While afterward full many a famous man
Was slaughtered by him for no fault at all.
My chief anxiety is now for thee,
For thou art shrewd of heart and stout of frame,
And, since thou camest to our land, hast done
No wrong to any, but adorned the world
With wisdom, seeking right and manliness.
Malignant Áhriman, who parteth hearts,
Hath seared the king's through thee, and it is all
Revenge and grief at thee! God's will I know not, V. 644
But thou dost know me as thy friend, thy partner
In weal and woe, and thou must not suspect
Hereafter that I knew of all this coil.
I therefore tell thee of the monarch's case,
Which it had been a fault in me to hide."

Then Siyáwush: "Have no concern hereat,
The Maker of the world is mine ally;
I did hope otherwise than that the king
Would turn my day to night; had he been wroth
With me he had not raised me over others,
Or given me a province, crown, and throne,
Domain, his daughter, treasure, and a host.
Now will I go with thee to court and make
His dim moon shine again. Where'er truth shineth
The light of falsehood waneth. I will show him
This heart of mine, a heart that doth outshine
The sun in heaven. Be happy then, reject
Suspicion, for whoever suffereth
That dragon's breath departeth from God's way."

But Garsíwaz made answer: "My dear friend!
He is much changed. So long as heaven shall turn
He will be harsh and wear a frowning face.
Not e'en the wisest knoweth of the wiles
That lift on his horizon. Thou thyself,
With all thy learning and thy prudent heart,
Thy towering stature and high purposes,
Discernest not 'twixt artifice and love:
May no ill fortune ever come to thee!
He dealt in charms and spells with thee, and sewed
The eyes of wisdom up by his devices.
V. 645 First, when he named thee son-in-law, thy joy
Was ill advised. Next when he sent thee forth
He made a feast for thee, and called his lords,
In hope that thou wouldst take some liberty,
And give occasion to the world to talk.
Besides thou art not closer unto him
By any ties than prudent Ighríras,
Whom he cut down, and filled the nobles' hearts
With terror. Since his purposes are clear,
Accept the fact; trust not the ties of blood.
Now like the shining sun have I displayed
My thoughts, my trade, and wit. Thou hast rejected
A father in Írán, and in Túrán
Hast builded cities, yielding to the words
And sharing in the troubles of the king.
It is an ill tree that thy hand hath planted,
With poisonous fruit and leaves of colocynth."
He spake deceitfully with running eyes
And sighing lips, while Siyáwush in tears,
Regarding him with wonder, called to mind
His own sad fate that heaven's love should cease,
And that though young his life was well nigh sped.
His heart was pained, his cheeks turned pale, he sighed
In heaviness of soul, and said: "I find not
That I deserve requital for ill done,

For nobody hath heard a fault of mine
In word or deed. Good sooth if I have squandered V. 646
His treasure my heart is wrung at his displeasure,
But come what may I never will transgress
His wishes or commands. Now let me go
With thee, without an escort, and discover
The reason of the anger of the king."
Then Garsíwaz replied: "Aspiring one!
It is not well to go. No need to walk
Thus into fire, or to expose thyself
To breakers; 'tis but rushing into danger,
And sending smiling destiny to sleep;
I surely shall suffice to mediate
And fling cold water on the flames; but write
A letter telling all things fair or foul,
And if I find him free from vengeful thoughts,
And in a lucid interval of good,
I will dispatch a cavalier and make
Thy gloomy counsels bright. I trust in God,
Who knoweth all things, that Afrásiyáb
Will turn to good and shun perverse, bad ways:
But if I find him rash and obstinate
I likewise will dispatch a camel-post
In haste; then make thee ready instantly.
Illustrious monarchs and their realms are near
At hand, it is but six score leagues to Chín,
And only seventeen score to Írán,
Where all are friendly and prepared to serve thee.
On that side too thou hast a yearning father,
A host attached to thee, and loyal cities.
Dispatch a lengthy letter to all parts,
And haste to get thee ready."
Siyáwush
Gave credence to the words of Garsíwaz,
So much was his shrewd intellect asleep,
And answered: "I will do as thou hast said, V. 647

And not transgress thy counsel and advice.
Make intercession for me with the king:
And show me the right course in everything."

§ 50

The Letter of Siyáwush to Afrásiyáb

A ready scribe was called to whom the prince
Gave full instructions. First invoking God—
The Assuager of His servant's grief—he spake
The praise of wisdom, blessed the king, and said:—
"O king victorious and fortunate!
May time ne'er prove thine only monument.
Thou calledst me and I rejoiced thereat:
May thy seat be amongst the archimages.
Moreover thou didst summon Farangís,
And fill her heart with love and loyalty
But Farangís is ailing at this present
With weakness and the loss of appetite,
She cannot rise and will not let me leave
Her side (I see her lying 'twixt two worlds)
Although my heart desired to look on thee,
And thy words gave new lustre to my spirit.
When Farangís is well she shall become
The ransom of the monarch of Túrán;
Her sufferings are also mine excuse,
For I am privy to her pains and griefs."
He gave the letter, when it had been sealed,
At once to evil-natured Garsíwaz,
Who boldly made request for three fleet steeds,
And rode without a halt both day and night.
He traversed in three days the long, hard road
O'er hill and vale, and on the fourth day reached
The monarch's court, a villain bent on ill.
V. 648 Afrásiyáb, on seeing him thus pressed,

And full of hurry, questioned him at large:—
"Why hast thou come in haste," the monarch said,
"Why didst thou make a journey of such length?"
Then Garsíwaz replied: "When fortune loureth
It is not well to put thy trust therein.
Now Siyáwush showed no regard for me,
Nor even came to meet me on the way,
Would hear no words, would not peruse thy letter,
But set me on my knees below his throne.
He had much correspondence with Írán,
And kept his city's portals shut on us.
What with a host from Rúm and one from Chín
There is a constant bruit within the land.
Unless thou actest promptly thou wilt have
Naught left but wind. While thou art hesitating
He will attack thee, and obtain both realms,
For should he lead his army toward Írán
What man would dare come forth to challenge him?
My purpose in forewarning thee is this
That thou mayst suffer by no act of his."

§ 51

How Afrásiyáb came to fight with Siyáwush

Whenas Afrásiyáb had heard these words
The feelings of old days returned to him.
His heart grew full of fire, his head of wind,
He could not answer Garsíwaz for wrath,
But in his fury bade pipes, cymbals, trumpets,
And Indian bells be sounded, and troops summoned.
He flung away the letter all unread,
And, through the words that wicked Garsíwaz
Had spoken, set another tree of feud.
Now, while the guileful Garsíwaz was toiling V. 649
Upon the saddle, Siyáwush in anguish

Went pale and trembling to his ladies' bower.
"Chief of the lion-clutch!" said Farangís,
"Why is thy favour changed?"
"My fair!" he answered,
"Mine honour hath been blackened in Túrán.
I know not how to answer thee, for I
Am all confounded at the case myself;
But, if the words of Garsíwaz be true,
My share is point and not circumference."

Then Farangís plucked at her tresses, rent
With filbert-nails her cheeks of cercis-bloom,
Blood drenched her locks of musky hyacinth,
Her heart was full of fire, her face all tears,
Which fell in showers upon the silver hills.
She bit with pearly teeth her tulip lips,
She tore her hair out by the roots, and wept
For what Afrásiyáb had said and done.
She said to Siyáwush: "O noble king!
What wilt thou do? Make haste to tell me all.
Thy father is enraged, thou durst not speak
About Írán; 'tis longsome hence to Rúm,
And thou wouldst be ashamed to go to Chín.
Whom wilt thou take to be thy refuge now?
Thy refuge is the Lord of sun and moon."

He answered her: "My good friend Garsíwaz
Will come with joyful tidings from the king,
Who surely will forgive through tenderness,
And turn his vengeance into clemency."

He put his trust in God while thus he spake,
But his hard fortune made his heart still ache.

§ 52

How Siyáwush had a Dream

V. 650 For three days Siyáwush wept bitterly
By reason of this treacherous turn of fate.

The fourth night as the prince lay fast asleep,
Clasped to the breast of moon-faced Farangís,
He shuddered, woke in fright, and cried as 'twere
A maddened elephant. The fair one clung
To him, exclaiming: "For love's sake, O king!
What aileth thee?"
When he called out they lit
The lamps and kindled aloe-wood before him,
And ambergris. The lady asked again:—
"O prudent prince! what sawest thou in sleep?"
Then Siyáwush made answer: "Tell not thou
This dream of mine to any of the folk.
My dream was this, O silvern Cypress-tree!
I saw a mighty river stretching far,
And on the further bank a mount in flames;
The river-side was held by men in mail.
On one side was the swiftly rolling fire—
A fire whereby Siyáwushgird was burned.
Here fire, there water, while Afrásiyáb
Stood right before me with his elephants.
He looked upon me with a louring face,
And blew the already fiercely burning flames."
The lady answered him: "It bodeth well,
Unless thou slumberest for this one night."
Then Siyáwush assembled all his guards
And posted them about the court and hall;
He mounted in full armour, sword in hand,
And sent out scouts upon the road to Gang.
Whenas the more part of the night had passed V. 651
There came a scout on horseback from the waste,
Who said: "Afrásiyáb with many troops
Appeareth in the distance, pressing forward."
Then came a messenger from Garsíwaz,
Who said: "Gird up thy loins to save thy life.
My words have proved to be of no avail,
I see black smoke although I see no fire:

Consider now what course thou shouldest take,
And how thou mayest best dispose thy troops."
But Siyáwush, who knew not the design,
Believed in Garsíwaz. Then Farangís
Said: "O wise king! take no account of us,
But mount upon a courser fleet of foot,
And trust not to the country of Túrán.
I fain would see thee in security
Abiding here, but save thyself and flee."

§ 53

The Parting Words of Siyâwush to Farangís

He said to Farangís: "That dream of mine
Hath come to pass: my glory is bedimmed.
For me existence draweth to an end,
The misery of bitter days hath come.
My palace may reach Saturn, yet death's poison
Hath to be drunk; though life should be prolonged
Twelve hundred years dark dust is our last home;
Some are the food of lions, some of vultures
Or eagles. Nobody possessed of wisdom
Expecteth any brightness from the night.
This is the fifth month of thy pregnancy
With our illustrious and growing babe:
This precious Tree of thine will bring forth Fruit,
V. 652 A glorious monarch; name him Kai Khusrau,
And in thy sorrowing find peace in him.
None from the bright sun to the darksome dust,
From gnat's wing to the mighty elephant's foot,
And from the well-spring to the river Nile,
Can scape the justice of All-holy God.
Túránian soil will be my grave, and none
Will say: 'His dust reposeth in Írán.'
May not men call this old world new whose sky

So quickly altereth? My jocund fortune
Will sleep henceforward by the king's command.
They will strike off this guiltless head of mine,
And lay my diadem in my heart's blood.
For me no bier, shroud, grave, or weeping people,
But like a stranger I shall lie in dust,
A trunk beheaded by the scimitar;
While thee, thy head unveiled, thy body bare,
The guards shall drag in shame along the road.
Then will Pírán the chieftain reach the court,
Plead with thy sire to spare thy blameless life,
And bear thee to his palace in thine anguish.
There in the house of that old, honoured man
Wilt thou bring forth illustrious Kai Khusrau,
And there will come a saviour from Írán,
One with his loins girt up by God's command,
Who will convey thee and thy son in haste
Toward the Jíhún. Thy son will have the throne,
And rule o'er fowl and fish. A host will come
For vengeance from Írán and shake the world. V. 653
Such is the process of the fickle sky,
Which cottoneth to no man out of love!
Oh! what a mighty host will don their mail
To vindicate mine honour! Battle-shouts
Will rise, and Kai Khusrau will vex the age;
Then Rustam's Rakhsh will trample earth, despising
Túránian folk, and thou wilt see no vengeance
Ta'en for me till the Resurrection-day
Save by the mace and trenchant scimitar."

The noble hero turned himself to her,
Bade her farewell, and said: "Fair spouse! I go;
Be strengthened by my words, and think no more
Of luxury and throne."

He left the palace,
Heart-broken, pale, lamenting sore. O world!
I wot not why thou nurturest men if they

Whom thou hast nurtured are to be thy prey!
The lady tore her cheeks, plucked out her hair,
Sent two streams pouring from her eyes, and hung
Upon him as he spake the words of woe.
With cheeks and eyes which ran with his heart's blood
He sought the stables of his Arab steeds,
And led forth from its stall night-hued Bihzád,
Which overtook the wind in days of battle.
He groaned, he clasped its head upon his breast,
And took the halter and the headstall off.
Long while he whispered in his charger's ear,
And said: "Be prudent, have to do with none.
When to avenge me Kai Khusrau shall come
It is on thee that he must put the bridle,
So now renounce the stable once for all,
For thou shalt carry him to his revenge.
V. 654 Be thou his charger, trample on the world,
And with thy hoofs sweep foemen from the earth."
He hamstrung all the other steeds and slashed
Their legs like rushes with his scimitar.
As for the riches in the treasury,
His palace, and rose-garden, his brocade,
Dínárs, pearls, jewelry, the diadem,
Sword, belt, and helm, he burned and wasted them.

§ 54

How Siyáwush was taken by Afrásiyáb

This done, he with his chiefs marched toward Írán,
Lost in amazement at his evil fortune,
And with his cheeks suffused by tears of blood
Fared half a league then met Afrásiyáb,
Beheld an armoured host with sword and mace,
And, buckling up his mail, thought: "Garsíwaz
Hath told the truth, a truth too evident!"

Now Siyáwush feared for his life what time
The monarch of Túrán drew nigh. His troops
Partook his fears. The Turkmans occupied
All hills and roads, and each host eyed the other, V. 655
For hate had been a stranger to their hearts.
Through fear of Siyáwush the Turkman horsemen
Sought not to fight but hung back cautiously.
With things at such a pass the Íránians cried
To Siyáwush: "O monarch of the world!
Why should they slay us with impunity
And drag us o'er the plain? Think this no trifle
But let them witness the Íránians' prowess."
Then Siyáwush: "This is not well, for we
Have neither room nor force to fight. To offer
My sovereign battle would disgrace my stock.
The turning sky is bent on my destruction,
Though guiltless, by the hands of wicked men,
And I can make no bold attack to-day,
For none can strive with God. What said the sage,
That man of prudence? 'Brave not adverse fate.'"
Then to Afrásiyáb said Siyáwush:—
"O full of virtues, great and glorious king!
Why hast thou come to battle with thy host?
Why wouldst thou slay me in mine innocence?
Thou wilt embroil the forces of two realms,
And fill the earth and age with malisons."
Said Garsiwaz the insensate: "Do these words
Befit thee? If thou art so innocent
Why hast thou come thus mail-clad to the king?
Men come not to receive their sovereigns
With gifts of bow and mail."
Then Siyáwush
On hearing answered: "Villain! through thy words
I left the right path in my heedlessness.
Thou saidst: 'The monarch is enraged at thee!'
Now guiltless men in thousands will be slaughtered V. 656

Through what thou saidst, but punishment will come
At last. As thou hast sown so shalt thou reap."
Then to the king: "Let not thine anger burn.
It is no jest for thee to shed my blood,
And wage a war against the innocent.
Give not thyself and kingdom to the winds
For what that miscreant Garsíwaz hath said."
But Garsíwaz the double-dealer watched
And, while the prince was speaking to the king,
Grew wroth and cried: "O king! what aileth thee?
Why shouldst thou hold a parley with thy foe?"
Now when the king had heard what Garsíwaz
Had spoken, and it being then broad day,
He bade his soldiers draw their trenchant swords,
And raise a shout like Resurrection-morn;
But Siyáwush, still constant to his pledge,
Put not his hand to sword and javelin,
And let not one of his companions
Advance a foot to battle with the foe.
Malevolent and fell Afrásiyáb
Then wrought upon that chieftain of Írán
Gross outrage, saying: "Give them to the sword,
And float a ship in blood upon the plain."
The Íránian army was a thousand strong,
All men of name and doughty warriors,
Who perished on the field and made the earth
Like tulips with their gore. Amid the mellay
V. 657 The prince fell from his sable steed, sore wounded
By shaft and dart. Gurwí the son of Zira
Bound both his hands, as he was lying senseless,
Behind his back firm as a rock, while others
Placed on his neck a yoke. The blood ran down
Those cheeks of cercis-bloom; he ne'er had seen
A day like that! The executioners
Urged him and dragged him on the road afoot
With troops around him toward Siyáwushgird.

Afrásiyáb commanded, saying: "Take him
Beside the road and let him be beheaded
On some bare spot where grasses never grow,
And pour his blood upon the burning earth.
Let there be no delay and have no fears."
The soldiers said: "What fault hast thou discerned?
Wilt thou not say, O king! how he hath wronged thee
That thou shouldst steep thy hands thus in his blood?
Why wilt thou slay a man for whom the crown
And ivory throne will weep with bitterness?
Plant not in times of happiness a tree
Whose fruitage fortune will convert to bane."
But Garsíwaz, that man of evil note,
Was in his folly on the murderers' side,
And fain would shed the blood of Siyáwush
Through dudgeon ever since the day of contest.[1]
There was a warrior younger than Pírán,
His brother and his noble peer, by name
Pílsam, a bright, accomplished youth, who reasoned
Thus with the king: "The fruitage of this shoot
Is pain and grief. I have heard sages say,
And wisdom too agreeth therewithal:—
'How can deliberation cause regret?'
And: 'Reason is the medicine of the angry.'
And: 'Haste and ill are works of Áhriman— V. 658
Pain and remorse to body and to soul.'
It is not reason to behead thy subject
So recklessly; keep him in bonds till time
Shall give its teaching; when the breath of wisdom
Shall breathe upon thy heart thou mayst behead him,
But give no order now, be not in haste,
For hastiness is rooted in regret.
It is not fit to sever, O wise king!
A head whose covering will be the crown;
And if thou shalt behead a guiltless man,

[1] See § 47.

One whom Káús and Rustam will avenge—
The Sháh's own son whom Rustam hath brought up
And nourished fondly—we shall see the wrong
Revenged, and thou wilt suffer for this day.
Bethink thee of the sword with flashing blade,
The sword whereby the world is filled with blood,
And those famed leaders of the Íránians,
Whose wrath confoundeth earth, as Faríburz,
The son of Kai Káús, the ravening Lion,
Whom none e'er yet saw satiate of fight;
That hero too and snorting Elephant,
Great Rustam, in whose eyes a host is vile.
Then will Gúdarz, Gurgín, Farhád, and Tús
Make fast the drums upon the elephants' backs,
Gird up their loins to take revenge, and fill
The wide champaign with spearmen. I, my peers,
V. 659 And our best warriors cannot countervail.
Good sooth Pírán will come at dawn, the king
Will also hear what he hath got to say,
And seeing that there is no urgency
Dispread not such a carpet of revenge
Upon the world. Enjoin not haste herein,
For it will be the ruin of Túrán."

Afrásiyáb was softened by these words,
But Garsíwaz his brother had no shame,
And said: "Check not thy purpose, man of wisdom!
Because of this youth's talk. The plain is full
Of vultures feeding on the Íránian dead,
And if thou fearest vengeance there is cause.
Should Siyáwush cry out earth would appear
All mace and scimitar from Rúm and Chín.
Hath he not done thee wrong enough that thou
Shouldst listen weakly to what others say?
The snake's tail thou hast crushed and bruised its head;
Now wilt thou deck its body with brocade?

If thou shalt spare his life I will depart
To some retreat and perish."
Then Damúr
Went with Gurwí, both writhing with affright,
Before the monarch of Túrán and said:—
"Mind not the blood of Siyáwush so much,
Because 'tis vile to rest with all to do,
But hearken to the words of Garsíwaz,
The counsellor, and sweep away thy foe.
Since thou hast laid the snare and captured him
Slay him at once, and tarnish not thy glory
Through folly. Holding him is not enough;
'Tis needful that we break our foemen's hearts.
Thou hast destroyed his troops! Mark how the prince
Will now regard thee. Had none injured thee V. 660
Aforetime water could have purged this fault;
Now policy would have him seen no more
At large or in restraint."
The king replied:—
"I have myself beheld no fault in him;
Albeit astrologers declare that ill
Will come to me through him, and if I shed
His blood revenge will raise dust in Túrán
And dim the sun. That day will daze the wise.
Misfortune is upon me and my realm;
Affliction, pain, and bondage are at hand,
Yet freeing him is worse than slaying him,
Though slaying him will cause me pain and anguish."
But neither sage nor villain can make sure
What new expedient heaven may have in store.

§ 55

How Farangís bewailed herself before Afrásiyáb

The news reached Farangís, who tore her cheeks
And came afoot before Afrásiyáb,

Girt with a bloody cord, her moon-like face
Besmirched with blood; she came in fear and trembling,
And, as she scattered dust upon her head,
Exclaimed: "O monarch full of excellence!
Why wilt thou bring me to such misery?
Why hast thou wrapped thy heart up in deceit?
Dost thou not from thy height perceive the abyss?
Take not a monarch's and a guiltless head;
The Judge of sun and moon will disapprove.
When Siyáwush departed from Írán
He did thee homage—thee of all the world—
Gave umbrage to the Sháh, left treasures, crown,
And throne to make thee his support and shelter.
What hast thou seen in him to make thee quit
The path of right? No man beheadeth kings
And long retaineth his own sovereignty.
V. 661 Wrong not my blameless self too, for the world
Is fleeting and is full of sobs and sighs.
One man though crowned it casteth into prison,
One who ne'er had a crown it maketh king;
Yet fate hath laid the grave's grip on them both,
And in the end both lie alike in dust.
Make not thyself a butt to all the world
By listening to malicious Garsíwaz.
Thou knowest well what tyrannous Zahhák,
The Arab, suffered from brave Farídún;
And likewise how both Salm and savage Túr
Fared at the hands of great Sháh Minúchihr.
Now living at the throne of Sháh Káús
Are Zál and Rustam the vindictive one,
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, whose hand is steel
And rendeth lions' hearts and leopards' hides,
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwárán,
Who heedeth not the maces of the valiant,
And Gív, son of Gúdarz, at whom the earth
Is all a-tremble on the day of battle.

In grief for Siyáwush the streams will boil
And heaven will execrate Afrásiyáb.
Herein thou art a tyrant to thyself,
And often will my words recur to thee.
Thou art not casting onagers in sport,
Nor art thou terrifying antelopes,
But plundering a monarch of his throne,
And sun and moon will curse thee. Give not thou
Túrán so madly to the winds, and never V. 662
Mayst thou have reason to recall my words."
She as she spoke caught sight of Siyáwush,
And tore her cheeks with lamentable cries:—
"O king! O brave! O chief! O sovereign!
O lion proud of head! O man of might!
Thou hast left home and country in Írán,
And recognised my father as thy king,
Yet art thou haled afoot with bounden hands!
Where are the crown and throne of high estate,
Where all the royal oaths and covenants
That made the Sun and Moon and Saturn quail?
Where would be Sháh Káús and his proud chiefs
If at this moment they beheld thee thus?
Where are the mighty Rustam, Tús, and Gív,
Zál, Farámarz, and their associates?
The tidings of this wrong will reach Írán
And vex the day of its prosperity.
Ill hath befallen thee through Garsíwaz:
Curse on him, on Gurwí and on Damúr!
He that shall lay a hand on thee for ill,
Be his head smitten off and flung away.
May God vouchsafe to lighten this for thee,
And make thy foes' hearts quake. Would that mine eyes
Were out ere they beheld thee haled like this,
But could I ever deem that mine own sire
Would banish all the sunlight from my breast?"
The monarch heard his child's words and the world

Was blackened in his eyes. He said to her:—
"Begone. What know'st thou of our purposes?"
His heart was all a-fire against his daughter,
He shut the eye of wisdom recklessly.
Within the lofty palace was one chamber
Unknown to her; the monarch bade his guards
To drag her thither, as they would the mad,
And having flung her down inside that room
To bolt the door and leave her in the gloom.

§ 56

How Siyáwush was slain by Gurwí

v. 663 Then Garsíwaz glanced at Gurwí; that villain
Turned round and going up to Siyáwush
Showed no observance and humanity,
But grasping with his hand the prince's beard
Dragged him, O horror! vilely through the dust,
While Siyáwush thus prayed Almighty God:—
"O Thou that art above the change of time!
Cause from my seed an Offshoot to appear,
In all men's eyes as 'twere a shining sun,
Who will avenge me of my foes, maintain
My precedents, exhibit all achievement
And manliness, and reinstate the world."
Pílsam came following Gurwí with tears
Of blood in anguish. "Fare thee well," the prince
Exclaimed. "Be thou the woof and be the world
Thy warp. Farewell Pírán for me and say:—
'The fashion of the world hath changed!' I hoped
Much otherwise of him, for his advice
Was like the breeze and I was like the willow.
He told me: 'I with five score thousand men,
All cavaliers in mail on barded steeds,
Will be thy helper when the day shall come,

Will be thy pasturage at feeding-time.'
Now hurried on in front of Garsíwaz,
Afoot thus in my shame and gloom of soul,
I see no friend or one to wail for me."
When he was past the city and the host
They bore and dragged him bound upon the plain,
And then Gurwí received from Garsíwaz
A blue-steel dagger for the bloody deed.
He dragged the prince on by the hair afoot V. 664
And when he came to where the mark had stood
The day that Siyáwush and Garsíwaz,
That lion-taker, had the shooting-bout,
The son of Zira, villain that he was,
Flung to the ground the mighty Elephant,
And showed no shame or reverence for rank,
But set a golden basin on the ground,
Turned up the prince's face as 'twere a sheep's,
Cut off the silver Cypress' head and filled
The bowl with blood. Gurwí took up the bowl
And emptied it where he had been commanded.
From that blood presently there sprang a plant,
Which I will teach thee how to recognise,
For it is called "The Blood of Siyáwush."
Now when the Sun had left the Cypress-stem,
And when the prince's head had fallen asleep,
(And what a sleep! For how much time hath passed
And he hath never stirred, hath never waked!)
A tempest with a cloud of darksome dust
Arose enveloping the sun and moon,
And no man could discern his neighbour's face.
Then all of them began to curse Gurwí.
I turn me left and right and all around,
But knowledge of this world have I not found.
One man doth much amiss but good alone
Is his, the world and fortune are his own;
Another walketh this earth righteously

Yet withereth away in misery.
V. 665 From every anxious care thy soul release,
And let thy sorrow over this world cease,
For 'tis a fickle thing, not ever sure,
And will be so till time shall be no more.
But this is certain—whatso'er thy lot
May be in this world it abideth not.

A cry rose from the halls of Siyáwush,
For Garsíwaz had filled the world with tumult;
The slaves all rent their hair, and Farangís
Plucked off and bound a long and musky tress
Around her, tore her cheeks of cercis-bloom,
And cursed with tears and shrieks her father's soul,
Who hearing how she wailed and cursed him, said
To Garsíwaz the villain: "Bring her forth,
Drag her outside the curtains by the hair,
And tell the guards and executioners
To take her by the tresses, strip, and beat her,
Until she casteth on Túránian soil
The seed of vengeance, for I will not have
A tree or bough or leaf or crown or throne
Come from his root."

Then all the nobles present
Began to curse Afrásiyáb, and said:—
"From king or minister or warrior
None e'er heard such a sentence!"

With his cheeks
Blood-stained, his spirit seared, his face all tears,
Pílsam approached Lahhák and Farshídward.
V. 666 "E'en Hell is better than Afrásiyáb's
Throne!" he exclaimed. "No rest or sleep for us
In this land! We must hasten to Pírán
In sorrow and concern about the captives."

They put the saddles on three noble steeds:
"They roll the earth before them," thou hadst said.
Now these three horsemen, when they reached Pírán,

Their faces blood-stained and their souls all thorns,
Recounted to him what had come to pass,
And how the ills of fortune had begun.
Pírán, when he had diligently heard
Their words, fell from his throne and swooned away.
He rent his clothes, threw dust upon his head,
Plucked out the hair, and in his bitter anguish
Exclaimed: "Alack! thou worthy of the crown! V. 667
For ivory throne will never see thy like."
Lahhák said: "Haste! oh! haste! or greater grief
Will come, for they have carried Farangís,
Her body all a-quiver like a tree,
Dethroned, disgraced, unrespited, away
To give her over unto those that slay!"

§ 57

How Pírán saved Farangís

Pírán on hearing this cried out in wrath,
Descended to the street and from the stable
Brought forth ten roadsters up to warriors' weight,
And with the brave Rúín and Farshídward
Sent up the dust forthwith.[1] He reached the court
In two days and two nights, there found the deathsmen
About the portal, Farangís bereft
Of all her wits dragged roughly by the guard
With sword in hand, and all the court in uproar;
All hearts were full of grief, all eyes of tears,
All tongues of curses on Afrásiyáb.
The populace—men, women, and young children—
Were talking at the palace-gate and saying:—
"It were a cruel, fearful, shocking deed V. 668
To cut asunder Farangís! This fury

[1] No doubt Pílsam and Lahhák were with them, as the mention of ten horses looks like a re-mount for each man. Rúín was the son of Pírán.

Will wreck the reign and none will call him king
Henceforward."
At that moment came Pírán
Like wind, and all the men of wisdom joyed.
When noble Farangís saw him her cheeks
Were hidden by a flood of tears, she said:—
"Ill hast thou dealt with me! Why hast thou flung me
While living into fire?"
Pírán dropped off
His steed, he rent the raiment that he wore
As paladin, and bade the officers
To hold awhile. He sought Afrásiyáb
In haste, grief-stricken, and with tearful eyes,
To whom he said: "O king! live prosperously,
Be evil's hand afar! What hath occurred,
My gracious king! to turn thy face to ill
To-day? Why hath the foul Dív gained thy heart,
And robbed it of its reverence for God?
Thou hast slain Siyáwush though innocent,
And flung his name and kingship to the dust.
News of this wrong will reach Írán and vex
Our prosperous times, for many a paladin
Will march in anguish and revenge against us.
V. 669 The world reposed from ill, the way of God
Was clear until the wily Dív from Hell
Smote to the heart the monarch of Túrán;
And rightly be that Áhriman accursed,
Who turned thy counsels to an evil course.
Thou wilt repent of this for many a day,
And surely writhe and burn in agony.
I know not whose ill words have prompted this,
Or what the Maker's purpose is herein!
Now, quit of Siyáwush, thou hast ill-treated
Thine own child, and hast madly left thy throne
To make a day of woe! She wisheth not
For fortune, royal state or throne or crown.

Make not thyself a butt to all the world
By what thou doest to thy pregnant child,
Else while thou livest thou wilt be accursed,
And when thou diest Hell will be thy portion.
If now the king would make my spirits bright,
Let him send Farangís to mine abode.
If there be apprehension through this babe,
In truth the trouble and concern are small.
Have patience only till the child is born;
Then will I bring it thee and—do thy worst."
He answered: "Do as thou hast said, for thou
Hast made me cease to wish to shed her blood."
Pírán rejoiced, his heart was eased from fear.
He sought the court-gate, rescued Farangís,
Bestowing many a curse upon the guards,
Then bore her to the country of Khutan,
Unhurt, amid the applause of camp and court.
When he had reached his palace he bespake
Gulshahr: "We needs must harbour this fair dame
Until she hath brought forth her royal babe,
And after that I will devise some scheme.
Meanwhile attend upon her like a slave,
And mark the pranks of fortune."
Time passed by, V. 670
The Moon grew near to her delivery.

§ 58

The Birth of Kai Khusrau

One dark and moonless night, while birds, wild beasts,
And cattle slept, Pírán in dream beheld
A splendour that outshone the sun itself,
While Siyáwush, enthroned and sword in hand,
Called loudly to him, saying: "Rest no more!
Throw off sweet sleep and think of times to come,

For from to-day new feasts and customs date,
Because to-night is born Sháh Kai Khusrau!"
The chieftain roused him from his sweet repose:
Gulshahr the sunny-featured woke. Pírán
Said unto her: "Arise! Betake thyself
To minister to Farangís, for I
Saw Siyáwush in sleep a moment since,
Surpassing both the sun and moon in lustre,
And crying: 'Sleep no more, but join the feast
Of Kai Khusrau, the monarch of the world.'"
Gulshahr came hasting to the Moon and saw
The prince already born; she went with cries
Of joy that made the palace ring again
Back to Pírán the chief. "Thou wouldest say,"
She cried, "that king and Moon are fairly matched!
Oh! hasten and behold a miracle—
The Maker's greatness and His providence—
For thou wilt say: 'The babe hath need of naught
But crown, mail, mace, and lands to devastate.'"
The chieftain visited the royal babe,
And offered many praises to the Almighty
For that tall stature and those arms and neck.
Thou wouldst have said: "The child is twelve months old!"
Pírán's eyes filled with tears for Siyáwush;
He uttered curses on Afrásiyáb,
V. 671 And thus addressed the noble company:—
"Although the king shall break my soul therefor
I will not suffer him to touch the child,
Not though he fling me to the crocodiles!"
When gloomy murk was sleeping, and the sun
Displayed its rays, the captain of the host,
'Twixt fear and hope, went to Afrásiyáb
In haste, but waited till the court had cleared;
Then came anear the famous throne and thus
Addressed the king: "O sunlike sovereign

And world-lord, shrewd and versed in magic arts!
Thy lot last night was bettered by one slave,
'Dowered by the moon,' as thou wouldst say, 'with sense.'
He hath engrossed all beauty: thou wouldst say:—
'It simply is the moon inside the cradle!'
If Túr could have his lifetime o'er again
He would desire to see this infant's face.
None looketh on a picture in a palace
So fair. The royal Grace is fresh in him,
And thou wouldst say: ''Tis valiant Farídún
In Grace and countenance, in hand and foot.'
Now purge thy mind from every thought of ill,
Exalt thy heart, and illustrate the crown."

God gave the king a better mind. He banished
Thoughts of injustice, harshness, and revenge:
His spirit sorrowed for his evil deed.
Then from his heart he heaved a sigh, repenting
Of evil done, and putting by revenge
Replied: "Much evil will befall me now:
That is the gist of everybody's words.
The age will be disquieted by war,
For an adviser hath reminded me
That from the seed of Túr and Kai Kubád
A king of noble birth will lift his head,
The world will seek his love and all men pay V. 672
Him homage in Írán and Túrán.
What is to be will be, no anxious thought
Will aught avail; rear not the child at home,
But send him to the shepherds on the mountains
That he may know me not or why I sent him
To them, not know the truth about his birth,
But be in ignorance of all the past."

He spake upon the matter as he thought,
And deemed this old world young! Canst thou do aught?

There is no remedy. The world is vast,
No hooks or nets of thine will hold it fast;
But if misfortune's ills thou hast to feel
There is instruction also for thy weal.
The paladin went forth with joy, his heart
Full of glad thoughts, began to bless the Maker,
And sing the praises of the infant king;
Then journeyed to his palace musing thus:—
"This little gift—what will it prove to us?"

§ 59

How Pírán entrusted Kai Khusrau to the Shepherds

V. 673 Pírán had shepherds called from Mount Kalúr,
To whom he spake about the infant prince,
Then trusted to their care his Heart and Eyes—
The child that was so good and admirable—
And said: "Entreat him like your souls. No wind
Or dust must see him. Keep him from mischance
E'en at the cost of your own eyes and hearts."
They said: "We will obey."
He furnished them,
And sent a nurse to tend the royal babe;
They laid their fingers on their eyes and heads,
And took the young prince with them to the mountains.
The heavens revolved awhile with matters thus,
And looked upon Khusrau with loving face.
Now when the brave young prince was seven years old
His prowess told the secret of his birth;
He made a bow of wood and string of gut
Looped at both ends, he made an arrow blunt
And featherless, and would go on the plain
To hunt; at ten he was a valiant warrior,
Who fought with boars and wolves, anon with lions
And leopards, armed with that rude weapon only,

And thus he fared until as time went on
His teacher came to ask for fresh directions.
The shepherd left the mountains and the waste,
And came before Pírán with loud complaints:—
"I come complaining to the paladin
Anent this noble Lion running loose:
He hunted antelopes at first, attacked V. 674
No leopards, and avoided lions' tracks,
But now to fight fierce lions is the same
For him as following the antelope,
And yet I must not let him come to harm!
The noble paladin expecteth this
Of me."
Pírán on hearing smiled and said:—
"High birth and excellence will show themselves."
He mounted on an easy-going nag
To seek the sunlike Lion, and observed
The stalwart youth as he approached like wind.
He kissed Pírán upon the hand, who, seeing
Such Grace and such a countenance, shed tears,
And long and lovingly embraced the youth
In secret commune with all-holy God.
Khusrau said: "O thou pure of Faith! mayst thou
Illume the country of Túrán, for all
That know thee call thee friend! Thou dost embrace
A shepherd's son and feelest not ashamed!"
The heart of wise Pírán grew hot, his cheeks
Flushed, he replied: "Thou memory of the great,
So good and yet defrauded of the world!
There is no shepherd that is kin to thee,
And on this matter I have much to tell."
He had an Arab steed brought for the youth,
Clothed him in royal robes and carried him
Home to the palace, thinking mournfully
Of Siyáwush. He cherished Kai Khusrau, V. 675
Rejoiced in him, and spent a happy time,

But lost food, rest, and sleep through tenderness,
And terror of the anger of the king.
With matters thus the heavens turned above
Awhile o'er Kai Khusrau in peace and love.

§ 60

How Pírán brought Kai Khusrau before Afrásiyáb

One night Pírán received a messenger,
Who bade him wait upon Afrásiyáb.
The monarch spake about the past: "My heart,"
He said, "is vexed by thoughts and grief too hard
To put aside; this child of Siyáwush
Hath, so to speak, o'ercast my day; but will
High policy allow a shepherd-swain
To rear one of the race of Farídún?
If ill through this child hath been written for me
No caution will avert it; 'tis God's doing.
But while the child suspecteth not the past
Let him be glad and we too will rejoice;
Still, if he showeth any evil bent,
He, as his father did, must lose his head."
Pírán replied: "O king! thou needest none
To teach thee. This boy is as mad folk are!
What notions can he have about the past?
A child brought up by shepherds on the mountains
Is like wild animals; what can he know?
The foster-father told me yester-night:—
'The boy is comely but devoid of wits.'
In spite of beauty, stature, form, and Grace,
The prince's head yet lacketh understanding;
Vex not thyself and think no more hereof.
What said the sage—a man exceeding wise?
V. 676 'More potent than the sire the nurse will prove,
But the great secret is the mother's love.'

If at this time the king shall order me,
I will present this lauded youth to him,
But make me easy by a promise first
And swear by such an oath as kings employ.
Sháh Farídún, when he affirmed a matter,
Swore by his crown and throne and diadem;
Túr, who enjoyed both fortune and high state,
Swore by the Ruler of the universe;
And that great king Zádsham, thy grandsire, swore
By Him that ruleth Saturn, Mars, and Sun."
The wits of fierce Afrásiyáb were lulled
At hearing this, he swore a royal oath
By white day and by sombre night, by God—
The Omnipotent, the Maker of the world,
The Maker of the sky, the soul, and beasts:—
"No harm shall come upon the boy through me,
And I will never breathe sharp breath on him."
Pírán then kissed the ground and said: "O king,
Who judgest justly and art wed to justice!
Be wisdom evermore thy guide to good,
Be earth and time the dust beneath thy feet."
He came in haste to Kai Khusrau with cheeks
Like cercis-blossom, glad exceedingly,
And said: "Put wisdom from thee. If the king
Shall talk to thee of fight, talk thou of feast.
Appear before him as an alien
And speak insanely, show no kind of sense,
And thus thou mayst perchance outlive the day."
Pírán equipped him with a royal crown
And belt, and called for him a pretty palfrey
Whereon the shrewd, young hero sat and rode
Toward the palace of Afrásiyáb.
Tears filled the eyes of all on his account,
And shouts were raised before him: "Clear the way: V. 677
The brave aspirant to the crown hath come."
When he arrived Pírán the general

Took him before the king. The grandsire's cheeks
Grew wet with tears of shame, meanwhile Pírán
Shook like a willow, fearing for Khusrau.
The king remembering his pledge and spurning
All fell designs, gazed in astonishment
Upon that royal neck, the young man's hands,
His gait, his bearing, and his dignity.
There was a pause. The monarch's face relaxed,
And love at length prevailed within his heart.
"O youthful shepherd!" said Afrásiyáb,
"Describe to me thy life by day and night.
On what wise hast thou shepherded thy flock?
What is the number of thy sheep and goats?"
Khusrau thus answered him: "There is no game:
Besides I have not arrow, bow, or string."
The monarch asked him next about his teacher,
And whether he was prosperous or not.
Khusrau replied: "Where'er there is a leopard
The hearts of valiant warriors are rent."
Afrásiyáb the third time questioned him
About Írán, his parents, and his home.
"The rending lion," thus he made reply,
"Is not o'er-powered by a fighting-dog."
The king said: "Wilt thou go hence to Írán,
To him who is the monarch of the brave?"
Khusrau thus answered him: "Two nights ago
A horseman passed me on the hills and plains."
The monarch smiled and blossomed like a rose,
Then asked of Kai Khusrau in gentler tones:—
"Dost thou not wish to learn to write? Hast thou
No wish for vengeance on thine enemies?"
V. 678 He said: "There is no cream upon the milk:
I fain would drive the shepherds from the plain."
The monarch smiled at what Khusrau had answered,
And turning to the captain of the host
Said thus to him: "The fellow is a fool:

I ask of heads; he answereth of feet!
In sooth no good or ill will come from him:
Of other stuff are they that seek revenge.
Go! Send him by the hand of some good man,
And let his mother have him back to her.
Dispatch him to Siyáwushgird, allow
No evil teachers to resort to him,
But furnish him with treasure, money, steeds,
Attendants, and whate'er may serve his needs."

§ 61

How Kai Khusrau went to Siyáwushgird

"Bestir thyself," Pírán said to the prince,
Then took him from the presence of the king,
And went back to his palace, flushed with joy
And triumph, since the eye of ill was closed.
He said: "A new Tree fruiteth in the world
Through Him that ruleth over destiny."

He oped the portals of his ancient hoards
And furnished all that Kai Khusrau required—
Brocade, dínárs, and precious stones, with pearls,
Steeds, implements of war, and crowns and girdles,
Besides a throne and purses full of drachms,
With carpetings and matters great and small.
He brought them all to Kai Khusrau with speed,
And with the present gave his blessing also,
Then sent both son and mother to the seat
That good king Siyáwush had built. They went
Their way rejoicingly toward the place,
Which had become by then a brake of thorns.
When Farangís and Kai Khusrau arrived
Much folk from every side appeared to greet them,
While all the city's tongues were full of praise:
"Thus then," they said, "hath fortune made a Shoot V. 679
Sprout from the razed roots of a noble Tree!

Far be the eye of evil from the king,
And may light fill the soul of Siyáwush."
The brambles of the city turned to box,
The meadow-grass to noble cypresses;
The very beasts rejoiced and all the folk
Felt solace for the death of Siyáwush,
Since cloudward from the dust that drank his blood
There rose an Evergreen of sweet perfume,
Upon whose leaves his likeness was portrayed,
Exhaling through his love the scent of musk,
And flourishing in winter as in spring
Would be a prayer-place for the sorrowful.
This is the process of the ancient sky—
It robbeth infants of their mother's breast,
And to the dust deposeth suddenly
A heart by fondness for the world possessed.
Brave not the world but seek its joys to win;
It hideth evils more than thou canst know,
Yet treat it as a garden and therein
Abstain from sniffing at the leaves of woe,
For whether thou art king or shod by want
In any case thy length of days is scant.
Vex not thy soul, this home is but a cheat,
Thy sole possession is a narrow bier;
What needeth thine amassing? Sit and eat;
God is thy treasurer, thou need'st not fear.
Albeit here much happiness is found
The world hath no real love for anyone.
'Twill raise a head one moment to the sun,
And in the next will lay it underground.
It is the process of the lofty sky
To bring down princes and set slaves on high.

I turn from blood to vengeance and tell how
Gív bare off from Túrán Sháh Kai Khusrau.

PART V

HOW RUSTAM AVENGED SIYÁWUSH, AND HOW GÍV BROUGHT KAI KHUSRAU TO ÍRÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet, after bewailing the approach of old age, tells of the arrival in Írán of the news of the death of Siyáwush, of the remorse of Kai Káús, and of the wrath of Rustam, who slays Súdába, invades Túrán, expels Afrásiyáb, and rules there himself for seven years; after which he retires to Sístán. Afrásiyáb returns, recovers his authority, and wars with success against Írán.

At this juncture Gúdarz is warned in a dream to have search made for Kai Khusrau, the son of Siyáwush, who is kept as a prisoner of state by Afrásiyáb, and Gív departs on the quest. His adventures are described, and he ultimately returns to Írán in company with Kai Khusrau and his mother Farangís in spite of all the efforts of Pírán and Afrásiyáb to stop them.

Subsequently a quarrel takes place between Gúdarz and Tús as to whether Kai Khusrau or Faríburz shall be associated as joint Sháh with Kai Káús, who puts the matter to the test and Kai Khusrau is successful.

NOTE

The most conspicuous character in this Part is Gív, a word which means "warrior." The feats which he is described as performing would be more than worthy of Rustam himself, who, after his withdrawal from Túrán, is relegated for a time to the background. We must conceive, as the Persians themselves would, that Gív, employed on the sacred mission of discovering and bringing to Írán the destined prince, was favoured with divine assistance in his enterprise.

§ 31. The quarrel between Gúdarz and Tús, as to the respective claims of Kai Khusrau and Faríburz to be associated as Sháh with Kai Káús, bears important results in the next reign. Tús was the

son of Naudar, and he and his brother Gustaham were deliberately passed over after the death of that Sháh, and again after the death of Garshasp, when Kai Kubád was fetched from Mount Alburz to fill the vacant throne.[1] Tús can never forget that he is the direct representative of the line of the Pishdádian Sháhs, and, despairing of ever becoming Sháh himself, he on this occasion attempts to obtain power indirectly by advocating the claims of a candidate of his own.

§§ 34, 35. In the account of the expedition of Faríburz and Kai Khusrau to Ardabíl we have another proof of the truth of the view, often advanced in the present work, that the true seat of the legends of the Sháhnáma is to be looked for in the regions lying between the Euxine and the Caspian. Ardabíl is in Ázarbáiján, a land exposed to invasions from the north through the Pass of Darband, and where the numerous fire-springs doubtless gave rise to the legend of the heat which distressed the host of Faríburz in the neighbourhood of the castle of Bahman.

§ 1

Firdausí's Lament over his old Age

V. 680 When threescore years hang swordlike o'er one's head
Give him not wine, for he is drunk instead
With them! They give to me a staff for reins,
My wealth is squandered and my fortune sped.

The watchman cannot from his hill descry
The countless army of the enemy,
And hath not wit to turn away although
Their spears confront the lashes of his eye.

The runners too that were so fleet of yore
Bend and are bound by pitiless threescore;
The singer is aweary of his song,
And one are bulbul's note and lion's roar.

[1] See vol. i. pp. 369, 381.

Since I took up the cup of fifty-eight,
The grave and shroud, naught else, I contemplate.
Ah! for my swordlike speech when I was thirty,
Those luscious days, musk-scented, roseate!

Drawn by pomegranate-bloom and cypress-bough
The pheasant haunteth not the dog-rose now.
Sufficient respite from my destiny
I ask the Judge Almighty to allow

That from the famous tale of days gone by
I may bequeath the world a history
Such that whoe'er shall judge my work aright
Shall never speak of me but lovingly;

And I that am the Prophet's household-thrall
In dust before his Mandatary fall—
Him of the pulpit and of Zú'lfakar [1]—
On him to plead my cause above I call.

The story of the rustic bard again
I take in hand; heed thou the minstrel's strain.

§ 2

How Káús heard of the Case of Siyáwush

The news reached Sháh Káús: "The prince is slain! V. 681
The monarch of Túrán wrung off his head
As 'twere a bird's! On every mountain-top
Wild beasts lament the guiltless. Bulbuls mourn
Upon the cypress, francolins and pheasants
Beneath the rose. Túrán is seared and sore,
Pomegranate leaves are yellow in the gardens.

[1] *i.e.* "The lord of the vertebrae"—the name of a famous sword taken at the battle of Badar from an infidel by Muhammad, from whom it passed to his son-in-law 'Alí, who is here referred to.

Gurwí set down a golden bowl and raised
As 'twere a sheep's the face of Siyáwush;
They cut his royal head off; there was none
To help or plead."
When Sháh Káús heard this
His crowned head bowed itself upon the state,
He rent his robes, he tore his cheeks, and quitted
His high throne for the dust. The Íránians
Went mourning on their way, the cavaliers
Put on their funeral weeds, their eyes wept blood,
Their cheeks were pale, all spake of Siyáwush.
Tús and Gúdarz, the gallant Gív, Shápúr,
Bahrám the Lion and Farhád arrayed
Themselves in raiment black and blue; no head
Retained its helmet but had dust instead.

§ 3

How Rustam came to Káús

The world-illuming chief heard at Nímrúz:—
"A wail ascendeth from Írán, the death
V. 682 Of Siyáwush hath shocked the world, Káús
Hath thrown dust on his crown and rent his robes!"
When matchless Rustam heard his senses fled;
A wail rose from Zábul, Zál tore his cheeks,
And scattered dust upon his crown and shoulders.
Thus passed a week in heaviness and mourning,
But on the eighth day rose the trumpet-blast,
And at the gate of elephantine Rustam
Troops gathered from Kashmír and from Zábul.
Blood in his eyes and vengeance in his heart
He marched toward the court of Kai Káús.
On coming near Írán he rent his robe
Of office, swearing by the Almighty Judge:—
"I will not rest from arms and war or wash
Dust from my face, whereat we need not grieve,

Till I have taken vengeance for the prince,
And brought our foes' heads to the shears. My crown
Shall be a casque, my cup a scimitar,
My net the leathern lasso on mine arm,
Until I take for our young prince's death
Revenge upon that Turkman dark of soul."
All dust from head to foot he came before V. 683
The throne of Kai Káús and said to him:—
"The noxious weeds that thou hast sown, O king!
Are fruiting now! Thy passion for Súdába,
And thine ill bent, have robbed thee of thy Crown,
And now thou seest clearly that thy seat
Is on the ocean's waves. A heavy loss
Hath come upon Írán through the distrust
And disposition of a cruel Sháh.
For one who is the ruler of people
A shroud is better than a woman's bidding.
A woman's talk hath murdered Siyáwush,
And blest is she who is as yet unborn.
Among the Sháhs there was not one like him, V. 684
As great, as noble, and as reticent.
Alas for that tall stature and that face,
That face that had the mien of majesty!
Alas for that so famous sovereign,
For time will never look on such another!
'Twas ever spring when he was on the throne;
At feasts he used to be the crown of kings,
In fight a Pard, a Tiger, and a Lion:
None ever saw a man so deft of hand.
Now, while I live, I give up heart and brain
To execute revenge for Siyáwush.
Ne'er shall I fight dry-eyed, and like my heart
The whole world shall endure the fiery smart."

§ 4

How Rustam slew Súdába and led forth the Host

Káús perceived on Rustam's countenance
How great his love was by his tears of blood,
And out of shame said nothing in reply,
But poured down scalding tears. The chief departed
And went toward the palace of Súdába.
He dragged her from the bower by her hair,
Dragged her all bleeding from her throne and clave her
Asunder with his dagger in the street
While Sháh Káús sat passive on his throne;
This done, the matchless Rustam felt a pang
Yet keener in his heart, he sought his palace
In pain and woe, with blood-drops in his eyes,
And livid cheeks. Írán was all in mourning,
And people flocked around him in their trouble,
V. 685 While he for seven days in grief and tears
Sat in his palace wrathful and distressed.
Upon the eighth he sounded trump and drum,
And to his palace came Gúdarz and Tús,
Shídúsh, Farhád, Gurgín, Gív, and Ruhhám,
Sháp úr, Kharrád the warrior, Faríburz—
The son of Kai Káús—Bahrám the Lion,
And dragon-bold Guráza. Rustam said:—
"I stake heart, soul, and body on revenge,
For in this world there is no man of name
In arms like Siyáwush the cavalier.
Treat not the matter lightly. None can deem
Such vengeance trifling. Banish all dismay,
And make the earth run like Jíhún with blood.
By God! while I am living in the world
I will not cease to grieve for Siyáwush.
On that unwatered waste where rash Gurwí
Poured on the ground the life-blood of the prince

I fain would chafe my face and eyes; perchance
It may relieve my heart of grief for him.
Perchance my hands like his may be secured,
A yoke placed on my neck, and both my wrists
Bound with a twisted lasso, and myself
Thrown like a hapless sheep upon the ground;
But if not, with my trenchant scimitar
And mace will I bring Domesday on the world;
Mine eyes shall see naught but the dust of fight,
And I renounce for life the cup of pleasure."
The chiefs and paladins on hearing this
All shouted like one man: thou wouldst have said:—
"Írán is seething." From the land the uproar
Rose to the clouds. "Earth is a lion's den," V. 686
Thou wouldst have said.
Then from his elephant
He dropped the ball into the cup. The troops
Unsheathed the sword of vengeance. Rose the din
Of horn, of brazen trump, and kettledrum;
The world was all revenge, and thou hadst said:—
"It is a seething sea!" Earth had no room
For walking, air was ambushed by the spears;
The stars began the fray, and time and earth
Washed hands in mischief. The Íránian warriors
Girt up their loins and Kawá's standard led them.
Then Rustam of Zábul chose from Kábul,
Írán, and from the forest of Nárwan,
Troops that were wielders of the scimitar:
There mustered five score thousand men of war.

§ 5

How Farámarz slew Warázád

The leader of the van was Farámarz,
The son of Rustam and a youthful chieftain,

Whom, when he reached the border of Túrán,
The watch descried.
The king of Sipanjáb
Was Warázád, a lustrous Pearl mid chiefs.
Whenas the blast of trump and clarion,
And din of Indian bells came to his ears
He beat the tymbals, marched out to the desert,
And from the desert to a sea of blood.
His troops and scimitars were thirty thousand
Prepared for fight. Advancing from the centre
He made all haste to counter Farámarz,
And questioned him and said: "Who art thou? Speak!
Why hast thou set thy face against this land?
Com'st thou in sooth by order of the Sháh,
Or captain of the host? Dost thou not know
Afrásiyáb, his state, his throne, and crown
V. 687 Of majesty? Be pleased to tell thy name,
For this is thy last fight. Thy swarthy form
May not give up the ghost beneath my hands,
Unnamed."
Then Farámarz: "Ill-fated chief!
The Tree that bare me is a paladin,
In whose hands lions writhe, while elephants
Grow lifeless at his wrath, but as for thee,
Thou ill-conditioned bantling of the Dív!
Why should I talk to thee of how and why?
The elephantine hero is behind
With troops—a foe sufficient anywhere.
He armed to take revenge for Siyáwush,
Advancing like a furious lion. He
Will raise the reek from this vile land. The wind
Will not adventure meddling with his dust."
As soon as Warázád had heard the words
He knew that it was useless to dispute,
And bade the troops: "Lay on; string up your bows."

Both hosts arrayed themselves and donned their helmets,
The war-cry rose, and ears grew deaf with drumming.
Now at the sound of drum and clarion
The heart of Farámarz began to throb.
He came on like a mighty elephant,
With loins girt up and bow upon his arm,
And in a single onslaught overthrew
A thousand warriors, then turning back
With spear in hand he sought for Warázád,
And, when he saw the Turkman leader's flag,
Rushed like a lion from among the troops,
And giving to his sable steed the spur, V. 688
And stiffening the clutch upon his lance,
Struck Warázád a blow upon the girdle,
So that cuirass and buckle brake, and took him
In such a fashion from the poplar saddle
That thou hadst said: "He dealeth with a fly!"
Flung him upon the dust and then dismounting,
While oftentimes invoking Siyáwush,
Cut off the head of his illustrious foe,
Blood-boltering his raiment and exclaiming:—
"See the first head of our revenge! The seed
That hath been scattered sprouteth from the dust!"
They gave up all the country to the flames,
The reek rose to high heaven, and Farámarz
Wrote to his sire respecting Warázád:—
"I opened wide the door of war and vengeance,
I took him from his sell of poplar wood,
Cut off his head, so doth revenge require
For Siyáwush, and set his land a-fire."

§ 6

How Surkha led his Troops to fight with Rustam

A runner came and told Afrásiyáb:—
"The elephantine Rustam hath come forth
To war, the Íránian chieftains are assembled;
They have, alack! beheaded Warázád,
And robbed the marches of Túrán of breath;
His army they have utterly o'erthrown,
And given up his country to the flames."
Afrásiyáb was grieved and called to mind
The ancient prophecy that he had heard
From wise archmages and astrologers;[1]
V. 689 He summoned all the nobles, paid his troops,
Gave largess from his treasures, and brought home
All herds of horses that were on the waste.
He took his minister's and treasurer's keys
To ope his magazines, and furnished swords,
Horse-armour, maces, and artillery,
Dínárs, gold, gems, crowns, torques, and golden belts,
And strewed the palace and the ground with drachms.
With troops equipped and treasure lavished on them
He sounded kettledrum and Indian gong,
And then the horsemen turned their thoughts to war.
He marched from Gang, and, having reached the open,
Called Surkha and spake much of Rustam, saying:—
"Lead thirty thousand Sabres swift as wind
To Sipanjáb, ignoring rest and pleasure,
For Farámarz is there. Send me his head;
But ware the son of Zál! Thou hast no peer
In fight save him, yet where the pard would combat
What will the dog of war avail in battle?
Thou art mine own son and my loyal subject,
The Pillar of mine army and my Moon;
Be so alert and circumspect that none

[1] See p. 234.

Will venture to attack thee. Lead in person,
Be vigilant, and guard the host from Rustam."
When Surkha left the presence of his sire V. 690
He took the troops and standard to the plain,
And marched along like wind to Sipanjáb,
Intent on war. The outposts saw the dust,
Turned round, and hurried in to Farámarz.
The din of drums rose from the Íránian troops,
Whose dust transformed the earth to ebony;
The clamour of the cavaliers and chargers
Rose from the plain, out-topping Sol and Venus;
The bright steel falchions flashed like diamonds,
The spearpoints fed on blood. Thou wouldst have said:—
"An exhalation riseth from the earth,
And giveth fuel to the flames of war."
The earth from end to end was heaped with slain;
Their severed heads were scattered everywhere.
As Surkha marked the progress of the fight
He saw the spearhead of prince Farámarz,
Then gave the rein to his high-crested steed,
And, giving up the bow, charged with the spear,
While Farámarz, abandoning the centre,
Came forth with lance in hand to counter him,
And by a thrust swift as Ázargashasp V. 691
Laid him unseated on his horse's neck,
While with the impetus and that rude shock
The lance was shivered. Then the Turkman chiefs
Advanced intent on battle and revenge,
While Surkha in the anguish of defeat
Fled. Farámarz, like some mad elephant,
Pursued him, brandishing an Indian sword.
The Íránian horse rushed after him like dívs,
And shouted. Farámarz came up with Surkha
And, like a leopard springing, seized his girdle,
Unseated him, and hurled him to the ground,

Then, driving him afoot, brought him to camp,
Disgraced. With that the flag of matchless Rustam
Was seen approaching mid the tramp of troops
And elephants; the prince went to his father
As quick as dust and told of his success.
In front was Surkha with his hands in bonds,
There lay the severed neck of Warázád;
The plain and hollows were all filled with slain,
The foe in full retreat. The soldiers blessed
The brave, young paladin, while peerless Rustam
Gave blessings to him also and bestowed
Great largess on the poor. Of Farámarz
V. 692 Spake elephantine Rustam: "He whose head
Is raised o'er others must have noble nature,
Instruction, prowess, and befriending wisdom:
His nature using these will bring the world
Beneath his feet by virtue of his manhood.
Thou seest naught but brightness in a flame,
Yet he is burned that toucheth. 'Tis not strange
That Farámarz should triumph, for the heart
Of steel is full of fire, and when steel fighteth
With flint the secret of its heart is shown."
Then elephantine Rustam looked on Surkha—
A noble Cypress of the garth was he,
His breast was like a lion's, and his cheeks
Were like the spring, cheeks where black musk was traced
On roses—bade men bear him to the plain,
And executioners with bowl and dagger,
To make his hands fast in the lasso's coils,
To throw him like a sheep upon the ground,
Behead him as was done to Siyáwush,
And let the vultures be his winding-sheet.
When Tús the general heard he went in haste
To do the bloody deed. Then Surkha said:—
"O most exalted king! why slay me guiltless,

For Siyáwush was of my years, my friend?
My soul was full of pain and grief for him,
By day and night my eyes o'erflow with tears;
I ever oped my lips to curse the man
By whom the prince's head was stricken off—
The man that brought the dagger and the bowl."
The heart of Tús was very pitiful
For that illustrious but luckless prince.
He went to Rustam and repeated to him V. 693
The pleading of the Turkman monarch's son,
But Rustam answered: "If there be a king
Who should be thus heart-seared and sad, then may
The heart and spirit of Afrásiyáb
Be ever full of pain, his eyes of tears.
This youth, engendered by those recreant loins,
Will but employ fresh stratagems and guile.
As Siyáwush was laid upon the ground
With shoulders, breast, and hair bedrenched with blood,
So by the head and life of Kai Káús,
The glorious, noble ruler of Írán,
I swear that every Turkman that I find
Throughout my life, be he a king or slave,
So he be of these marches and this folk,
I will behead."
And therewithal that Lion
Looked at Zawára and commanded him
In peremptory tones to do the deed
Of blood. He took the dagger and the bowl,
And gave the youth to executioners,
Who cut his throat—a cry, and all was over.
What wouldst thou, world! with those whom thou hast fed?
Fed! Say thy broken-hearted slaves instead!
Then Rustam took the head off, hung the trunk
Feet upward on a gibbet, and flung dust

In vengeance on the corpse, which afterwards
The soldiers hacked to pieces with their swords.

§ 7

How Afrásiyáb led forth the Host to avenge his Son

When the Túránian troops returned from battle,
Their bodies bloody and their heads all dust,
They said: "The noble chieftain hath been slain,
His eager fortune hath been overturned,
And they have set his severed head and body
Blood-boltered upside down upon a gibbet!
The people of Írán are all in arms,
Their hearts ache with revenge for Siyáwush."
Afrásiyáb hung down his head and crown,
Plucked out his hair, shed tears, and rent his robes,
V. 694 Cast dust upon his head, and cried aloud:—
"O prince! O gallant heart! O warrior!
O chief! O man of name! O hero! King!
Woe for that moonlike cheek of cercis-bloom!
Woe for that royal breast and mien and stature!
Thy sire shall ne'er seek rest unless it be
Upon his charger's saddle on the field."
Then to his men: "Our ease and feasts are over.
Keep ye your eyes wide open for revenge,
And make your jerkin and cuirass your bed."
Rose at his gate the din of kettledrums:
His warriors armed. Upon the elephants
The trumpets blared, the world was like a sea
Of indigo, and when they bound the drums
Upon the elephants heaven kissed the earth.
Then said the king: "Ye chiefs and warriors!
When both sides sound the drum he is no soldier
That laggeth. Let our hearts be full of vengeance,
Full as the bodies of our foes with javelins!"

Thus spake he to the troops, then bade to sound
The clarions, cymbals, and the Indian bells.
Arose the war-cry and the blare of trumpets,
The din of cornet, pipe, and kettledrum,
Earth shook beneath the trampling of the steeds,
The shoutings of the soldiers reached the clouds.
Now when that army's dust rose from the plain
One came to vengeful Rustam and spake thus:—
"Afrásiyáb the chieftain is at hand;
His troops move like a vessel o'er the sea.
All have prepared for combat and revenge,
And set their hands to blood."
Now when he heard:—
"The monarch of Túrán hath come in sight,"
The troops marched forth with Káwa's flag; the air
Turned blue with warriors' swords; a shout arose
From both sides and the world was filled with fighters. V. 695
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun and moon are darkened,
A crocodile hath swallowed up the stars!"
The monarch of Túrán arrayed his men,
Who grasped their maces and two-headed darts.
Upon the right Bármán came proudly on
Before his troops, Kuhram was at the left,
And in the centre was the king in person.
On his side Rustam too arrayed his host,
And earth was lost in dust. He took the centre
With Farámarz in front and in the rear
Zawára; on the left he placed Gúdarz,
Hajír, and other chiefs. He stationed Gív,
And Tús—those wary horsemen—on the right
With trump and drum, then armed himself for battle,
And eased his heart by vengeance. Earth became
Musk-black with troops, air like a leopard's back
With spears. "It is an iron mount whose crest
Is full," thou wouldst have said, "of helms and mail."

The staff-heads of the banners rose towards
The clouds, and brightly flashed the blue-steel swords.

§ 8

How Pílsam was slain by Rustam

Pílsam with angry looks and vengeful heart
Came to the centre to Afrásiyáb,
And said: "O full of wisdom, famous king!
V. 696 Unless thou here forbiddest me the use
Of charger, helmet, falchion, and cuirass
I will myself to-day encounter Rustam,
And cover all his name with infamy,
Will bring to thee his head, his steed, his mace,
And world-apportioning sword."
The king rejoiced
Thereat and raised his spearpoint o'er the sun,
Then answered: "O thou Lion of renown!
In sooth no elephant will conquer thee.
If thou dost take that elephantine chief
The age will rest from strife, and not a man
Within Túrán shall equal thee in rank,
In throne, in signet-ring, in crown, and sword.
Thou wilt exalt my head to turning heaven,
And I will give to thee my crown and daughter;
The more part of Írán and of Túrán
With treasures, gems, and cities shall be thine."
Pírán was grieved and, coming to the king,
Said to him: "This young man in his rash youth
Is laying violent hands upon himself,
For, if he combat with the matchless Rustam,
He will but lay his own head in the dust.
The king will share in his disgrace, 'twill break
The spirit of the troops; he is, thou knowest,
My younger brother, and my love for him

Is greater than an elder brother's love."
Pílsam rejoined: "My heart doth not misgive me,
And, if I fight this warlike Crocodile,
By thy good fortune I will bring no shame
Upon the king. Thou once beheld'st my prowess
In fighting with four famous warriors,[1]
And verily my strength is greater now.
It is not right of thee to break my spirit;
The enterprise is well within my reach:
Haunt not the portal of an evil star."
The monarch, hearing what Pílsam replied,
Gave him a barded charger, helm, cuirass, V. 697
A sword, and massive mace. Pílsam made ready,
And lionlike impetuously advanced,
Exclaiming to the Íránians: "Where is Rustam,
Who is, they say, a Dragon on the day
Of battle? Bid him come to fight with me,
For I am ready to encounter him."
Gív, furious at the challenge, drew his sword
And answered: "Rustam fighteth not one Turkman,
'Twould be disgrace."
The champions closed. Pílsam
Struck with his spear at Gív, who in dismay
Lost both his stirrups. Farámarz saw this,
And went at once to aid his gallant comrade;
He struck athwart Pílsam's spear with his sword,
And cut it like a reed; he struck once more,
The blade was shivered on his foeman's helm,
Who wheeled like some fierce lion on the plain
With those two warriors. Rustam from the centre
Espied them fighting with one lion-man,
The dust sent cloud-ward with their wind-like speed,
And thought: "Pílsam alone among the Turkmans
Hath dash and spirit." He had heard moreover
From hoar archmages and astrologers,

[1] See p. 112.

Amid his wanderings, how the stars foretold
That: "If Pílsam survive his evil day,
And heed his counsellors, no warrior
Like him in all the world shall gird his loins
For battle in Írán or in Túrán,"
V. 698 And thought: "Assuredly his time hath come,
For he hath set forth to encounter me."

He spake thus to his troops: "Let none advance
A single step from where he standeth now.
I go to prove the prowess of Pílsam,
And try his lustihood, his strength, and spirit."

He took a weighty spear, gripped fast his steed
With both his legs, and, putting on his helmet,
Pressed on the stirrups, let the reins hang loose,
And lowered the shining spear-head to his eye.
He wheeled about and foaming at the lips
Rushed from the centre toward the foemen's lines,
And cried: "O famed Pílsam! thou called'st me
To scorch me with thy breath! Thou shalt behold
The onslaught of the warrior-crocodile,
And ne'er turn rein toward a battle more.
My heart is burned with pity for thy youth:
Alas for thine estate of paladin!"

He spake and urged his charger on. He came
To battle like high heaven. With his spear
He smote Pílsam upon the girdlestead,
And took him from the saddle like a ball,
Rushed to the centre of the Turkman host
And there flung down the corpse contemptuously,
Exclaiming: "Dress it in brocade of gold,
For now 'tis lapislazuli with dust!"

Then wheeling round he went back to the centre.
Pírán rained tears; the body of Pílsam
Was past a leech's skill. The heart of all
The army of the monarch of Túrán
Was broken and the battlefield was darkened.

A shout rose from both hosts; the din of chiefs V. 699
Keen for the fray, the drumming on the backs
Of elephants, were heard for miles around.
Earth trembled with the chargers' tramp, the hills
Were seas of blood, the plains were hills of slain.
The cries and blaring clarions shook the sky,
The stones were coral and the dust was gore;
The heads of many chieftains were laid low,
And thou hadst said: "The sky is raining blood."
It was no time for love 'twixt sire and son.
A breeze arose upon the battlefield,
And murky dust usurped the firmament.
Then both hosts charged with fury o'er the plain
While neither could distinguish foe from friend;
The world became as sombre as the night,
And day in sooth had well nigh spent its light.

§ 9

How Afrásiyáb fled from Rustam

Afrásiyáb said to his troops: "Our fortune
That was awake is sleeping. Ye are feeble,
And I must to the field. Be leopard-like
In resolution if but for to-day,
Attack from every quarter and fight on.
Lay ambuscades on all sides for the foe,
And bring the sun down with your spears."
He quitted
The centre of his host, heart-seared, revengeful,
Charged Tús and slaughtered many of Írán
Till Tús, whose heart misgave him, showed his back.
One came for aid to Rustam saying thus:—
"The matter goeth ill with us to-day:
Our whole right is a sea of blood, the banner
Of our Íránian horsemen hath gone down."

Came elephantine Rustam from the centre
With Farámarz and troops. Confronting them
V. 700 Were many buckler-men who hated Rustam,
Allies and kinsmen of Afrásiyáb,
Swift in revenge, of whom the matchless one
Slew many, backed by Tús and Farámarz.
Afrásiyáb, when he beheld the flag
Of violet and Káwa's standard, knew:—
"'Tis Rustam of the elephantine form,
The noble chieftain sprung from Narímán,"
And raging as it were a warrior-leopard,
Sat tight and went up to encounter him.
As soon as Rustam saw the sable flag
He bounded like a lion in its rage,
Then full of fury gave fleet Rakhsh the reins
And, with blood streaming from his lance's point,
Encountered proud Afrásiyáb. One shaft
Of poplar, pointed like a willow-leaf,
Pinned to his head the Turkman's helm, while he
Speared warlike Rustam full upon the breast,
The point went through the leather of his belt
But failed against the tiger-skin cuirass;
Then matchless Rustam, bent upon revenge,
Speared his opponent's charger through the chest.
The speedy steed fell prone in agony
And threw the rider, whom the hero strove
To seize around the waist and make an end.
Húmán apart caught sight of him and, raising
His massive mace upon his shoulder, smote
The shoulder-blade of elephantine Rustam,
While both the armies shouted. Rustam turned
And looked behind him, thus the king escaped
His grasp, and mounted on a speedy steed,
While by a hundred shifts Húmán, the son
Of Wísa, saved him from that Dragon's clutch.
V. 701 The hero-flinging crown-bestower followed

Húmán in furious haste but caught him not,
His time had not yet come. Shouts rose to heaven,
And massive maces whirled. There came to Rustam
Some of the army of Írán lest harm
Might fall upon him, and the noble Tús
Made question of him: "Felt the Elephant
The impact of the Onager's assault?"
He answered: "Neither heart of stone nor anvil
Can bear the buffets of a massive mace
When wielded by a man with chest and arms;
As for that mace wherewith Húmán struck me—
Call it not iron; it was merely wax."
When Rustam's foeman turned and fled the troops
All gave a shout and raised their spearheads cloudward.
If slain and wounded covered not the ground
It was a field of tulips and of saffron;
The horses trampled blood, the elephants
Had feet incarnadined. The Turkmans fled,
Swift as the wind, because the arm of Rustam
Did execution on them. For three leagues
That matchless hero like a raging dragon
Pursued the foe. Then he returned to camp,
And thou hadst said that heaven befriended him;
The soldiers came back satiate with spoil;
And iron, gold, and silver, weapon, rein,
Spearhead, and girdle covered all the plain.

§ 10

How Afrásiyáb sent Khusrau to Khutan

Now when the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops,
And scattered jewels on night's pitchy back,
A shout rose and the din of clarions
As matchless Rustam led his army forth.
They marched against Afrásiyáb with cheeks V. 702

All tearful for the death of Siyáwush.
The king, on hearing that a host pursued him,
Led by the matchless chief intent on vengeance,
Marched his own forces to the sea of Chín;
The broad expanse of earth was narrowed to him.
He went across the sea to where he would,
And thus addressed Pírán: "Advise me well
What should be done about this wretched boy;
Because if Rustam take and carry him
Off to Írán, they will enthrone and crown
This dív-begotten as Sháh. Convey him hither,
Bestir thyself, and slight not my command."

Pírán replied: "We must not rashly slay him,
But I will take such order that the king
Shall praise his faithful slave. Fetch we the youth,
And fix his residence within Khutan.
We must not give occasion to ill-doers
Eternally to blame our sovereign."

The king replied: "O master of wise rede!
Thou art my guide to good. Use all dispatch;
'Tis not a matter that will brook delay."

Pírán at once sent off a prudent man
Of noble birth to fetch the prince. The envoy
Made haste and sped like smoke, for so the chieftain
Had bidden. When he came before Khusrau,
And saw the young man's Grace and majesty,
He gave unstinted praise, did reverence,
And tarried long delivering his message
In fitting language fittingly received.

V. 703 Khusrau, bewildered, sped to tell his mother:—
"Afrásiyáb hath sent and summoned me
Down to the sea! What shall we do? Perchance
We yet may make a shift to save our lives."

They talked together and discussed it much,
But found no remedy. They had to go,
And set off, though unwillingly, in haste.

They mourned and wept and cursed Afrásiyáb
Until they reached Pírán, who, when he saw
Khusrau, descended from his throne, inquired
About the tedious journey courteously,
And full of praises set the prince beside him.
As for those things whereof Khusrau had need,
Provisions, raiment, carpetings, pavilions,
Tents, steeds, Pírán provided him with all,
Then went to king Afrásiyáb and said:—
"O king of wisdom, Grace, and glory! I
Have brought the little boy that hath the Grace;
What further orders hast thou for me now?"
The king said: "Send him from the sea of Chín
So that the chiefs may find no trace of him."
Pírán performed his task without delay,
And sent like smoke the youth upon his way.[1]

§ 11

How Rustam reigned over Túrán for Seven Years

The chief, the elephantine hero, marched
Toward the realm of Chín, and with his sword-arm
Subdued Khatá, Khutan, and all the coasts V. 704
Of Chín, and took the throne of him whose fortune
Had come to dust. This saw spake Rustam first:—
"The man of worth will seek the enemy;
'Tis good to slay him if he countereth thee,
And good too if he shun the fight and flee."
He searched the palace for its hoards; the people
Disclosed them all. The slaves, both boys and girls
Famed for their beauty, steeds, and treasuries
Of gold, crowns, robes, brocade, and ivory throne,
Fell into Rustam's hand, with many a jewel
Out of the hoards at Gang, and all the soldiers
Were rich in armlets, torques, and coronets.

[1] Kai Khusrau was sent to Máchín (China). See p. 370.

He gave torques, armlets, and the ivory throne
To Tús, besides the government of Chách,
And said: "If anybody shall revolt,
Or even call Afrásiyáb to mind,
Cut off his head and make him food for vultures;
But like a father keep from want and travail
The wise and peaceful, shunners of the Faith
Of Áhriman. Offend not the offenceless,
And practise all humanity and justice,
For this world is a lodging not a home.
None ever had more Grace than had Jamshíd,
Yet still high heaven trod him under foot,
And found the world a monarch in his stead."
Next, to the worthy, pious paladin
Gúdarz he gave a crown of royal gems,
With earrings, torque, and throne, and made him lord
Of Sughd and Sipanjáb; he added counsel
With commendations and felicitations,
V. 705 And said: "The seal of majesty and justice,
And feast and fight remind us still of thee;
But worth is better than high lineage,
Though lineage assisteth men of worth.
Since thou hast worth and lineage and wisdom,
And mak'st thy soul a concourse of sweet sounds,
It is but right that thou shouldst hear my rede,
Who art thyself a teacher of the great.
From Sipanjáb to the Gulzaryún
Be thy word law."
To Faríburz he sent
A crown of gold beside dínárs and gems,
And said: "Thou art a prince and potentate,
And brother unto Siyáwush; avenge him!
Ne'er loose thy lasso from the saddle-straps,
Cease not from vengeance on Afrásiyáb,
And take no thought of food, repose, and sleep.

Be just in all thy doings here below,
For justice never ruined any one."
The tidings spread through Chín that Rustam sat
Enthroned as over-lord. Then all the fólk
Brought handsel of dínárs and royal gems,
And said: "We are thy servants and thy slaves;
We only tread the earth to do thy bidding."
The chieftain gave them quarter for their lives,
Perceiving that they had discerning minds,
And occupied himself for many a day
With hawk and cheetah. Passed a while away.

§ 12

How Zawára went to the Hunting-ground of Siyáwush

Now as it chanced one day Zawára went
To hunt the onager. He rode apace
Conducted by a Turkman. On the open
He saw a forest, "which," thou wouldest say,
"One cannot pass, it fresheneth the soul,"
So many were the scents and tints and streams. V. 706
The Turkman told Zawára thoughtlessly:—
"This was the hunting-ground of Siyáwush,
This was his favourite spot in all Túrán,
Where was he wont to be both glad and merry,
But elsewhere sad."
The Turkman's talk recalled
Old recollections to Zawára's mind.
A hawk was on his hand; he let it go;
The lashes of his eyes ran tears of blood.
His comrades of the host approached, observed him
In grief and tears; then they began to curse
The Turkman guide and felled him to the ground.
With gall-drops streaming from his eyes Zawára
Swore a great oath: "I will not hunt or sleep,

Or cease from vengeance on Afrásiyáb.
I will not give a moment's rest to Rustam:
All must prepare for fight."
He sought his brother.
"Did we come hither to revenge or bless?"
He said. "The Giver of all good hath given
Thee strength and made the circle of the sun
Thy star. Why should this realm be populous,
Or any soul live joyfully therein?
Forget not to avenge that prince, whose peer
Thou wilt not look upon for many a year."

§ 13

How Rustam harried the Land of Túrán

Roused by Zawára's words the matchless Rustam
V. 707 Began to ravage and to massacre
Till all the land showed signs of misery,
And from Túrán up to Sakláb and Rúm
Folk saw no cultured tract. The Íránians
Beheaded all the men, both young and old,
And made the women and the children slaves.
Thus o'er a thousand leagues and more the reek
Of burning rose. Then all of noble race
Came with the dust upon their heads protesting:—
"We are aweary of Afrásiyáb,
And would not see him even in a dream.
As for the guiltless blood that he hath shed,
We had not any voice or part therein,
And now, although we are a scattered people,
Yet are we all thy slaves. As thou art mighty
Shed not, provoking God, more guiltless blood.
None knoweth where our king is, or if he
Is well or blasted by the dragon's breath."
The prudent Rustam's heart was grieved thereat,

He summoned all the chieftains of the host,
And marched the army to Káchár Báshí.
The wise, the great men, and the veteran chiefs
Flocked to his presence, and one said: "Káús,
Who hath not Grace, and cannot soar or stand,
Is seated on the throne without a guide,
And if Afrásiyáb should suddenly
Come with an army to invade Írán,
And conquer old Káús, our joy and peace
Would be destroyed. We all have won both honour
And vengeance, and have burned up every city.
Now let us go back to the agéd king;
When feasts begin we shall be all new men.
For six years we have had not one glad day;
Our slaves, our states, our signets, and our crowns
Are in Írán. 'Tis wealth hath dazed us thus! V. 708
Heart sated is soul bated! If thou settest
Thy heart upon this ancient dwelling-place
'Twill flatter thee but cozen thee withal;
So, if thy heart be not with Áhriman,
Abstain from greed which is the enemy.
Array thyself and lavish, drink and eat,
Such is thy portion of this fleeting show."
The matchless Rustam yielded his assent
To what the noble archimage had urged.
That jocund counsellor went on to say:—
"Choose pleasure in this Wayside Inn. Reflect
That in the dust there is no brotherhood,
And how thou wilt deplore this present good!"

§ 14

How Rustam returned to Írán

The matchless Rustam heard the words with shame,
And felt an ardent longing to depart.
He gathered horses out of all the herds

That wandered o'er the deserts of Túrán,
Together with ten thousand boys and girls—
Slaves fit to serve a king—with bags of musk,
With skins of marten, ermine, and grey squirrel,
Of minever and weasel.. On the backs
Of elephants were furs, perfumes, dínárs,
Gold, tapestries, and havings great and small,
Stuffs for apparel, treasures, drachms, and swords,
As well as other weapons, crowns, and thrones.
They packed the loads, set forward to Írán,
And, going from Túrán toward Zábul,
Drew near to glorious Zál, while Tús, Gúdarz,
And Gív, those famous chiefs, went to the Sháh
At Párs.

When news reached base Afrásiyáb
That Tús and Rustam were across the river
V. 709 He set off westward toward the sea of Gang,
With vengeance in his heart intent on war.
He found the country all turned upside down,
The nobles slaughtered and the folk enslaved;
No horses, treasures, crowns, or thrones were there,
There was no verdant leafage on the trees;
The world had been consumed with fire, and all
The palaces had been o'erthrown and burned.
The king wept tears of blood and thus harangued
The captains of the host: "A man must lose
His reason to forget these outrages!
Fill all your hearts with vengeance, make your shields
Your beds, your helmets pillows, let us fight
Till heaven itself shall fall in our revenge;
For country's sake, for treasure, child, and kin,
We will tread down the cities of Írán
In striving after vengeance; 'tis not well
To be thus downcast just because the wind
Was in their favour in a single fight.
From all sides will we gather arms and troops,

And make a new departure."
He assembled
Without delay a host equipped for war,
And led his warriors and lion-men
Against Írán. His plan was to attack
From every side. No respite was afforded,
He burned up all the settlements and trees,
And brought the Íránians to a parlous case.
For seven years there was a rainless sky,
The favour changed, conditions were reversed,
And all were beggared by distress and travail. V. 710
Much time elapsed with matters in this stay
While at Zábul the mighty Rustam lay,
And Turkman sworders in the world held sway.

§ 15

How Gúdarz had a Dream of Kai Khusrau

Gúdarz one night dreamed that a watery cloud [1]
Rose o'er Írán, and on it sat Surúsh,
Who thus addressed him: "Give to me thine ear
As thou wouldst be released from this distress,
From this injurious Turkman dragon-fierce.
There is a youthful prince now in Túrán,
Sháh Kai Khusrau by name. He is a prince,
The offspring of the loins of Siyáwush,
A man of worship and of noble race,
Illustrious, of the stock of Kai Kubád,
And sprung from Túr upon the mother's side.
Whenas his glorious feet shall reach Írán
Heaven will accord to him his full desire.
Then will he gird him to avenge his father,
Will overturn the sovereignty of Túr,

[1] An emblem of coming prosperity in a land where rain is the chief want.

Will make the waters of the Red Sea boil,
Pause not in vengeance on Afrásiyáb,
But live in his cuirass the whole year through,
And pass his days and nights upon the saddle.
Among the chiefs and warriors of Írán
None will discover him excepting Gív:
Such is the outcome destined by the sky.
On Gív the Judge hath rightly lavished love."
Gúdarz awoke and, with his hoary beard
Upon the ground, gave thanks to God: his heart
Was hopeful of a Sháh to rule the world.
Now when the sun appeared above the dales,
Ascending as it were a shining lamp,
The chieftain sat upon his ivory throne,
And furnished forth the hall with seats of teak.
V. 711 Fulfilled by anxious thought he summoned Gív
And told him of the dream in many words,
Thus saying: "Glorious are thy feet and days,
And glorious is thy world-illuming star;
Since thy blest mother bare thee earth hath been
Fulfilled with blessings. Blest Surúsh appeared
Last night to me in sleep by God's command.
He sat upon a cloud mid wind and rain,
And purged the world of woe. He looked at me
And said: 'Why all this grief? Why is the world
Thus filled with warfare and thus parched with drought?
Because Káús hath neither Grace nor might,
And heedeth not the precedents of Sháhs.
When Kai Khusrau arriveth from Túrán
He will bring war and trouble on the foe;
But none of all the valiant chiefs can find him
Save Gív, the famous offspring of Gúdarz.'
Thus heaven hath ordained thee to remove
Our sorrow, toil, and bondage. Thou hast sought
For fame in war, and now eternal fame
Is in thy reach, for, while the world hath men

And words, thy good name will continue fresh.
'Twill be a toil, but one with fame and treasure,
A toil which surely will exalt thy fame;
And, since thou wilt not tarry here for ever,
That fame is better than this Wayside Inn,
For thou wilt bring a monarch to the world,
And cause the tree of fealty to fruit."
Gív answered: "Father! I am but a slave;
For thy sake will I labour while I live.
If this may be I will accomplish it:
By thy great name I swear it, O my guide!"
He went home and prepared for setting forth,
Lost in amazement at his father's dream.
The spouse of Gív was of exalted rank— V. 712
The well-loved daughter of the hero Rustam—
Bánúgashasp. News reached her that Gív's steed
Was being saddled for his expedition.
She went to him and said: "Aspiring chief!
I hear that thou art going to Túrán
To seek both far and near for Kai Khusrau;
So, if the paladin will give me leave,
I will betake me joyfully to Rustam,
Because I long to look upon his face,
And through not seeing him my soul is sad.
Farewell to thee, O chief of paladins!
Mayst thou for ever be our heroes' stay."
The chieftain having given his consent,
Toward Sístán with speed the lady went.

§ 16

How Gív went to Túrán in Quest of Kai Khusrau

At sunrise, when the earth resembled flowers
Of fenugreek, the gallant Gív approached
With girded loins, upon a steed with feet

As swift as wind. Gúdarz inquired of him:—
"What comrade hast thou? Who will fare with thee?"
He thus replied: "O chief of paladins,
Brave, ardent, and exalted! I have need
Of no companions save my horse and lasso.
Suspicion will be roused if I take men,
And I shall bring a quarrel on myself.
A lasso in the straps, a rapid steed,
A sword and Indian vesture are enough,
Unless perhaps a guide to lead the way.
My home awhile will be the plain and mountain,
I may not pass through cities, for the folk
Will recognise me and I shall repent it.
I shall return rejoicing, bright of soul,
Through thy good fortune, chief of paladins!
Tend heedfully my little son Bízhan[1]
And guard him carefully against mischance,
V. 713 Give him instruction in the art of war,
He need learn nothing but to feast and fight;
Young as he is I note his manliness
With satisfaction. Fare well. Think of me
Without anxiety. I cannot tell
If we shall meet again. The secret things
Of God who knoweth? When thy cheeks are bathed
For prayer entreat the Lord on mine account,
For He is higher than all height; the mighty
Are but His slaves. This day revolveth not
Without His will; there is no food or sleep
Save at His word. He made both time and space,
The mighty and the weak. He is our hope
And fear, the Lord of all the elements,
And oh! may He vouchsafe to be my Helper,
And guide me to illustrious Khusrau."
The father hoary-headed, while the youth

[1] The first mention of this famous hero who is an especial favourite of the poet's.

Fierce as a lion girded up his loins,
Knew not if he should see his son again,
And was distracted at his setting out.
The gallant Gív dismounted from his steed,
And kissed the hand of that exalted Lion,
Who clasped him tightly in a fond embrace,
And kissed him oft upon the face and head.
That ancient man cried unto God: "Just Judge!
Be Thou my Helper. To Thy care I leave
Him who is sense and soul and life to me—
My son so noble and so young—that haply
The realm may be delivered from this stress.
Restore him to me safely, O my King!"
Those in the world who toil laboriously,
And win applause because their aims are high,
Must make the dust their bed when all is done; V. 714
That is their bane, and antidote is none.
Thy sojourn here, thou knowest, is soon sped,
Why set the crown of greed upon thy head?
Canst thou still wear it after thou art dead?
In this world ample pleasure thou canst take,
Why art thou toiling for another's sake?
Thou toilest and another will consume
At ease, unmindful of thy bier and tomb,
But for him also pleasure hath its bound,
And his head too must pass beneath the ground.
Think then upon the day when thou must go,
And make it thine to serve God here below,
Incline to good and do to no man scath,
For, in a word, this is Salvation's path.
Upon this world that whirleth set no store,
It will not last with thee for evermore.
Long though thou stayest thou wilt reach the bourne
And, having reached it, there is no return.
So now thou sage, whose heart is wakeful! cease
From doubt, and from the mire thy foot release.

'Tis God Almighty that sustaineth thee,
His servant thou and thy Creator He.
Although thou weighest down thy neck with thought,
Of His existence ask and question naught,
And if by any it be not confest
With such thou shalt not eat or sleep or rest,
Because their heads are witless, their hearts blind,
And wise men count not such among mankind.
Both earth and water of God's being tell,
Let not thy knowledge prove thy way to Hell,
For His are power and knowledge and control,
The Artist He of wisdom and the soul.

V. 715 When mused the monarch of Túrán and said:—
"Above all people will I lift my head,"
And slew a youth so royal, then was he
Confronted by his evil destiny.
Howbeit from his loins God caused to shoot
A Tree[1] of noble height and yielding fruit,
A Tree that dealing with him as was just
Sent both his wits and palace up in dust.
The Lord of Saturn, Sun, and Moon is He
That giveth victory and mastery;
The Lord of being and of righteousness,
'Tis He that giveth us our more and less.
There is one path—His will—and only one—
A knowledge hidden from the moon and sun.
At His command Gív girded up his loins,
And like a savage lion sallied forth;
He took no comrade with him, but resigned
To God his body used to luxury;
If, when he reached the marches of Túrán,
He found a man alone Gív questioned him
In Turkman as to Kai Khusrau. When such
Replied: "I wot not of that prince," Gív used

[1] Kai Khusrau, son of Siyáwush and of Farangís, daughter of Afrásiyáb.

To slay him, hitch him in the lasso's noose,
Drag him aside, and cover him with dust,
That no one might discover his own secret,
Or hear his name or any news of him.
He had awhile a countryman as guide
From whom he hid the object of his quest.
At length he said: "I fain would ask a question
In confidence. If thou shalt wisely purge
Thy heart of craft and answer truthfully
Then I will give thee whatsoe'er thou wilt, V. 716
And not deny thee e'en my soul and body."
"There is no lack of knowledge," said the guide,
"But then it is dispersed 'mongst all the folk.
If I have any knowledge of the matter
Thou wilt not find me speechless."
"Where," said Gív,
"Is Kai Khusrau? Thou must declare the truth."
The guide thus answered: "I have never heard
Or asked concerning one so named."
And so
Gív smote him with the sword and laid him low.

§ 17

The Finding of Kai Khusrau

Gív like a madman roamed about to find
Some traces of the prince. While seven years passed
His loins were galled by sword and leathern girdle.
He fed on onagers and wore their skins,
At times had brackish water and green herbs,
And went about the desert and the mountains
In travail and in hardship far from men.
Now at the time when Rustam led his host
Across the river to the Íránian side
Afrásiyáb returned to Gang, Túrán

Came to his hand again, and then he bade
Pírán: "Bring hither ill-starred Kai Khusrau
Back from Máchín and give him to his mother,
But have the roads well watched."
Pírán dispatched
A messenger upon a noble camel,
And had the son of Siyáwush brought back—
A prudent and a life-inspiring youth—
And gave him to his mother. Passed a while.
As gallant Gív was roaming o'er Túrán
In melancholy case, it so fell out
V. 717 One day that, full of anxious thoughts, he came
Within the precincts of a famous wood,
And wandered woe-begone along the mead;
The world was jocund but his heart was sad.
He saw the earth all verdant, brooks a-brim,
And all the scene right apt for rest and sleep.
Dismounting from his horse he turned it loose,
And laid him down but with an anxious heart.
He said: "The foul Dív verily possessed
The paladin when he beheld that dream.
I find no traces here of Kai Khusrau:
What do I gain by all my wanderings?
Now while my comrades are engaged in war,
And while my friends are sitting at the feast,
These seeking pleasure, those in quest of fame,
My lot is throwing walnuts on a dome!
I do but spend my soul in vain, 'tis like
A bended bow; Khusrau hath not been born
At all, or fate hath flung him to the winds.
I get but toil and hardship by my quest:
Blest is the man that perisheth by poison."
With heart all sorrowful he roamed about
Those meadows in his search, and spied afar
Beside a sparkling stream a beauteous youth
Of cypress-height, a wine-cup in his hand,

And on his head a bright, sweet wreath. His mien
Betokened Grace and wisdom. Thou hadst said :—
"'Tis Siyáwush upon his ivory throne,
And turquoise-crowned; his looks exhale the scent
Of love itself, his locks adorn the crown."
Gív thought: "This is none other than the prince!
Naught but a throne befitteth such a mien."
Dismounting from his charger he advanced V. 718
On foot and, as he drew anear, the bolts
Were loosened on the portal of his travail,
And all his splendid treasure came in sight.
When Kai Khusrau looked from beside the stream
He smiled, while gladness made his heart to throb,
And thought: "This warrior is none else but Gív:
This land hath not a chief of such a stamp.
He is engaged in making quest for me
To bear me to Írán to make me Sháh."
As that redoubted warrior approached,
Khusrau the prince moved forward from his place,
And said to him: "O Gív! thou art well come;
Thy coming here is wisdom's fitting gift.
How didst thou make thy passage to this land?
What tidings hast thou touching Tús, Gúdarz,
And Sháh Káús? Are they in happiness,
And do they in their hearts think of Khusrau?
How is it with the elephantine Rustam,
The aspiring one, with Zál, and all the rest?"
Gív heard the words amazed, invoked the name
Of God, and answered: "O exalted chief!
All yearn for thee. Methinketh that thou art
The son of Siyáwush, of royal race,
And wise; but say, thou head of upright men!
Who told thee of Gúdarz, Gív, and Kishwád?
May Grace and happiness be thine."
He answered :—
"O lion-man! my mother told me this—

That when my father by the Grace of God
Entrusted unto her his last commands,
V. 719 He said: "Whatever mischief may befall me,
Still in the end will Kai Khusrau appear,
And bring a key to open all the locks.
When he hath grown a noble warrior
The doughty Gív will come forth from Írán,
And bear him to the throne among the nobles
And lion-men. His valour will restore
The world, and execute revenge for me."

Gív said: "O head of all the chiefs! what mark
Hast thou to indicate the Grace of kingship?
The mark of Siyáwush was manifest
As 'twere a drop of pitch upon a rose-bed,
Uncover then and show to me thine arm,
Because thy mark is known to every one."

The prince made bare his arm and Gív perceived
The black mark on it. Now this mark had been
A birth-mark from the time of Kai Kubád—
A clear distinction of the Kaian race.
When Gív beheld that mark he did obeisance,
And weeping told his errand. Kai Khusrau
Embraced him, giving thanks with joy, and asked
About Írán, the imperial throne, Gúdarz,
And Rustam, lover of the fray. Gív said:—
"O royal world-lord, noble, fortunate,
And wise! were God, who knoweth good and ill,
To give to me the whole of Paradise,
The seven climes and sovereign sway withal,
The seat of greatness and the crown of might,
My heart would not exult therein so much
As in beholding thy face in Túrán.
Who knoweth in Írán if I am living,
Or if I have been laid in dust or burned,
Or have encountered Siyáwush alive,
And questioned him about his care and travail?

Thanks be to God that fate determineth V. 720
This irksome toil in happiness and joy."
Together they departed from the wood
While Kai Khusrau asked after Sháh Káús,
About Gív's seven years of grief and pain,
His lodging, sleep, and food. Gív answered all,
And spake about the purpose of the Lord,
The vision of Gúdarz, his own long toil,
His victuals, clothes, and rest, his pains and pleasures;
How years had spent the Grace of Kai Káús,
And how he was distracted for his son;
How all was dark and scentless in his palace,
And how the desolation was complete.
The heart of Kai Khusrau burned at these woes,
His two cheeks flamed like fire. He said to Gív:—
"Fate giveth thee for travail rest and ease;
Be as my sire, but say not anything
To any one, and note what time will bring."

§ 18

How Gív and Kai Khusrau went to Siyáwushgird

The chieftain mounted on the steed of Gív,
And that brave warrior preceded him
With Indian sword in hand. If any met them
Gív, ever on the watch, struck off his head,
And covered up the corpse with earth and dust.
They made their journey to Siyáwushgird,
And, when they both recovered heart and wit,
They made a confidant of Farangís,
And privily agreed to quit the place,
Unnoticed by the troops. "We shall but straiten
The world to us if we delay," said she.
"Afrásiyáb will hear, will neither eat
Nor sleep, but like the White Dív follow us,

Will make our hearts despair of pleasant life,
V. 721 And leave not one of us, at large or hiding,
Alive. The world is full of enemies,
Our whole land is the abode of Áhriman.
Hear mine advice, my son endowed with Grace!
There is a meadow near out of the track
Of Turkman cavaliers; be there at dawn,
And have this saddle and black bridle with thee.
Thou wilt behold a mountain whereupon
Clouds fret their faces. Having scaled the height
Thou wilt behold the mead like jocund spring,
All rivulets and purling streams: the soul
Reviveth at the sight. When it is noon,
And thou art eager for repose, the herds
At pasture there will water at the streams.
Show to Bihzád the saddle and the bridle,
And, if he proveth tractable, advance,
Go quickly to him, let him see thy face,
Caress him with thy hand and speak to him.
When Siyáwush had given up all hope
Of this world, and his day was turned to night,
He spake thus to Bihzád his sable steed:—
'Be thou henceforth free as the wind itself.
Remain upon the mountains and the meadows,
And when Khusrau shall come in quest of thee
Be thou his charger, tramp the whole world thro',
And sweep the earth of foemen with thy shoe.'"

§ 19

How Kai Khusrau won Bihzád

The valiant chieftain mounted on his steed
With Gív in front on foot. They set their faces
Toward the heights as men who seek for safety.
V. 722 Now when the herds came down to watering,

And having drunk their fill turned to depart,
Illustrious Khusrau went hastily
Toward the stream and, to attain his wish,
Showed to Bihzád the saddle and the reins.
The steed looked at him, recognised a master,
And stirred not from the stream, but gazed with sighs
Upon the pard-skin seat of Siyáwush,
The lengthy stirrups, and the poplar saddle.
This Kai Khusrau observed and hurried up.
Meanwhile the noble black stood still and wept.
Moreover Kai Khusrau and Gív wept too,
As though they had been burning in fierce flame,
And while they shed tears from their eyes their tongues
Were full of curses on Afrásiyáb.
Khusrau caressed the horse's eyes and face,
Stroked down his chest and shoulders, scratched his hide,
Put o'er his head the bridle, saddled him,
And spake the while with grief of Siyáwush,
Then mounting gripped his legs; the mighty beast
Sped like a blast out of the sight of Gív,
Who troubled and amazed invoked God's name.
"This," he exclaimed, "is subtle Áhriman
Appearing in the likeness of a horse!
The prince's life is lost and my toil too,
My toil—the only treasure that I had!"
When Kai Khusrau had traversed half the mountain
He drew his black reins and remained till Gív
O'ertook him, then the shrewd and valiant prince
Exclaimed: "Shall I inform the paladin
What I perceived was passing in his thoughts?"
Gív said to him: "O most exalted prince!
All secrets should be open unto thee:
Thou with thy Grace divine and Kaian stature V. 723
Canst penetrate a hair and see within it."
He said: "Thou didst mistrust this noble steed,

And think: 'Now Áhriman hath got the youth,
Who hath gone off and turned my toil to wind.
My spirit mourneth and the dívs rejoice.'"

The veteran Gív dismounted from his horse,
Invoking blessing on the warrior-prince,
And said: "May day and night be fortunate
To thee, thy foemen's hearts be rooted out,
Since God hath given to thee worth and birth,
With throne and stature, state and Grace divine."

They left the heights, and set off toward the palace
With brains absorbed in thought and scheming minds;
On reaching Farangís they much discussed
The toilsome journey, and the way to keep
The project secret. When she saw Bihzád
Her face was hidden by a flood of tears,
She laid her cheek against his mane and chest,
And called upon the soul of Siyáwush.
When she had wept she hurried to her hoards,
For in the palace was a secret treasure—
Known but to her—of jewels and dínárs,
Of iron maces and horse-furniture,
As well as daggers, swords, and massive sparths.
With cheeks that ran with tears of blood, and liver
Pierced by her grief, she showed her son the treasure,
And said to Gív: "O veteran in toil!
Choose what thou pleasest from this treasury—
Dínárs and jewels fit for kings to wear,
And crowns with patterns wrought in precious stones.
We are the keepers and the hoard is thine;
Thine are the toil and risk."

V. 724 He kissed the ground,
And said: "O chief of dames! thou makest earth
A Spring in Paradise, and, as thou willest,
The sky apportioneth both good and ill.
Be all the world a slave before thy son,
And be the heads of all thy foes wrung off."

When Gív's eye fell upon those precious things
He chose the mail of valiant Siyáwush.
They then selected all the choicest gems,
And bare away as much as they could carry
As well as helms, rich armour for the steeds,
And weapons suited to a paladin,
Then having locked the hoard the prince in haste
Made ready for the journey through the waste.

§ 20

How Farangís went with Kai Khusrau and Gív to Írán

This done they put the saddles on their steeds,
Those fleet and famous steeds, while Farangís
Assumed the helmet, and all three departed
Like wind and eagerly toward Írán,
But secretly and taking all precautions.
The thing, however, could not be concealed
A moment; one approached Pírán and said:—
"Illustrious Gív came from Írán to seek
The brave and shrewd Khusrau, and hath gone back
With him and Farangís."
Pírán was grieved,
And trembled like the branches of a tree.
He thought: "The king's foreboding hath proved true!
What shall I say to him? My lustre now
Is darkness in his eyes!"
He chose Kulbád
And Nastíhan—a man of steel—and bade
Three hundred Turkman horse to muster dight
For war, and thus addressed them: "Hence with you,
Lose no time in your saddles, place the head V. 725
Of Gív upon a spear, hide Farangís
In dust, and bind accurséd Kai Khusrau—
The ill-starred lackland. If the miscreant

Shall cross the river what will not befall
Our land and chiefs!"
Thus went the brave young band
Commanded by two wary paladins.
The persecuted prince and Farangís,
Worn out with journeying and nights of toil,
Had laid them down to sleep, and while they slept
Gív stood on guard with angry eyes intent
Upon the road by which the band approached.
He wore his habergeon; his helm was on;
His heart was full; he was prepared to die;
And, like a valiant chief, he had his steed
Accoutred by his side in case of need.

§ 21

How Kulbád and Nastíhan fled from Gív

Gív saw afar the dust raised by the troops,
And having drawn his sword sent up a shout
Like thunder, such a shout as would have dazed
A lion's brain and spirit, then he rushed
Like dust among the troop and made earth dark
By combat. With his sword and mace he showered
Down iron from above, till by the blows
The heads of all the chiefs grew sick of strife,
While to his eyes, such were his pain and rage,
A river seemed a rill. Anon they hemmed him—
A raging Lion in a host of men.
The field became a reed-bed with their spears,
Both sun and moon were hid, the Lion raged,
And made a winefat of the bed of reeds
With blood, o'erthrowing many of his foes:
Those valiant cavaliers were all astound,
V. 726 And thus Kulbád addressed brave Nastíhan:—
"This is a rock of flint with neck and arms!
See here the Grace of Kai Khusrau and not

The mace of Gív! I know not what will come
Upon our fields and fells, for who can traverse
The will of God? Astrologers presage
Disaster to Túrán and to her lords."

They made a charge at Gív with all their troops
Like lions, giving and receiving blows:
The battle-shouts and blast of clarions
Went up and shook the mountains to their cores,
The alleys and the plains were filled with slain,
And earth became like cercis-bloom with blood.
The whole host turned away in flight from Gív—
That noble chief, the refuge of the troops—
And made their way all wounded and fordone
To proud Pírán, while gallant Gív returned,
With breast and hands all bloody, like a lion
To Kai Khusrau, and said: "O prince! rejoice!
May health be thine, and wisdom thy companion!
Kulbád and Nastíhan the deft of hand
Have been pursuing us with hostile troops,
And those that still survive have gone back home
With necks and chests in case to ask our tears.
I know not any horseman in Írán
Save Rustam able to encounter me."

Khusrau, pure in the Faith, rejoiced o'er Gív,
Called blessings down on him, and praised him greatly;
They took some food, such as came first to hand,
And hasted on toward the trackless waste.

Now when the Turkman troops came to Pírán
So stricken, heated, and discomfited,
He spake in anger to Kulbád, and said:—
"This is a marvel which must not be hidden!
What have ye done to Gív? Where is Khusrau?
How went the matter? Tell me honestly."

Kulbád said: "If I tell, O paladin!
What gallant Gív did to our warriors,
Thou wouldst no more of battles. Thou hast seen me

V. 727 Oft with the host, and hast approved my prowess,
Yet when I charged him, thinking: 'Now shall I
Behold his overthrow,' in sooth he bore
Above a thousand buffets of mine ax.
Thou wouldst have said: 'His head is but an anvil,
His chest and arms are solid ivory!'
Oft have I gazed on Rustam in the fight,
And hearkened tales of mighty warriors,
But never knew one so endure the blows,
The rush, and whirl of war. Though we had borne
Wax maces, and our horsemen pard-skin lances,
No wonder had his shoulders, arms, and breast
Been pounded small. He kept his dash and keenness
Throughout, and bellowed like an elephant.
The plain was heaped with slain, our warriors
Were routed by one man!"

Pírán was wroth;
"Enough," he said, "'tis shame to tell the tale;
Such words as these are not for cavaliers.
Attempt no more to strive with men of war.
Thou wentest forth with noble Nastíhan,
And troops like lions; now thou makest Gív
A maddened elephant; thy fame is sped
With mighty men; Afrásiyáb at hearing
Will fling away from him the imperial crown,
Because two paladins, two gallant horsemen,
Accompanied by soldiers dight for war,
Turned tail before a single cavalier,
Who slaughtered many! Mocking and disgrace
Are thine, not standard, kettledrum, and mace."

§ 22

How Pírán pursued Kai Khusrau

Pírán chose from his troops six thousand horse—
V. 728 Brave warriors. "Swiftly ply," he said to them,

"Your fleet steeds' reins, like savage lions go
By day and night, no girdle must be loosed,
For if Khusrau and Gív shall reach Írán
The women there will be as lionesses,
And neither earth nor water will remain
Within Túrán. Afrásiyáb, heart-seared,
Will lay the blame of this escape on me,
Not on the process of sun, moon, and stars."
Thereat they raised their heads and hurried on
By day and night, till scattered and disordered
They reached a narrow river, where the stream
Was deep and difficult for men to cross,
That river which was called Gulzaryún,
And was in springtide like a stream of blood.
Upon the further bank the prince and Gív
Were sleeping: Farangís was keeping watch,
And looking round her from her post descried V. 729
The banner of the leader of Túrán!
She ran to Gív, gave the alarm, and roused
The sleepers, crying: "Man of toil! arise!
'Tis time to flee, a host pursueth us.
Our time, I fear, is come. If they shall take thee
They will not leave thee living and will rack
Our hearts for thee. Me and my son in tears
Pírán will bear bound to Afrásiyáb,
And after that I know not what may chance;
None wotteth of the secrets of high heaven."
Gív said: "O Moon of dames! why vex thy soul
Herein? Ascend yon mountain with the prince;
Fear nothing from Pírán or from his host.
The conquering Lord of earth is mine ally,
The star of fortune lieth on my breast.
By help of God, the Author of our lives,
I will not leave a rider in the saddle."
Then said Khusrau: "O warrior! my cause
Is wearisome to thee. I have been spared

The net of bale. Seek not the Dragon's breath
So oft. Be mine to go upon the plain,
And spurt blood heavenward with my scimitar."
V. 730 Gív answered: "Noble prince! the world hath need
Of thee to wear its crown. My sire and I
Are paladins whose loins are ever girt
To serve the Sháhs; three score and eighteen brothers
Have I; the world will perish with thy name,
For paladins are many, Sháhs are few.
Few? I see none! If I am slain, another
Will take my place, the royal head and crown
Will still survive; but if afar from here
Thou perish [1] I see none fit for the crown
And throne. The winds will take my seven years' toil,
My race will be disgraced. Choose then the heights,
And mark yon host. The World-lord is mine aid.
Earth is beneath thy shadowing wings; if I
Succeed thy Grace will give the victory."

§ 23

How Pírán contended with Gív

Gív donned his mail and came forth like a lion,
His steed as 'twere a mountain under him.
The chief was on this side, the host on that;
Between the river flowed and barred the way.
Gív roared out like a thunderclap in spring,
Inquiring for the captain of the host.
Pírán was wroth, upbraided Gív, and said:—
"Thou miscreant by nature and descent!
Com'st thou alone so hardily to face
An army? Thou shalt taste two-headed javelins,
While falcons' talons shall provide thy bier.
Thou art a single horseman, iron mountain

[1] "Si tu péris dans une *captivité* lointaine."—MOHL.

Although thou be. A thousand will surround thee
Like ants, will smash the armour on thy breast,
And drag thy carrion-carcase in the dust.
The mighty lion springing spake this saw :—
'Whene'er the stag hath reached its destined day
Fate reckoneth each breath drawn by the prey V. 731
Till it shall cross a lion on the way.'
So fortune now hath brought thee in my path
Here in the presence of this famous host."

Brave Gív, that chief of mighty paladins,
Replied in thunder-tones: "Thou miscreant Turkman
Of dívs begotten! perish chiefs like thee!
Thou sawest my revenge for Siyáwush,
And hadst good reason to admire my prowess,
For many chieftains of Túrán and Chín
Fell by my hand in battle. I it was
Who ravaged all thy home and wrecked thy life.
Thy two chief dames were in the company
That I dragged off in bondage from Khutan,
Thy sister one, the other was thy spouse,
Who ever tendered thee both soul and body.
When I beheld those wretched Turkman dames
I gave them to the meanest of my slaves,
While thou didst show thy back as women would,
And run away with shrieks and doleful howls.
For thee mankind should fight like womankind;
Brag not of bravery to warriors,
For chiefs shall sing hereafter to thy shame
How Gív unaided carried off Khusrau,
And all shall hold your names to be disgraced.
Again, while all the princes of the earth—
Faghfúr and Cæsar and the Khán of Chín,
The nobles and the kin of Shah Káús,
Brave men and warriors with golden casques—
Sought Rustam's daughter eagerly in marriage,
And Tús too sent to ask her, matchless Rustam

Met him with scorn, and put their offer by
Because they were unworthy. Afterward,
V. 732 When he had looked throughout the world in vain,
He gave his favourite daughter to myself—
A daughter whom he prized above his crown.
That high exalted and most noble prince
Gave me the horsewoman Bánúgashasp,
His eldest daughter, chose me of all lords,
And raised my head to heaven. I gave my sister,
That Moon of ladies—Shahr-Bánú-Iram—
To him. Excepting elephantine Rustam,
The lion-man, I do not know my match,
And when I come with him to take revenge
Ye must make ready to bewail your dead.
Now with this steel-blue falchion will I turn
The world before your eyes as black as pitch,
And if I leave one of your host alive
Give to me never more the name of man.
Íránward bear I royal Kai Khusrau
To bring him to the monarch of the brave,
To seat him on the famous ivory throne,
And place upon his head the glorious crown.
Then will I don again this precious mail,
And make Túrán the lair of mighty lions.
Son am I to Gúdarz son of Kishwád;
The noble Gív am I, the prince of chiefs,
Thou luckless Turkman, thou accursed Pírán!
May no crown, throne, or realm be ever thine.
I will behead thee with mine Indian sword,
Thy mail and helmet shall weep over thee;
Death from my twisted lasso shalt thou meet,
Thy mail and helm shall be thy winding-sheet."

§ 24

How Pírán was taken by Gív

Pírán was furious and wept with rage, V. 733
Then gripping with his legs urged on his steed,
And, with his massive mace upon his shoulder,
Launched forth like boat on stream, invoking Him
That giveth every good. Gív bode his time
Until the chief had crossed, and then, declining,
Brave leader though he was, as if through fear
The combat, fled. His foe approached, the world
Grew night-dark. Gív, when he had drawn Pírán
Afar from stream and host, flung mace on saddle
And charged "like dragon raging," thou hadst said.
Pírán the Lion fled pursued by Gív,
Who unobserved took from the straps his lasso,
Then whirling round his arm discharged the coil,
And caught his foeman's head, dismounted him, V. 734
Drave him afoot disgraced far from the stream,
Then threw him on the ground, secured his hands,
And donned his mail. When this was done Gív took
His prisoner's flag and rode up to the bank.
The Turkmans seeing their commander's flag
Advanced to meet him as a thing of course.
There rose a shout with din of clarions,
Of pipes, and Indian bells. Perceiving this
Gív strove as 'twere a boat against the waves,
And laid his massive mace upon his shoulder,
While all the troops looked at him wondering.
Soon with reins lightly held and stirrups pressed
He filled the haughty Turkmans' heads with fear,
And with his sword, his stirrups, arms, and onset
Laid them in dust. The plain was like a mountain
Of dead, one man discomfited the host.
The chieftains turned their backs, the Lion charged

The Flock, that great host fled from Gív, who crossed
The stream again so fresh that thou hadst said:—
"He hath not dreamed of foes." He hurried back
To cut Pírán's head off, but drave him first
Afoot, scorned, hustled, and beside himself,
In anguish, wan, and wretched to Khusrau.
Gív then dismounted, drew anear the prince,
And, having kissed the ground and homaged him,
Exclaimed: "This miscreant and faithless man
Is now a captive in the Dragon's jaws,
V. 735 So let him now be even as the wind,
Like Siyáwush, who hearkened to his words."
Pírán too did obeisance to the prince,
Cried with a loud voice, kissed the ground, and said:—
"O prince that seekest after understanding,
And art a shining sun among the people!
Thou knowest mine affliction, my distress,
And struggle with the king on thine account.
Prince Siyáwush had lived if I thy slave
Had been at court. By rede and artifice
I saved thee and thy mother from the Dív.
So by thy Grace and fortune grant that I
Have from this Dragon's clutch my liberty."

§ 25

How Farangís delivered Pírán from Gív

Gív looked for orders at Khusrau and saw
The tearful eyes of Farangís, whose tongue
Was fraught with curses on Afrásiyáb.
She said to Giv: "O chief, who hast endured
Such wanderings! this hoary paladin
Is both a wise and understanding prince;
And know that next to God—our Judge and Guide—
He was the means of saving us from death.

He with his love screened us from injury,
And seeketh now for quarter in return;
So grant him to us, O thou noble one!
For he hath never led the way to ill."
Gív said to her: "O chief of ladies! live
For ever bright in mind and joyfully.
I swore a mighty oath by moon and crown,
And by the great Sháh's throne: 'If I shall get
The best of him in battle I will make
Earth with his blood like cercis-bloom.'"
Khusrau
Said: "Keep thine oath to God, thou lion-like!
And ease thy heart on that score: pierce his ear V. 736
Through with thy dagger, and as blood-drops fall
Thence to the ground think of both love and vengeance."
Gív saw the prince's heart warm to Pírán,
Perceived the prince's cheeks all tears and ruth,
So went and pierced Pírán's ear with his dagger,
And slept in peace because his oath was kept.
Pírán said to Khusrau: "I cannot go
Back to the host afoot; bid him restore
My steed; then thou hast given me life and means."
The valiant prince requested Gív: "Bestow
On me his charger, O thou mighty Lion!"
Gív spake thus to Pírán: "Brave warrior!
Why hast thou grown so feeble on the field
Of fight? If thou wouldst have thy wind-foot steed,
First will I bind thy hands, then thou shalt gain
Thy liberty upon a mighty oath
That none shall loose thy bonds except Gulshahr,
Because she is the chief among thy dames,
And knoweth thee completely—skin and marrow."
The paladin agreed and purchased life V. 737
And charger, swearing: "None shall loose my bonds
Upon the way. Gulshahr alone shall do it."

Gív bound him, brought the horse, and bade him mount.
Then Farangís and goodly Kai Khusrau
Embraced him tenderly; he took his leave
With many blessings on Khusrau and Gív.

§ 26

How Afrásiyáb found Pírán on the Way

The sun turned dark before Afrásiyáb
When news came from the host; he sounded trump
And tymbal, called to horse and went like fire.
In haste he made two stages into one,
And sped forth like an arrow from the bow.
Arriving at the place whereat Kulbád
Had fought he saw troops scattered o'er the land,
While everywhere lay bodies of the fallen.
He asked: "How came this paladin with troops
Here from Írán? None of our warriors
Knew of a mighty army coming thence.
Who told those sons of dívs that Siyáwush
Had offspring here? If dust had been his tutor
Mine eyes had never seen a day like this."
"Thou mayst be easy," Sipahram replied,
"So far as thy concern is for an army.
V. 738 'Twas Gív, son of Gúdarz, none else; we saw
No other cavalier with him. One man
Discomfited our troops in fight, and so
Gív and the prince and Farangís escaped."
On hearing this the monarch's cheeks turned pale:
His heart was full of pain at this reverse;
He answered: "This is as the sages said.
When God bestoweth fortune on a man
He cometh to the throne without an effort."
While they conversed a host appeared in sight

Led by Pírán besmirched with dust and blood.
The king imagined: "He hath captured Gív,
And come on first with news of victory,"
But, nearer, saw that he was wounded sore
And bound fast as a rock upon the saddle,
With both hands pinioned tightly at his back.
The king amazed and pained asked what it meant.
Then said Pírán: "No ravening wolf or tiger,
Or savage lion, is like Gív in battle,
Although alone. The fear of fighting him
Would make a crocodile burn under water.
He first attacked us with a massive mace,
And dealt us blows as with a blacksmith's hammer.
By dint of steed and dexterous horsemanship
He overthrew, smote down our cavaliers,
And slaughtered them at will, yet cloud ne'er rained
More drops than sword-strokes fell upon his head!
In sooth his saddle was no bed of roses;
Thou wouldst have said: 'He is a mountain's match.'
At last our troops all turned and I alone
Remained to fight with him. He fled from me,
But threw his twisted lasso, and my waist V. 739
Was taken in its coils. I lost my head,
And fell with all my weight upon the ground.
He lighted from his charger, bound my hands.
And then remounting drave me on before him.[1]
He carried me in shame to Kai Khusrau,
And would have had my head, but Farangís
Came to mine aid; he spared my life but pierced
Mine ear, and in a fury bound my hands,
Then by the Sháh's own life and head, by sun
And moon, by God Almighty, crown and throne,
Proposed to me a mighty oath, and I,
Since I saw fortune hostile, duly swore
That nobody should loose me but my wife,

[1] Reading with P.

Gulshahr. Thus did he bind me head and foot
With lassos and, when that was done, by oaths.
I know not why the sky hath ceased to love me."
Afrásiyáb on hearing wept for rage,
And lifting up his voice drave forth Pírán,
Who writhing as he was made no reply.
Then blustering and cursing swore the king:—
"Though Gív and that Dív's child were thunder-clouds
Or storm-winds I would make them fall from heaven.
With this," he drew his sword, "this iron-piercer,
Will I in vengeance rob them both of breath,
And as for Farangís will make the world
Both strait and dark to her when I shall catch her,
V. 740 For I will cleave her with the scimitar,
And fling her to the fish to tear in pieces.
Khusrau is fain to seek Írán, but why
Should Farangís thus bear him company?"

§ 27

How Gív disputed with the Toll-man

Pírán departed sadly toward Khutan:
Meanwhile Afrásiyáb pursued his march
Toward Jíhún, and in his anger trailed
His skirt in blood. He bade Húmán: "Haste on,
And draw rein at the river. If Khusrau
And Gív get over, any pains of ours
Are but a desert-blast. I was forewarned
Of this by what a sage said long ago:—
'The seed of Túr and Kai Kubád combined
Will raise a monarch of illustrious mind
To make Túrán a brake of thorns again,
And leave no city on its wide champaign.
Írán will have his love, Túrán will know
The vengeful face that looketh on a foe."

When Gív and Kai Khusrau had reached the stream
In haste to cross they wrangled with the toll-man.
Gív said: "What swift and well appointed boat
Fit for the use of Kai Khusrau is here?"
The man replied: "What hath a stream to do
With king or slave? If thou hast need to cross
It is incumbent to bespeak a boat."
Gív said to him: "Demand whate'er thou wilt,
But let us cross because a host approacheth."
The officer, on hearing this from Gív,
Became extortionate, and said: "I ask
No little toll, but one of four—thy mail,
Thy black steed, handmaid, or thy moon-like page."
Gív answered him: "O thou of broken wits! V. 741
Do words like these become a man like thee?
Were he a subject of the king of kings
Thou wouldst receive thy portion from the world;
But what art thou to ask the Sháh himself?
Art thou so hasty, miserable wretch?
And then his mother is thy next demand!
Thou wouldest have the moon's crown as thy toll!
Or thirdly thou requirest black Bihzád
Who when he hasteth overtaketh wind!
Or fourthly in thy folly thou wouldst take
My mail, when mail is indispensable,
And this is steel which water will not wet,
And such as fire and Indian scimitars,
Or spears or arrows, have no power to harm!
Thou wouldst have toll: then take it in the river!
The stream for us, the ferry-boat for thee;
'Twill not be easy to collect thy fee!"

§ 28

How Kai Khusrau crossed the Jíhún

Gív told the prince: "If thou art Kai Khusrau
The stream will favour thee. When Farídún
Crossed the Arwand [1] it led him to the throne,
And all the world became the slave of him
Who had the Grace and glory. Tarry not
If thou art Sháh, the shelter of the Lions
And warriors. The stream will give thee passage,
Who hast the mien and Grace to deck a throne.
If I, or if thy mother should be drowned,
Grieve not. For thee I lived because the throne
Of king of kings was naught. My mother too
Bare me for thee. Pause not or else, I doubt not,
Afrásiyáb will reach the river-bank
V. 742 In fury, hang me on the shameful gibbet
Alive, and fling thyself and Farangís
To feed the fish or tread you under hoof."
Then Kai Khusrau replied: "So be it. Enough.
My refuge is with God the Succourer."
He lighted, groaned, fell prostrate in the dust,
And said: "Thou art my refuge and support;
Thou showest justice and Thou art my way.
Thy Grace for good or ill sufficeth me;
The shadow of Thy wing is wisdom's soul."
He spake, and radiant as the morning star
Bestrode his sable steed, took to the water,
Reached like a boat the toll-house opposite,
And issued from the bed of the Jíhún
With gallant Gív and Farangís behind him.
Thus all three safely gained the other side,
Where Kai Khusrau, his head and body bathed,
Thanked and adored the Maker of the world.

[1] See vol. i. p. 160.

As they went o'er the master of the boats
Astound said to his mates: "Behold a wonder!
This passeth all! Springtide! Jíhún in spate!
Three steeds and riders mailed! No sage would deem
Him man who went across in such a case."
He saw his plight, regretted his rash words,
Supplied his boat with such things as he had,
Set sail and went to ask the prince's pardon. V. 743
When he arrived upon the farther shore
He brought his offerings before Khusrau,
He brought a bow, a lasso, and a casque,
But Gív thus answered him: "Insensate dog!
Thou saidst: 'The stream will sweep a man away,'
And when so great and puissant a prince
Requireth thee to furnish him a boat
Refusest! Perish all thine offerings!
A day will come when thou wilt think of this."
The river-warden went off in chagrin,
Despairing of his life. On his return
The army from Túrán was at the toll-house.
Afrásiyáb, not seeing man or boat
Upon the stream, cried fiercely to the toll-man:—
"How found that dív his way across the water?"
The man replied: "O king! my father took
The toll as I do, yet I never saw
Or heard of one who made the water land.
In springtime when the waves are running high
If thou dost enter there is no escape,
Yet those three riders crossed! Thou wouldst have said:—
'The air supported them upon its breast,'
Or, 'They are children of the rushing wind—
The messengers dispatched by God to man.'"
Afrásiyáb on hearing this turned pale,
And sighing deeply bade the man: "Launch forth
A boat upon the river with all speed.

See if thou canst discern the fugitives,
Upon the road or stopping for repose,
That I may take them prisoners. Make dispatch,
Out with the boat, and get thee gone at once."
Then said Húmán to him: "O king! consider,
And kindle not a fire within thy breast.
Wilt thou essay Írán with these few horsemen,
Essay the breath and clutches of the Lions,
V. 744 The elephantine Rustam and Gúdarz,
Tús and Gurgín the shatterer of hosts?
Thou must be weary of the throne indeed
If thou wilt go thus to the Lions' claws.
Hence all is thine to Chín and to Máchín;
Sun, Saturn, Moon, and Pleiades are thine.
Guard thou Túrán and thine own lofty throne:
We need not now fear mischief from Írán."
With that they turned them in chagrin away,
And matters long continued in this stay.

§ 29

How Kai Khusrau came to Ispahán

When Kai Khusrau and Gív arrived at Zam
Most men rejoiced but certain were displeased.
Gív sent out messengers to every part,
And wrote thus of the valiant prince: "The chieftain
Head of the race of noble Kai Kubád—
The exalted, blesséd Kai Khusrau, to whom
The waters of Jíhún were as a throne—
Hath come rejoicing from Túrán."
He chose
Among the chiefs of Zam a messenger,
A valiant cavalier, wise, shrewd, and prudent,
Informed him of the case, and said to him:—
"Depart hence unto Ispahán—the land

Of Sháhs, the habitation of the mighty—
And tell Gúdarz: 'O chief of paladins!
Thy mind was not asleep when thou didst dream.'
Then add this: 'Kai Khusrau hath come to Zam,
And not a blast hath done him injury.'"
He wrote a letter unto Sháh Káús.
The messenger arose and went his way.
The wind-foot camels with their lips afoam
Rushed onward fire-like. First he sought Gúdarz,
Declared the message, and gave up to him V. 745
The letter, which the paladin in chief
Placed to his head with tears for Siyáwush
And maledictions on Afrásiyáb.
The messenger went on to Kai Káús
While drops of sweat fell from the camels' necks.
When he approached the palace-gate a shout
Of gladness rose, the monarch gave him audience,
And sprinkled jewels over Gív's dispatch.
They decked the whole world in their happiness,
They called for minstrels everywhere, while Rustam,
When tidings of Gív's triumph reached Nímrúz,
Gave gold in largess to the mendicants
Because that Lion had received no hurt;
And afterward dispatched Bánúgashasp,
Like lightning, bearing treasures, and with her
Twelve hundred mighty men of name with gifts
Of thrones and heavy crowns, three hundred damsels,
And six score youths, all bearing golden goblets.
The lady left her sire and went to Gív
As swiftly as a bird upon the wing,
While news spread everywhere: "The monarch's son,
The young prince Kai Khusrau, is on his way."
As for the men of leading in the world
They all resorted unto Ispahán.
Gúdarz prepared his stately residence,
And draped it with imperial brocade,

Prepared a throne with gold and jewelry,
Such as must needs be worthy of the Sháh,
And armlets, torques, and earrings with a crown
V. 746 Of royal gems. He had the city decked,
Prepared the Ground, and mounted on his steed.
The illustrious chiefs arose and, all being ready,
Went forward seventy leagues to meet the prince
Upon the road according to their custom.
As soon as Gív appeared with Kai Khusrau
The valiant cavaliers advanced on foot.
Gúdarz the chieftain when he saw the prince,
Accompanied by Gív upon the road,
Shed tears of gall and in his deep distress
Spake much in memory of Siyáwush.
The paladin then lighted from his steed,
And clasped the youthful monarch to his breast,
Paid him high compliments, did reverence,
And said to him: "O monarch of the earth!
Be bright in fortune and be bright in heart;
I would not lose thee for a realm or throne.
Far from thee be thy foeman's evil eye,
And may the soul of Siyáwush be bright.
God is my witness that to see thee lengtheneth
My life. If I saw Siyáwush alive
I should not laugh so from the heart as now."
He kissed the head and eyes of Gív and said:—
"Thou hast revealed a very heaven to us.
Thou art no sluggard but a warrior;
Yet on occasion thou canst bide thy time."
Then all the mighty warriors of Írán
Bent down their faces to the ground before him,
And as they turned back on their way rejoicing
The fortunes of those haughty men grew bright.
They reached the palace of the paladin,
All reached it full of joy and happiness.
There for one sennight in the festal hall

They tarried wine in hand, but toward the city
Of Sháh Káús upon the ensuing day
With joyful hearts set forward on their way.

§ 30

How Kai Khusrau came to Káús

When Kai Khusrau appeared before the Sháh V. 747
The world was filled with colour, scent, and beauty,
And everywhere in festal trim. The doors,
The roofs, and walls were full of precious things,
While minstrels had been stationed in all quarters,
And there were wine, rose-water, musk, and saffron.
The horses' manes were drenched with musk and wine,
While sweets and drachms were scattered under foot.
The tears coursed down the cheeks of Kai Káús
When he beheld the visage of Khusrau.
He came down from his throne, approached the prince,
And with his face caressed the prince's head
And eyes. The youthful atheling did homage,
And then they paced back to the throne together.
The Sháh inquired at large about the Turkmans,
And how the ruler of that people fared.
The prince replied: "That man of little wit
Still walketh on the face of earth for ill.
Why doth the Sháh inquire about that wretch?
May pleasure, crown, and throne be never his!
He slew my father vilely, shamefully,
And beat my mother with harsh blows that I
Might perish in the womb! May he ne'er scape
From woe! As soon as my pure mother bare me
That miscreant dispatched me to the mountains.
Among the cattle, goats, and buffaloes,
I reckoned by the sun my nights and days.
At length Pírán arrived, and from the heights

Conducted me to that vindictive king.
I trembled at his rage and savagery,
Afraid of what might come. He asked me questions,
While I concealed what wit and worth I had.
If he inquired of heads I spake of feet,
If he inquired of food I talked of place.
God took away his sense and intellect,
And so the dullard took me for a fool,
V. 748 Conceived my head to be ill stocked with brains,
And sent me to my mother with a curse."
Káús said: "Noble youth! the world desireth
That thou shouldst wear the crown, for thou'rt a prince,
And, like the king of kings, both wise and worthy."
Khusrau said: "Monarch of this ancient throne!
If I should give thee an account of Gív,
And what hath been accomplished by his hands,
The Sháh would wonder, and no marvel too,
Because it passeth bounds. Full many a hardship
Did he endure, and sought me in Túrán
With strivings, yet he bore not toils so great
As those which followed in my company,
For then two noble paladins with troops
Came after us like fire upon the road.
Idolater of Hindústán beholdeth
No maddened elephant do what I saw
Gív do. Methought: 'No crocodile will come
Forth from the streams to fight thus!' That great host,
And those two paladins, were seized with panic—
Both old and young alike—and afterward,
What time Pírán came boldly with girt loins
Upon a wind-foot steed, Gív flung his lasso
And caught the paladin. I interceded,
O king! for him, else Gív had ruthlessly
Struck off his head. Know that Pírán had suffered
Through anguish for my sire, had never spoken
V. 749 Aught ill of me, and saved me and withal

My mother from the fierce, grim Lion's claws,
Who else had ta'en my head just like my father's.
Thus till we reached the banks of the Jíhún
Gív with his ox-head mace ceased not from combat.
A paladin like him should keep his youth
For ever."

When Káús had heard Khusrau
His cheeks bloomed like a rose. He clasped Gív's head,
And kissed his face and bosom many times,
Then gave him presents such as in the world
None, whether great or small, had seen before.
They wrote a patent out on painted silk
For Khurásán, Rai, Kum, and Ispahán.
The prince, whose Grace divine was as Jamshíd's,
Gave these to Gív, whose head rose to the sun.
"Thou hast," the Sháh said, "undergone much toil,
So now, O toiler! take thy fill of treasure."

Gúdarz and all his sons with faces laid
Upon the ground called blessings down on him.
He had a golden pleasure-house prepared
For Farangís with earrings and a torque,
Set golden seats within the halls thereof,
Embellished the interior with brocade
Of Chín, and said to her: "O chief of dames!
May'st thou ne'er weep for sorrow. Thou hast left
Both land and kin, and borne much on the way.
Írán is now thy home, thy rede my guide."

That Moon of ladies blessed him. "May," said she, V. 750
"The world and age ne'er be deprived of thee."

§ 31

How Tús refused Allegiance to Kai Khusrau

Kishwád possessed a palace at Istakhr—
The glory of the nobles. Thither went,
Their audience with the monarch being closed,

Gúdarz with Kai Khusrau. When they had reached
That pleasance with its arabesques of gold
They placed the prince upon a golden throne,
And called down blessings on him as their Sháh.
The warriors of Írán all did him service
Save Tús, son of Naudar, who turned away:
'Twas he that had the drums, the golden shoes,
And charge of Káwa's standard. Much displeased
Gúdarz dispatched a friendly embassage
By brave, ambitious Gív, the man that had
The clutch of heroes and the leap of lions.
Gúdarz said: "Say to Tús, son of Naudar:—
Seek for no pretexts at this time of joy.
The nobles and the Lions of Írán
Have all invoked a blessing on the prince.
Why dost thou draw back at the Dív's command,
And quit the way of Him who ruleth earth?
If thou refusest to obey Khusrau
There will be strife and vengeance 'twixt us twain.
The messenger is Gív, the words are mine,
And sanctioned by the nobles here assembled."
Gív left the presence of his sire with words
Of anger in his heart. On reaching Tús
V. 751 He said: "Thy rede and wisdom are not mates."
Tús hearing that replied: "It is not good
To play off tricks on me, for in Írán,
Save elephantine Rustam, I am first
Among the chieftains that command the host,
And grandson of the valiant Minúchihr,
The Sháh who with his sword subdued the world.
Naudar my father was the king of earth,
I represent the race of Farídún.
Whenever I engage myself in fight
I rend the lion's heart and leopard's hide.
Ye have, without my counsel and consent,
Established a new monarch in the world:

I will not be a party to this thing,
So talk not in my presence of Khusrau.
If from the offspring of Afrásiyáb
We make a king, then will our fortunes sleep.
We want no Sháh descended from Pashang;
A flock is ill entrusted to a leopard.
This is the fruitage of these toils of thine,
For Kai Khusrau is young and violent,
While he that ruleth earth should have high lineage,
Worth, Faith, and Grace. Now Faríburz, the son
Of Sháh Káús, is worthier of crown
And throne, not sprung from foes on either side,
But having Grace and glory, fame and right."
Then Gív arose in dudgeon, doubting both
The wisdom and the honesty of Tús,
And said: "O Tús, illustrious warrior!
Withdraw not when the drums sound. When thou seest
The spear-heads of the kindred of Gúdarz
The gain that thou expectest will prove loss.
The many toils that we have borne together
Thou throwest to the winds. Hadst thou the Grace
And counsel we had sought not from Alburz
A monarch; and thy head hath not the crown
Because thou lackest brains and royal rede;
God doth bestow the throne of sovereignty V. 752
On one who hath the Grace, mien, sense, and counsel."
He spake thus wrathfully and showed his back
In anger; thence returning to Gúdarz
He said: "Tús is no mate for rede and wisdom.
Thou wouldest say: 'His eyes are blind.' His choice
Is Faríburz, although no sovereign
On golden saddle is our prince's peer,
Nor have we such another cavalier."

§ 32

How Gúdarz was wroth with Tús

Gúdarz was full of wrath and said: "May Tús
Cease from among the nobles of the world.
Now will we let him see to whom belong
The Grace, the sovereign sway, throne, state, and fortune."
His sons and grandsons numbered seventy-eight.
He beat the drums and marched forth from the palace
Out to the open with twelve thousand men
Of his own kin, brave troops on barded steeds,
Led by himself, that shatterer of hosts.
Upon the other side came Tús, the chieftain,
And bound the drums upon the elephants,
While many warriors girded up their loins,
And Káwá's standard led the central host.
Tús saw Gúdarz with such a multitude
As dazed the eyes of sun and moon, he saw
A mighty elephant which bore a throne
Of turquoise as resplendent as the Nile.
Upon it sat the aspiring Kai Khusrau,
With loins girt up and crown upon his head,
V. 753 Surrounded by ten score huge elephants;
Thou wouldst have said: "The world hath not a Sháh
Save him." Khusrau shone moonlike on the throne,
With earrings, torque, and armlets, on his head
A crown of glittering gems, and in his hand
An oxhead mace. Tús thought with saddened heart:—
"If I shall fight to-day there will be slain
A multitude of warriors in both hosts.
This feud shall not arise within Írán,
For naught would better please Afrásiyáb,
The fortune of the Turkmans would awake,
The throne of empiry pass to Túrán,

And our prosperity be at an end."
He sent a man of wisdom and resource
To Sháh Káús to say: "If any here
Among us lay a shaft of poplar wood
Upon his bow there will arise a fight
Whereof Afrásiyáb will dream all night."

§ 33

How Gúdarz and Tús went before Káús on the Matter of the Kingship

Káús, on hearing these wise words, dispatched
A messenger to summon both the chiefs.
He went before the captain of each host,
And mildly said: "Experienced veteran!
Put not fell poison in a cup of milk,
Replace thy sword, and loose thy girdlestead;
This gain of ours must not be turned to loss.
Let both the captains of the hosts appear
Before me and without a retinue."
They went before the Sháh and Tús spake thus:—
"If now the Sháh is weary of the crown
And throne, his son should have the world, the might,
The diadem, and throne of majesty.
Why should a grandson, when there is a son, V. 754
Put on the crown and sit upon the throne?
Now Faríburz hath Grace and royal mien,
And girdeth him as 'twere a savage lion."
Gúdarz replied: "O thou of little wit!
No sage would reckon thee to be a man.
None in the world hath equalled Siyáwush
Or been so great, discreet, and reticent.
Now this aspirant is a son of his,
'The same,' thou wouldest say, 'in face and form.'
If on his mother's side he is from Túr

The grandson of the Sháh must still prove just.
There is not in Írán or in Túrán
One like him: to what end is thy crude talk?
Thine eyes have never even seen his face,
His lofty mien, and lovingkindliness.
He crossed Jíhún and needed not a boat,
Such were his royal Grace and steadfast purpose.
As with Sháh Farídún, who crossed the Arwand
Without a boat, his courage and God's Grace
Preserved him from the hand and eye of ill.
Moreover, to avenge his father's blood,
He like a savage lion girdeth him
To banish toil and trouble from Írán,
And over-reach astute Afrásiyáb.
Surúsh the glorious said to me in sleep:—
'His Grace will still the war-cry in Írán,
And when he shall adorn the crown and throne
Of chiefs, the world will cease from toil and hardship.'
Thou art no alien; thou art from Naudar:
Thy father was perverse and thou art mad.
Had I my weapons I would drench thy neck
And breast in blood, would slay thee with my sword,
V. 755 And end thy silly talk. Thou makest discord
Among the Kaians for thy selfish ends.
The king of kings acknowledgeth Khusrau,
And will bestow the throne on whom he will.
Tús said: "O ancient chief! what rancorous words!
Though thou art from Kishwád yet I am Tús,
Son of Naudar, a Sháh and a Sháh's son,
And if thy sword will penetrate an anvil
My spear will rend the centre of Mount Káf.
V. 756 What booteth wordy war betwixt us twain?
The king of kings doth know who is the chief."
Gúdarz replied to him: "Talk not so much;
I see not that thy glory is so great."
Then said he to Káús: "Experienced Sháh!

Turn not from rule and custom, call before thee
The noble youths, and let thy clear mind judge;
Discern between them which is worthier
As having royal mien and Grace divine,
And give to him the crown and throne if thou
Art weary of the crown and host thyself."
Káús replied to him: "This is not well,
For both alike are dear; when I have chosen
One then the other will seek vengeance on me.
I will take means that this may not betide
Among our folk. Let both, each with a host,
Go to the entering in of Ardabíl—
The march where is the castle of Bahman, V. 757
And Áhriman is ever making war
On those that worship fire. No archimages
Dare settle there. I will give up the throne
Of kings to him who captureth that fortress."
Gúdarz and Tús, contented with the plan
Of their clear-sighted chief, proposed no better,
But set their hearts on its accomplishment,
And from the monarch's presence forth they went.

§ 34

How Tús and Faríburz went to the Castle of Bahman and came back foiled

Now when Sol rose in Leo, and the night
Was turned beneath, came Faríburz and Tús
In haste before the Sháh, and Tús spake thus:—
"Now will I take the drums, host, elephants,
With Káwa's flag, and turn the ruddy cheeks
Of foemen pale. The Grace of Faríburz,
And royal might, shall gird me royally."
The Sháh replied: "When men go forth to war

Their number more or less importeth not,
But by the purpose of the Lord of sun
And moon they may have triumph and success:
So if it seemeth good to Faríburz,
Array thine army and be diligent."

V. 758 Tús with the golden boots upon his feet
Went forth with Káwa's standard. Faríburz,
Son of Káús, was at the army's centre,
While Tús went first with troops and elephants.
When he drew near the castle of Bahman
The ground seemed breathing fire, the lances' points
Flamed in the heat, the men of war were scorched
Beneath their mail. Thou hadst said: "Earth is burning,
Air is a net of rebel Áhriman's!"
The ramparts rose to heaven; none knew a way
To battle there. Tús said to Faríburz:—
"A man of mettle going into fight
With lasso, falchion, and artillery,
Will strive to wreck his foes, but to this castle
Is no approach, at least we know it not.
Our loins are scorching underneath our mail,
The bodies of our beasts of burden burn.
Have no anxiety within thy heart:
Thou hast not ta'en, and none can take, this hold."
They went about the castle seven days,
And found no entrance, then turned back again
Despairing; their long journey proved in vain.

§ 35

How Kai Khusrau went to the Castle of Bahman and took it

When tidings reached the chiefs and old Gúdarz,
The offspring of Kishwád: "Tús hath returned

With Farîburz, prepare thyself to go,"
He donned his mail, shouts rose, the world's new lord V. 759
Khusrau came forth. They set a golden throne,
Inlaid with emeralds, on an elephant;
Around the prince were warlike cavaliers
With flags of violet, with golden boots,
With crowns of amber, and with torques of gold
Adorned with divers gems. Gúdarz thus spake:—
"This is the first of days, for Kai Khusrau,
The atheling, accedeth to the throne."
The atheling sat on the golden seat,
Crowned and with mace in hand; he with Gúdarz,
Gív, and a numerous host went toward the castle.
When near the hold he girded up his loins,
Put on his mail, and, mounted on his charger,
Dictated to a scribe in lofty terms
A letter, which they wrote in royal style
With ambergris, and in the olden tongue:—
"This letter cometh from the Almighty's slave—
From noble Kai Khusrau the atheling,
Who, freed from wicked Áhriman's constraint,
Hath cleansed his hands from ill by help of God,
Who is eternally the Lord most high,
The Giver of our daily bread, our Guide,
The Lord of Mars, of Saturn, and the Sun,
The Lord of Grace, the Lord of puissance,
Who gave the throne and Grace of kings to me,
Fierce lion's claws and elephantine bulk.
The whole world is my kingdom; all is mine
From Pisces downward to the Bull's head. Now
If this hold be of Áhriman's domain,
The enemy of Him who made the world,
I by the Grace, and Holy God's command, V. 760
Wilt cast it headlong from the clouds to dust;
And if it is a hold of sorcerers
I can dispose of them without a host,

For when I have looped up my leathern lasso
I take the heads of sorcerers in the noose;
While if the blest Surúsh himself is there
The host is one at the command of God.
I am not of the seed of Áhriman;
My soul hath Grace, my body lofty stature;
By God's command I will reduce the castle,
Such are the orders of the king of kings."

Khusrau then took a lengthy lance and fixed
Thereto the haughty letter banner-wise;
He asked for naught on earth but royal Grace,
And ordered Gív to hasten with the spear
Up to the lofty ramparts, saying thus:—
"Take thou this letter of admonishment,
And bear it to yon lofty castle's wall;
Plant there the spear, call on the name of God,
Then quickly turn thy rein and hurry back."

That worshipper of God, that glorious chief,
Gív, took the spear in hand and went his way.
He set the letter by the wall, delivered
The message of Khusrau, pronounced the name
Of God who giveth good, and fled like wind.
That noble letter vanished with a crash,
Dust flew, and by command of Holy God
The rampart of the stronghold split asunder;
Thou wouldst have said: "It thundereth as in spring."
A shout went up from plain and mountain-top,
The earth became black as a negro's face,
Sun, Moon, and Pleiades were lost to sight,
And thou hadst said: "A murky cloud ariseth,
The air is like a mighty lion's maw."

Then Kai Khusrau urged on his sable steed,
And shouted to the captains of the host:—
V. 761 "Make arrows rain in showers upon the hold,
And let your bows be like a cloud in spring."

Immediately a cloud rose charged with hail,

Hail charged with death; full many a dív was slain
And many venom-stricken fell to earth.
At length a brilliant light began to shine,
And all the heavy darkness cleared away;
A glorious breeze sprang up; the heaven above,
And all the face of earth, began to smile;
The world became as 'twere the shining moon
By God's name and the prince's Grace, the dívs
Went at his bidding, and the gate was seen.
The monarch of the free made entry there
With old Gúdarz, the offspring of Kishwád,
And saw a mighty city in the hold,
All gardens, spaces, halls, and palaces.
Upon the spot where darkness cleared and light
First shone Khusrau commanded to erect
A dome ascending to the darksome clouds.
It was ten lassos long and broad, its circuit
Was half a rapid Arab charger's course,
And round it there were lofty cupolas.
He brought and stablished there Ázargashasp,
And round it settled the astrologers,
The archmages, and the men of lore. He tarried
Till that Fire-fane attained to good repute,
And, when a year had passed, led forth his force,
Made up the baggage-train, and called to horse.

§ 36

How Kai Khusrau returned in Triumph

When news of Kai Khusrau, of his success,
And of God's Grace upon him, reached Írán
The world was in amazement that the prince V. 762
Had won that Grace and greatness; all the chiefs
Went forth with joy and brought him offerings.
Prince Faríburz approached him with a band

Of warriors from Írán as 'twere a mountain,
And seeing him gat off his rose-red steed,[1]
Whilst brave Khusrau alighted from his black.
The uncle kissed the nephew on the face,
And, having set for him a throne of gold
Inlaid with turquoise, seated him thereon,
And joyfully saluted him as Sháh.
Then Tús approached him, bringing Káwa's flag,
The drums, and golden boots, and, having kissed
The ground, surrendered them to Kai Khusrau,
And said: "See who deserveth in the host
The drums, gold boots, and Káwa's glorious flag.
Give them to him; I merit them no more:
Mine errors cannot hope for aught but life."
Thus he apologised, abandoning
His foolish enterprise. The conquering prince
Received him well, placed him upon the throne,
And said: "For Káwa's standard, for the post
Of paladin, and for the golden boots,
I see none fitter in the host than thee,
Thine is the office and the rank is thine;
I have no wrath against thee in my heart,
Thou needest not to tender an excuse;
Thou didst not wish to have an alien Sháh."
The atheling both shrewd and fortunate
Departed thence upon his way to Párs,
And Kai Káús, when he received the news:—
"The youth of lucky steps hath come," went forth
With cheeks like cercis-bloom to welcome him:
The old man's heart grew young with happiness.
V. 763 Khusrau beheld his grandsire from afar,
And smiled; his heart was throbbing with delight;
He went afoot and offered reverence.
His grandsire, fain to look on him, embraced him

[1] At the present day the horses of the Sháh and of his sons have their tail-tips dyed red. (C. J. Wills, M.D., "Persia as it Is," p. 9.)

With smiles and praises well deserved, and said:—
"The Lion hath returned victorious,
Confounding his opponents' hearts and eyes."
They sought the palace and the world-lord's throne—
His who had made the diadem his own.

§ 37

How Káús set Khusrau upon the Throne of Kingship

When they arrived they lighted from their steeds
With heartfelt, joyful greetings on their tongues.
Khusrau advancing kissed his grandsire's hand,
And laid his cheek against the throne. Káús
Took the young prince's hand, right joyfully
Set him upon the Sháh's own seat, and bade
The treasurer bring forth the royal crown.
He kissed Khusrau and, having crowned him, quitted
The splendid ivory throne and sat below.
He brought an offering of emeralds
With many royal jewels from his treasures,
Invoking blessings oft on Siyáwush,
Whose image was Khusrau. Then all the nobles, V. 764
The chiefs, the leaders, and great men assembled,
They called down blessings on him as their Sháh
And sprinkled gold and jewels over him.

The use and fashion of this world it is
To take with that hand and to give with this;
We are aggrieved because of its caprice,
And alternate 'twixt summit and abyss.

If then thy heart alloweth thee be glad,
Ensue but pleasure while it may be had,
Provide thee well and give the rest away,
And suffer not one moment to be sad.

Enjoy thy wealth and be not niggardly,
But share not earnings with thine enemy;
God gave to thee and will give to thy child—
That sucker springing from the parent tree.

Perceivest not how fully earth is stored
With wealth and furnished with good things? The Lord
Abateth nothing in His bounteousness:
Abstain from sorrow and let joy be toward.

XIII

KAI KHUSRAU

HE REIGNED SIXTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kai Khusrau succeeds to the throne during the lifetime of his grandfather, Sháh Kai Káús, and swears to him to avenge the death of Siyáwush. This he achieves after long wars and vicissitudes of fortune ; and then, fearing that, like Jamshíd, he too may fall away from holiness by reason of his great successes and half descent from Túr, prays that he may be taken from the world, its temptations, and its evil. His prayers are granted, and, having appointed his successor, he is caught up alive to heaven. In the course of the reign the poet tells two episodic stories, that of the dív Akwán, and that of Bízhan and Manízha.

NOTE

Kai Khusrau is the last of the Sháhs in whose names we can trace a connexion with Indian mythology. In the Vedas he appears as Sushrávas. In the Zandavasta he is Kavi Husravah and is mentioned often. Like his grandfather Kai Káús he originated in the ancient nature-worship of the Aryan race, and a trace of his divine origin still clings to him in the Sháhnáma, as is shown by his exemption from death. The story of his birth and youth will be found in the reign of Kai Káús, Parts IV. and V.[1]

The reign of Kai Khusrau is the longest in the Sháhnáma and forms more than a fifth of the whole poem. It is nearly twice as long as "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" combined. It is divided into seven Parts, of which Parts IV. and V. are episodic.

[1] See Vol. ii.

The others carry on and bring to a conclusion the story of the old epic cycle of Írán, the deaths of Íraj, Naudar, Ighríras, and Siyáwush are avenged, and the royal house of Túrán becomes extinct. Early in the reign a new motive of great importance is introduced, that of the slaughter of the descendants of Gúdarz, who in Part VI. has his revenge on Pírán, just as in Part VII. Kai Khusrau avenges himself on Afrásiyáb. By the end of the reign a clean sweep has been made on the Túránian side, while on the Íránian a great clearance has been effected. Many heroic names drop out of sight, Kai Khusrau and his half-brother Farúd leave no issue,[1] and in the next reign the curtain rises on a complete change of scene and motive. Only Zál and his descendants—great relics of the heroic past—still continue to play their part among "new faces, other minds."

The story is one of almost unceasing warfare, for even the episodes end with battles against Afrásiyáb. Omitting these, four campaigns are fought, the first in Part I., the second in Parts II. and III., the third in Part VI., and the fourth in Part VII. The successive campaigns become more and more elaborate in the method of their presentation, and set forth the gradual progress of the Íránian arms from total defeat to absolute triumph.

In the course of the reign we find a mass of subject-matter of comparatively late growth. It is only in Part VII. that the older legendary strata crop up, and we again find ourselves in touch with the Zandavasta, while it is not till the concluding scenes of all that we come upon the ancient legend which may be regarded as the bed-rock of the whole. Another version of it occurs near the end of the great Indian epic, the Mahábhárata.[2] This will be given in the Introductory Note to Part VII. in Vol. IV. of this translation, where it may be compared most conveniently with its Íránian equivalent.

It was stated in the Introduction[3] that the Sháhnáma was divisible into two periods—a mythic and a historic—and the distinction was based not so much on the nature of the subject-matter as on the names of the chief characters which at a certain point cease to be mythic and become historic. As regards the names of the Sháhs, which were there referred to, this is correct. We are still far from the point in the poem at which such names begin to appear in their proper historic connexion of time and

[1] In the Zandavasta, however, Kai Khusrau is represented as having a son named Akhrura, whose legend is lost. DZA, ii. 223.

[2] RM, Vol. x., Maháprasthánika Parva.

[3] Vol. i. p. 49.

place, but it does not follow that all the names occurring before that point is reached are wholly mythical. Real dynastic, family, and personal names are found thrown back upon and incorporated with a mythical past with which they have no connexion whatever. The dynastic title of Cæsar, for instance, occurs in the reign of Minúchihr,[1] while the personified name—Káran—of a family famous in Ashkánian (Parthian) and Sásánian times is very prominent in the Pishdádian dynasty. The most striking instances of personal names and personalities being thus thrown back occur in the Kaiánian dynasty and in the reigns of Kai Káús and Kai Khusrau. These we will now proceed to consider.

About A.D. 40 the Parthian king Artabanus III. died. He left at least two sons living at his death—Vardanes, who succeeded him, and Artabanus. Shortly afterward, and during the absence of Vardanes from the capital, a certain Gotarzes assumed the supreme power and caused Artabanus with his wife and son to be murdered. The relationship of Gotarzes to Artabanus III. has been a matter of considerable difference of opinion, but seems fairly settled now by two pieces of contemporary evidence. On the rock of Bihistún, some three hundred feet below the inscription of the great Darius, Gotarzes has left a memorial tablet of himself. Unfortunately it is now almost defaced,[2] but when the late Sir Henry Rawlinson examined it in 1836 he made out, in addition to the name Gotarzes, which is still legible,[3] the word Mithrates, and Gotarzes' description of himself as "Satrap of Satraps." In one corner of the tablet the words "Gotarzes Geopothros" (Γωτάρζης Γεόποθρος) were also found. Sir Henry Rawlinson's account was read before the Royal Geographical Society in January 1838.[4]

In the first element in the word "Geopothros" we have, as now seems generally admitted, the historical original of the Gív of the Sháhnáma. In the second element we have the old Persian word "puthra," which means "son." The whole word therefore means "son of Gív." This historical Gív seems to have been prince of Hyrcania and the father-in-law of Artabanus III.[5] He was also, if we accept the evidence of the inscription, the father of Gotarzes.

The second piece of contemporary evidence is a very rare coin of Gotarzes in the corrupted legend on which he is described as "the king of kings, the Arsacid, the adopted son of Artabanus"

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[1] *Id.* p. 262. [2] JP, p. 209. [3] *Id.*
[4] See Journal, Vol. ix. p. 114, and CIG, Vol. iii. No. 4674.
[5] GIP, ii. 504.

(υἱὸς κεκαλούμενος or κεκλημένος Ἀρταβάνου).[1] It appears therefore that Gotarzes was closely connected with the reigning Parthian family both by marriage and adoption, but was not really one of the sons of Artabanus III. as was formerly supposed.

Vardanes, on hearing of Gotarzes' usurpation of the kingdom, hurried back and expelled him. Gotarzes withdrew into his hereditary principality of Hyrcania, where, with the assistance of the Dahae, who dwelt between the Caspian and the Aral, he prepared to renew the struggle. The opposing forces met on the Bactrian plains, but hostilities were averted. Gotarzes had discovered a plot, on the part of the Parthian nobles on both sides, to kill him and Vardanes, and set up a new king in their place. He informed Vardanes of this, and the two combined against the common enemy. Gotarzes then withdrew to Hyrcania and Vardanes retained the crown. Subsequently another war broke out between the two and several battles were fought. Tacitus, the chief authority for this part of history, tells us[2] that Vardanes advanced to meet Gotarzes as far as the river Erinde,[3] at the passage of which severe fighting took place in which Vardanes was victorious, who then in several successful engagements subdued all the nations between that river and the river Sinde, which divided the Dahae and the Aryans.[4] He returned in triumph, but shortly afterward was assassinated while hunting, A.D. 46. Upon this Gotarzes became king, but his ferocity and self-indulgence speedily rendered him unpopular, and a Parthian deputation arrived in Rome in A.D. 49 for the purpose of obtaining from the Emperor Claudius permission for Meherdates, who resided there, to accompany them back to Persia. Meherdates was the son of a former Parthian king, Vonones I. As was to be expected in the circumstances the character of Gotarzes was depicted in very unfavourable colours by the envoys. He had killed all his relations, whether near or distant, with their wives and children; he was sluggish at home, unfortunate in war, and sought to cloak his sloth by

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[1] LCP, p. 153 and Plate 3, 70; GKS, iii. 68.

[2] Ann. xi. 10.

[3] Generally assumed to be the Charinda mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6) and by Ptolemy (vi. 2), who describes it as parting Media from Hyrcania.

[4] The rivers Erinde and Sinde have not been identified, but the latter *may* be intended for the Oxus. That river was confounded with the Indus (Sind) in ancient times (see Vol. i. p. 71) and flowed into the Caspian in the days of Tacitus, so it might be regarded as dividing the Dahae and the Aryans.

cruelty.[1] Meherdates was sent accordingly, but was defeated and taken prisoner by Gotarzes, who, however, rather belied his character for ferocity on this occasion. He spared the life of Meherdates and merely cut off his ears—a mutilation that disqualified him for the Parthian crown. It was to commemorate this victory that Gotarzes had the bas-relief already referred to carved on the rock of Bihistún, in the neighbourhood of which the battle probably was fought. Gotarzes is represented as charging at the head of his troops, while above him a winged Victory is setting the crown upon his head.[2] He died in A.D. 51.

In the lists of the kings of the Ashkánian (Parthian) dynasty, compiled by oriental historians,[3] the name Gúdarz occurs in several connexions. We also find the name Bízhan given as the son of one Gúdarz and as the father of another. We also find the name Bahrám. Firdausí, when he reaches Ashkánian times, includes the above three names in his very scanty list of the kings of that dynasty. He admits that he knows nothing about any of them, being wholly unaware, as naturally he would be, of their identity with some of his own most favourite heroes.

In the Sháhnáma Gotarzes becomes Gúdarz, who is represented as being the father, not the son, of Gív. Vardanes becomes Bahrám and is the son, not the adopted brother, of Gúdarz. Bízhan becomes the son of Gív and the grandson of Gúdarz. Similarly other names of the Parthian period appear in the poem. Meherdates (Mithradates, Mithrates, Mithradát, Mihrdát) appears as Mílád, the father of Gurgín, who plays such a prominent part in the story of Bízhan and Manízha, (Part V.). Phraates—a common Parthian name—becomes Farhád, and there are other instances.[4] Some of the names thus transplanted have flourished amazingly, and Gotarzes' reputation has not suffered by the change.

We conclude this note with a few instances in which the events of Parthian history summarized above may be traced in a distorted form in the Sháhnáma. In the war between Gotarzes and Vardanes we seem to have the origin of the campaigns of Tús against Túrán in Parts I. and II. The scene of operations is the same in both cases, and the battle at the river Erinde seems reproduced in that of the river Shahd.[5] The assassination of king Vardanes on the hunting-field is reproduced in the episode in which Bahrám, having lost his whip on the battlefield, insists on returning to look for it, and is, after a gallant defence, mortally wounded by the enemy.[6] It is because Meherdates, after march-

[1] Ann. xii. 10.
[2] See HAP, p. 39, and RP, frontispiece.
[3] GKS, iii. 24.
[4] NIN, p. 7.
[5] See p. 117 *seq.*
[6] See p. 95 *seq.*

ing through Armenia to attack Gotarzes,[1] is let off after his defeat with a slight mutilation that, in the story of Bízhan and Manízha, Gurgín the son of Milád and Bízhan the grandson of Gúdarz set forth together on an expedition to Irmán, that Gurgín treats Bízhan badly and, after having brought him into deadly peril, is lightly punished, then pardoned, and in the end forgiven by Bízhan himself,[2] while lastly it may be noted that the battle with Afrásiyáb, consequent on the release of Bízhan, is stated to have taken place in the neighbourhood of Mount Bístún.[3]

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[1] Tacitus, Ann. xii. 12.

[2] See pp. 292 *seq.*, 316, 331 *seq.*, 345.

[3] *Cf.* pp. 11, 350.

PART I

HOW KAI KHUSRAU TO AVENGE SIYÁWUSH SENT A HOST AGAINST TÚRÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet, first having set forth the various qualities that kings ought to possess, proceeds to tell how Kai Khusrau becomes joint Sháh with Kai Káús, who exacts from him an oath that he will avenge the death of Siyáwush. He accordingly assembles the host, and sends it, under the command of Tús, against Afrásiyáb, strictly enjoining the former not to attack Farúd—the half-brother of Kai Khusrau—on the march. Tús out of dudgeon with Kai Khusrau disobeys, and Farúd is slain. The Íránians subsequently are surprised in a night-attack by Pírán and defeated. Kai Khusrau recalls Tús and appoints Faríburz leader, who arranges a month's truce with Pírán, after which the fight is renewed and the Íránians are overthrown at the disastrous battle of Ládan. They retreat to Írán, and Pírán is splendidly rewarded by Afrásiyáb. The poet in this part records various heroic exploits of Gív, his son Bízhan, and his brother Bahrám, who is slain.

NOTE

§§ 1 and 9. There are two Preludes in this Part. The first may be regarded as introductory to the whole reign, specifying as it does the ideal kingly qualities that are to be exemplified in the person of Kai Khusrau, while the second is meant to impress upon the reader the real motives that underlay the conduct of Tús with reference to his treatment of Farúd. Tús, as we have seen, was a disappointed man.[1] Although he was the direct representative of the ancient Pishdádian Dynasty his claim to the crown invariably had been ignored. Despairing, moreover, of ever becoming Sháh himself he had just been advocating the claims of

[1] Vol. ii. p. 335.

Faríburz to the kingship, in opposition to those of Kai Khusrau, in the hope of becoming at all events a king-maker and the power behind the throne. Again his plans are frustrated, and he vents his spite on Khusrau's half-brother, Farúd.

§ 6. The name of the slave of Tazháv appears variously as Isnapwí and Ispanwí. We adopt the latter.

§ 7. In Rustam's account of the conquest of part of Zábulistán by the Turkmans we seem to have a reminiscence of the permanent occupation of that country (*c.* 100 B.C.), from which it received the name of Sístan.[1] Similarly in Kai Káús, Part II., we had a reference to the invasions of Mesopotamia by the Arabs.[2]

§ 10. Kalát is a word used for forts in general, but if, as seems probable, the particular stronghold referred to is that which is now known as Kalát-i-Nádirí, we here find ourselves in the poet's own neighbourhood. Tús, his native place, is said to have been founded by the legendary hero of that name, who plays so prominent a part in this portion of the Sháhnáma, because, in consequence of the death of Farúd, he was afraid to return to the court of Kai Khusrau,[3] but we find nothing to this effect in the Sháhnáma. Kalát-i-Nádirí was so called because Nádir Sháh (A.D. 1736–1747), one of the most remarkable of Persian sovereigns, whose uncle was the ruler of this fortress,[4] was born in its neighbourhood and made it his favourite residence. It is situated some forty miles to the north of the ruins of Tús. "It is upon a very high hill, only accessible by two narrow paths. An ascent of six or seven miles terminates in a plain about twelve miles in circumference, watered by several fine streams and covered with verdure and cultivation. A second ascent, by a route of ten or eleven miles, leads to another plain of greater elevation, but of equal richness."

"It is a district or a basin," says another account, "fortified in the most wonderful way by nature. In shape it is something like a foot, and it must have a length of twenty miles by a breadth of two to four miles . . . if the term impregnable can be used anywhere, it can here. For the fifty miles of its circuit, nature has indeed left hardly anything for man to do."[6]

§ 15. The Rívníz slain by Farúd should be distinguished from the hero of the same name slain at Ládan (§ 30). The former was descended from Pashang[7] and therefore of Pishdádian descent. He is quite appropriately the son-in-law of Tús. The latter is a son of Kai Káús and therefore a Kaiánian.

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[1] Vol. i. p. 19. [2] Vol. ii. p. 81. [3] C. Persian Preface, p. 32.
[4] MHP, ii. 4. [5] *id.* i. 34, *note.* [6] MGN, ii. 53, 56.
[7] See p. 25.

§ 18. Bízhan's friendship with Gustaham, the son of Gazhdaham, is one of the features of this reign. Another is Gív and Bízhan's anxiety about one another when either is courting danger. The father can never bring himself to realise that his son is grown up and well able to take care of himself, while the son, with all the insolence of youth, persists in regarding his father as played out—touches not foreign to human nature.

§ 30. The battle of Ládan is also known by the name of the battle of Pashan, and there is a legend that when Firdausí was on his way to seek his fortune at the court of Mahmúd he chanced to enter a garden where three of the seven poets of Mahmúd's court were revelling. He asked to be allowed to join them, and they consented on the condition that he should cap their three rhyming verses with a fourth. Firdausí at once obtained the needful rhyme by a verse referring to the battle of Pashan, whereby he showed his superior knowledge of the epic history of his country.[1] In this connexion the word has sometimes been understood as equivalent to Pashang, the name both of the father and of one of the sons of Afrásiyáb, but Firdausí's line was intended to celebrate the prowess of Gív at the battle of Pashan or Ládan. It is possible, however, that these are the names of distinct battles though fought in the same campaign, in which case we may regard the former as the night-surprise and the latter as the occasion when Gúdarz lost nearly all his descendants. Gív distinguished himself at both battles.

The "mountain-skirt" to which the Íránian army withdrew after its defeat seems to be that of the northern scarp of the province of Khurásán which still goes by the name of Dáman-i-Kuh—the term used in the poem, *cf.* p. 10.

§§ 31–33. See pp. 10, 11. The historical Bahrám (Vardanes) was, according to Tacitus, a king of exceptional valour and brilliancy.[2]

§ 1

The Prelude

THIS much achieved, the poet will present
Another tale of yore—how Kai Khusrau
Sat on the throne and sent an armament
Against Túrán. Thus, if God's grace allow
Me life and health, shall I one story more V. 765
Leave to the world from this famed book of lore.

[1] See C. Persian Preface, p. 27. [2] Ann. xi, 10.

When in the garth a cypress sendeth off
A shoot, whose green top mounteth palace-high,
The tree rejoiceth in the height thereof,
Its prudent carriage, and prosperity,
The heart of fortune nourisheth the shoot,
And all the world partaketh of the fruit.

If sovereignty to native worth be due
The wearer of the crown must needs do right;
Three aspects of the matter let us view,
And presently a fourth will come in sight:
Accomplishment thou wilt not fail to find
With high birth and with native worth combined.

Such are the three, and all in one content,
For save in company with native worth
How can there ever be accomplishment,
And, lacking that, what scion of high birth
Hast thou beheld? High birth the father's seed
Produceth, which may well fair fruitage breed.

V. 766 Accomplishment thou learnest painfully
From others, at the cost of many a groan,
While native worth is greatest of the three—
A robe of honour given by God alone.
To these be wisdom added, that which will
Discriminate for thee 'twixt good and ill.

When any man possesseth all the four
He hath repose from travail, greed, and grief,
But not from death; that is an evil, sore
Beyond all others; there is no relief.
Now Kai Khusrau possessed all four, and he
Was fashioned thus by heaven's destiny.

§ 2

How the Nobles did Homage to Kai Khusrau

When Kai Khusrau acceded, and the world
Had been apprised, he sat upon the throne
Of king of kings and donned the crown of greatness.
He meted justice out to each, uprooting
Injustice from the earth. Then all the nobles,
Possessed of crowns and sprung of royal race,
With foreign monarchs, potentates, and magnates,
Resorted to Khusrau: there was no head
Not taken in his toils. He cultivated
Waste lands and freed the mourners' hearts from woe;
The moisture rained down from the clouds in spring,
And cleansed the face of earth from rust and sorrow;
'Twas decked like Paradise with goodly havings
By reason of his justice and his bounty.
The world was full of happiness and peace, V. 767
The hands of Áhriman were barred from ill,
While envoys came from all the provinces,
From every man of name and potentate.
When tidings had been carried to Nímrúz,
And reached the chief, the Lustre of the earth:—
"The glorious prince is seated on the throne,
And hath his foot upon the sky of power,"
He summoned his retainers from all sides
To go to offer homage to the Sháh,
Departing on the journey in great state
And much content with Zál the son of Sám
The son of Narímán, and all the nobles,
Both great and little of Kábul—a host
Which made the desert as 'twere ebony
What while the tymbals split the leopards' ears.
Zál with an escort led the way; behind
Came Rustam followed by the violet flag.

When tidings reached the Sháh: "The loyal Rustam
Is on his way," the people as one man
Arose prepared to go to welcome him.
The Sháh was glad and bade the courier: "Take
Thy pleasure here, for Rustam reared my father,
And all eyes recognise his excellence."
The monarch ordered Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús
To set forth with the tymbals and the pipes,
The drums beat at the portal of the Sháh,
And all the warriors assumed their helms.
From every quarter of the land all went
With flag and kettledrum to welcome Rustam;
While those in chief command with many troops
Went forward two days' journey to receive him.
As soon as Rustam's standard came in sight,
And when the host's dust mounted o'er the sun,
V. 768 Shouts rose with sound of trump and kettledrum,
And from the centre Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús
Approached in haste the elephantine chieftain,
And gave him salutations joyfully.
All three of them embraced him; he meanwhile—
The lion-queller—asked about the Sháh.
From Rustam they proceeded next to Zál,
The son of Sám, with open hearts and happy,
Then turned to Farámarz, rejoiced to see him.
Thence they approached the Sháh, approached to gaze
Upon the glorious crown. Now when Khusrau
Beheld the elephantine warrior
Tears trickled from his eyelids down his cheeks.
Descending from the throne he greeted Rustam,
Who kissed the ground. The Sháh said: "Paladin!
Live ever glad and happy, for thou art
The foster-sire of Siyáwush and likewise
Art of all men most wise and reticent."
He clasped upon his breast the head of Zál,
And sorrowed for his own sire's sake the while,

Then seated both chiefs on the royal throne,
And blessed them in God's name. When Rustam marked
From head to foot the person of the Sháh,
And how he sat, held converse, and advised,
The hero's cheek flushed up and his heart ached,
So much reminded him of Siyáwush.
He thus addressed the world's king: "To the world
Thou art, O Sháh! the memory of thy sire.
I have not seen a king with Grace like thine,
Or one so like thy father."
When they rose
They had the tables spread and wine prepared.
Khusrau slept not till night was far advanced,
But held more converse touching what had chanced.

§ 3

How Kai Khusrau made a Progress through his Realm

When Sol had drawn its shining scimitar,
And dark night's head had vanished, rose the blare
Of trumpets from the court-gate, and such chiefs
As Tús, Gúdarz, and valiant Gív, Gurgín, V. 769
Ruhhám the Lion, Gustaham, and others,
Came to the Sháh in that famed audience-hall.
Now when they had assembled at his throne
He said to them: "I purpose to survey
The glorious realm and marches of Írán.
Go we in hunting wise and fleet a while
In happiness."
The nobles all agreed.
The monarch of the world went forth to hunt
With Rustam, that illustrious paladin,
With Gív, Gúdarz son of Kishwád, Shápúr,
Bahrám, a wielder of the scimitar,

Gurgín, Bízhan expert in archery,
Farhád and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
And one among the fighting-men, Guráza—
A host that darkened both the sun and moon
With helmets, maces, coats of mail, and casques.
The tracks and trackless waste were like a field
Of battle with the corpses of the game.
Khusrau passed through the country of Írán,
And subsidised and peopled all the lands
That then were uninhabited or ravaged,
Or ruined by misgovernment; he found
No toil in justice or munificence.
He tarried in each city and set up
His throne as fitted fortune's favourite,
Called for his purse and cup, and with dínárs
Decked all the world; then sought another city,
Conveying with him crown and throne and wine,
V. 770 Until with all the great men and the nobles
He reached at length Ázar Ábádagán;
Then quaffing wine, and urging on his steed,
Approached the temple of Ázargashasp,
Prayed in that Fane of Fire and praised the Maker.
He left in state to go back to Káús,
With whom they sat—a merry company—
Not ceasing for a moment from their mirth
Till to their heads the sparkling liquor rose,
And all went eagerly to seek repose.

§ 4

How Kai Khusrau sware to Kai Káús to take Vengeance on Afrásiyáb

When morn brought forth bright day, and scattered gems
Upon the dusky ground, the world-lord sat

With Kai Káús—both noble, prosperous Sháhs—
With Zál and valiant Rustam. Kai Káús
Discoursed at large on matters great and small,
And, first, in speaking of Afrásiyáb,
Bathed both his cheeks with blood-drops from his eyes,
Recounting what that king had perpetrated
On Siyáwush, and how he had sent up
Dust from Írán, how many paladins
Had died, and how their wives and children suffered,
Thus saying: "Thou beholdest many cities
Waste in Írán, wrecked by Afrásiyáb.
Since every needful, God-sent gift is thine—
Men, knowledge, might of hand, Grace, majesty,
And favouring stars—and thou in every point
Of native worth art raised o'er other kings,
I claim of thee an oath, and thou must keep it,
That vengeance on Afrásiyáb shall fill
Thy heart, and thou shalt not allay that flame,
Regardless of his kinship with thy mother, V. 771
And heeding not what any one may urge.
Thou shalt not be seduced by wealth or power,
Howe'er thou be exalted or abased,
Nor shalt thou turn aside to treat with him
For mace or sword or throne or diadem.
I will declare the sanction of thine oath—
One binding on thy wisdom and thy soul:
Swear by the righteous Judge of sun and moon,
By crown, throne, casque, and signet, by the justice
Of Farídún and by his precedent,
The blood of Siyáwush, thy life, O Sháh!
The Grace, and by the favouring stars divine,
That thou wilt never turn aside to ill,
Wilt ask no arbiter but sword and mace,
And rise above thyself in thy resolve."

Whenas the youthful monarch heard the words
He turned both face and soul toward the Fire,

And took an oath: "By God, the Lord of all,
By day resplendent and night azure-dim,
By sun and moon, by throne and casque and signet,
By sword and by the Sháh's own diadem,
I never will incline toward amity
For him, or dream of looking on his face."
V. 772 This they recorded in the olden tongue
With scented ink upon a royal roll,
And Zál and Rustam signed as witnesses,
And likewise all the other mighty men.
The written oath attested in due form
Was put for safety into Rustam's hands.
When this was done they called for wine and feast,
And held a session of another kind;
The nobles passed a week with harp and wine
Within the hall of Kai Káús. Khusrau
Upon the eighth day bathed, composed himself,
Then sought the place of prayer, and, in the presence
Of circling heaven's Lord, adored the Maker.
That night until the rising of the sun
He cried aloud with eyes fulfilled with tears,
And said: "O righteous Judge, the only God,
The World-lord, the Sustainer, and the Guide!
Thus didst deliver me, a hostless boy,
Out of the Dragon's breath. Afrásiyáb
Thou knowest reckless, not afraid to injure;
His curse is on the waste and peopled lands;
Revenge against him filleth guiltless hearts.
V. 773 He hath poured fire upon these goodly coasts,
Hath sifted o'er the brave the dust of woe,
Unjustly shed the blood of Siyáwush
Upon the earth, and rent our souls thereby.
The hearts of kings are filled with dread of him;
His throne and diadem are this world's bane.
Thou knowest that he is of evil nature,
And both a miscreant and sorcerer."

He laid his cheek full oft upon the ground,
And uttered praises to the Lord of all.
Departing thence he went back to the throne,
And thus harangued the exalted paladins:—
"O ye my men of name, my gallant hearts,
And swordsmen! I have ridden through Írán,
But, from the temple of Ázargashasp
To this place, seen not any one heart-glad,
Possessed of riches or of lands in culture.
All have been injured by Afrásiyáb,
All hearts are filled with blood, all eyes with tears.
I am the first whose liver thus he wounded,
So that my soul and body smart through him,
And next there is that noble Sháh—my grandsire—
Who from his heart still heaveth chilly sighs,
While men and women groan throughout Írán V. 774
At massacre and pillage, war and raid.
So now if ye are all my trusty friends,
Devoted to me in your hearts indeed,
I will make ready to avenge my father,
And turn this evil from the Íránians.
If ye will, all of you, renew the fight,
Strive, and contend like pards, so too will I;
Plains in the battles of the brave shall turn
To mountains, and for all the blood shed there
Afrásiyáb the criminal shall be
Responsible. If any of our host
Shall fall, their place is Paradise above.
What say ye then? What answer do ye give?
Advise me well. Afrásiyáb, ye know,
Began the wrong. Requital should not rest."
The chiefs prepared to answer and arose
With rancour in their hearts. They said: "O Sháh!
Keep thy heart glad and ever free from care.
Our bodies and our souls are wholly thine,
And thine our grief and joy, our loss and gain.

We all of us are mother-born to die,
And all of us, though free men, are thy slaves."
Whenas he heard this answer from the throng,
From Tús, Gúdarz, and elephantine Rustam,
The Sháh's cheek grew as red as cercis-bloom,
For he was young in person and in fortune.
V. 775 He called down blessings on the company;
"May earth be peopled by the brave," said he.

§ 5

How Kai Khusrau numbered the Paladins

With matters in this stay the sky revolved
Till Sol appeared in Virgo; then the Sháh
Called all the archimages of the realm,
And spake to them at large in fitting terms.
He closed the door of audience for two sennights,
And had the muster-roll compiled afresh.
He bade the commissaries to call over
The names of great and small, and had them written
In solemn form befitting paladins.
The kin of Kai Káús five score and ten—
Chiefs of the host—came first upon the list,
And at their head was Faríburz the son
Of Kai Káús—the new Sháh's kinsman. Next
He chose him eighty scions of Naudar,
All armed with maces and all warriors.
Their leader was Zarásp the general,
Who used to make their welfare his concern
In everything—a crown of kings, the son
Of Tús—the lord of iron mace, of scimitar,
And drum. Gúdarz son of Kishwád came next,
Whose counsels were the safeguard of the host.
His sons and grandsons numbered seventy-eight—
Brave mountaineers and horsemen of the plain;

They carried Káwa's standard and illumed
The throne and fortune of the Kaian race.
The seed of Gazhdaham were sixty-three,
And great men all; their chief was Gustaham.
The kinsmen of Mílád—a hundred horsemen—
Had for their chief victorious Gurgín.
Tawába's kindred numbered eighty-five
Brave cavaliers, the wardens of the treasure,
While Barta was the warden over them,
And most illustrious of them all in fight.
Next three and thirty scions of Pashang, V. 776
Brave men, who bore the double-headed dart
In battle-time, their chieftain was Rívníz—
A mighty man both valiant and discreet,
Who used to go before the drums in war,
The warriors' warden, son-in-law to Tús.
The kinsmen of Barzín, three score and ten
In sum, all Lions on the day of battle,
Had over them Farhád, himself an Anvil
Of steel in fight. Guráza led in person
His kinsmen—five score and five warriors.
Apart from these, the lords and paladins,
The princes and the mighty men of worship,
Were more than any archimage could reckon,
So many were the chiefs with Grace and glory!
They wrote upon the monarch's muster-roll
The names of all efficients, and the Sháh
Bade them to quit the city and march out
Toward the wastes and plains. He said to them:—
"About the ending of the month must rise
The clarion-blast and sound of Indian bells,
And all must march with joy against Túrán."
They bent their heads before him to the ground,
And all called blessings down upon him, saying:—
"O Sháh possessed of Grace divine and glory,
Who givest lustre to the crown and girdle!

We all are slaves, thine is the sovereignty,
From Aries to Pisces all for thee."

§ 6

How Kai Khusrau bestowed Treasures upon the Paladins

Wherever there were horses running wild
Their keepers drove them to the camp in herds.
The Sháh commanded: "Let the lasso-throwers—
The warriors brazen-bodied in the fight—
V. 777 Catch these swift Arab chargers in the noose."
Anon the conquering world-lord took his seat
With mace in hand upon the throne of gold,
Unlocked his treasury of dínárs, and said:—
"The treasures of the great should not be hidden.
In times of strife and fighting for revenge
They look with scorn on treasure and dínárs;
So all our wealth and thrones will we bestow
Upon the brave, to make our Tree fruit sunward,
And why delay since treasure helpeth them?"
A hundred pieces of brocade of Rúm
With jewelled patterns on a golden ground,
With beaver-skins, gold raiment, and a goblet
Of royal gems—he had these brought. "Behold,"
Said he, "the price set on the worthless head
Of that fierce Dragon, murderous Paláshán,
Now made commander by Afrásiyáb[1]
That he may slumber while that chieftain watcheth.
Who in our camp will bring his head and sword
And steed to dust upon the day of battle?"
Bízhan the son of Gív sprang to his feet
Forthwith, he undertook to slay that Dragon,
And carried off the stuffs and cup of gold,

[1] Pírán was at that time in disgrace with Afrásiyáb, owing to the escape of Kai Khusrau. See Vol. ii. p. 390.

With all the jewels, blessing Kai Khusrau,
And saying: "May this crowned head live for ever!"
Then went back to his seat retaining still
The goblet with the jewels in his hand.
The Sháh then bade his treasurer to bring V. 778
Two hundred robes of gold embroidery
With beaver-skins, brocade, rich painted silk,
And two slaves rosy-cheeked with girded loins,
And thus he said: "These presents will I give,
And will confer more favours on, the man
That bringeth unto me, or to the chieftains
Assembled here, the crown worn by Tazháv,
Which crown Afrásiyáb set on his head,
And hailed him as a high-born son-in-law." [1]
Again Bízhan the son of Gív arose,
Who had a hand far reaching in the fight,
And seized upon the presents and the slaves
While all assembled wondered; he exclaimed:—
"May earth be prosperous under Kai Khusrau!"
Then sat down gladly giving many thanks.
The Sháh commanded and the treasurer
Brought out ten slave-boys with their girdles on,
Ten steeds of rapid pace with golden bridles,
And ten veiled maidens in their bravery;
The watchful ruler of the people said:—
"These steeds and all these Beauties are for one
Who, when Tazháv hath fled, need not possess
A lion's heart. Tazháv hath by his side
In battle one whose voice would tame a leopard,
A slave with cheeks like spring, of cypress-stature,
With reed-like waist and with a pheasant's gait,
A Moon-face, Ispanwí by name, a Jasmine
In visage, heart-alluring, breathing musk.
Her captor must not strike her with the sword,
For swords are not for such a cheek as hers,

[1] Tazháv, an Iránian by birth, had gone over to Afrásiyáb. See p. 75.

But noose her waist and take her to his bosom."
Bízhan smote on his breast and volunteered
Again. He drew anigh the all-conquering Sháh,
V. 779 Began to laud the monarch of the world,
And supplicate the Maker. The great king
Rejoiced in him and spake thus: "Famous chief!
May paladin like thee ne'er help our foes,
Ne'er may thine ardent soul and body part!"
Then said the world-lord to the treasurer:—
"Bring forth ten golden beakers from the hoard,
And let them put pastilles therein; bring also
Ten goblets of pure silver brimmed with jewels,
One topaz goblet filled with musk, and one
Of turquoise, one of lapis-lazuli,
With emeralds and carnelians showered therein,
Mixed with rose-water and with musk; ten boy-slaves
With belts, and ten fine steeds with golden bridles.
These are," he said, "for him who, having strength
To fight Tazháv upon the day of battle,
Shall bear his head off from the stricken field,
And bring it to the warriors of the host."
Then Gív son of Gúdarz smote on his breast,
And undertook to fight that paladin,
Whereat they brought those noble slaves and gifts,
And set them in array in front of him.
He called down many blessings on the Sháh,
And said: "May crown and signet ne'er lack thee."
The Sháh commanded then the treasurer:—
"Set out ten golden trays before the throne,
And mix in them dínárs and musk and jewels;
Set too ten Fairy-faced with crowns and girdles,
Two hundred beaver-skins, brocade of gold,
Ten girdles, and a royal diadem.
This is for him," he said, "that grudgeth not
His labour for the sake of fame and treasure.
Let such depart hence to the Kása rúd,

And there salute the soul of Siyáwush.
He will behold a mighty pile of fire-wood,
Whose height is greater than ten lassos' length.
It is a pile raised by Afrásiyáb
Upon the spot whereat he crossed the river.
He wished that none should pass there from Írán
Túrán-ward. Some bold warrior must go hence, V. 780
And make the Kása rúd a sheet of flame,
So that if e'er it be the scene of fight
The wood may prove no cover for the foe."
Again Gív spake: "This is my quarry; mine
Shall be the task to set the pile a-blaze.
I fear not combat if the foe shall come,
But will invite the vultures to a feast."
The Sháh bestowed on Gív those goods as well,
And said to him: "Famed chieftain of the host![1]
May this bright crown ne'er lack thy sword. So be it.
Oh! may the Brahman never lack the Idol!"
He ordered: "Let the treasurer produce
Forthwith a hundred divers-hued brocades,"
Chose from his hoards a hundred lustrous pearls—
"All drops of water frozen," thou wouldst say—
And brought out from the women's bower five handmaids,
Whose heads and tresses were concealed by crowns.
He said: "This is a present meet for one
Whose wisdom is the king of his pure mind—
A daring, prudent man and eloquent,
Who turneth not from lions in the fight—
If he will carry to Afrásiyáb
A message, weeping not for dread of him,
And will convey his answer back to me.
Who of this noble company will dare?"
Gurgín son of Mílád held forth his hand,
And gat him ready for that enterprise.
The Sháh bestowed on him the slaves, the robes

[1] Reading with P.

Of gold-embroidery, and royal gems.
He called down blessings on the Sháh and said:—
"May wisdom wed the soul of Kai Khusrau!"
V. 781 Whenas earth's face grew black as raven's plumes,
And when night's Lamp rose o'er the hills, the Sháh
V. 782 Went to his palace, and his mighty men
Departed, each one to his home again.

§ 7

How Kai Khusrau sent Rustam to the Land of Hind

When daylight made the hills like sandarac,
And cockcrows reached the clouds, the matchless Rustam
With Farámarz and with Zawára came
Before the Sháh to speak about Írán,
The crown, the state, and matters great and small.
Then Rustam said: "Illustrious, glorious Sháh!
There is a district in Zábulistán,
That formed a portion of the realm of Túr
Till Minúchihr drave all the Turkmans out.
It is a goodly and a glorious land;
But when Káús grew hoar and spiritless,
When fame, the Grace, and prowess quitted him,
Túránians seized it and Íránians ceased
Therein.[1] The folk now carry to Túrán
Both toll and tribute, heeding not the Sháh.
V. 783 The march is full of elephants and treasure.
The innocent are troubled by this folk
With constant pillage, massacre, and raid,
And all the insolency of Túrán.[2]
Now that the kingship of Írán is thine,
Thine from the ant's foot to the lion's claws,

[1] See Introductory Note to this Part.
[2] Or "And have rebelled against Túránian pride."

'Twere well to send a valiant paladin,
And mighty host, to make this people bring
Their tribute to the Sháh and look to him.
This region ours we can defeat Túrán."
The Sháh said: "Live for ever! Thou art right.
Take order for sufficiency of troops,
Selecting all the famous warriors,
For since the district marcheth with thine own
Its purchase will be worthy of thy fame.
Commit a mighty host to Farámarz,
As many warriors as shall suffice.
The business will succeed with him; his hook
Will catch the crocodiles."
The paladin
With flushing cheeks called many a blessing down
Upon the Sháh, who bade the chamberlain
To spread the board, bring wine, call minstrelsy, V. 784
And listened spell-bound to their melody.

§ 8

How Kai Khusrau reviewed the Host

When bright Sol rose above the hills, and when
The minstrels tired of song, the kettledrums
Clanged at the court-gate and the troops drew up
Before the palace. On the elephants
They bound the tymbals and the trumpets blared.
Upon one elephant they set a throne;
That royal Tree bore fruit; the Sháh came forth,
And took his seat, crowned with a jewelled casque.
He wore a torque of royal gems and held
An ox-head mace. Two earrings, decked with pearls
And precious stones, depended from his ears;
His bracelets were of jewels set in gold;
His belt was pearls and gold and emeralds.

His elephant with golden bells and bridle
Proceeded to the centre of the host.
He had with him the ball within the cup;
The shouting of the army rose to Saturn;
The earth grew black and heaven azure-dim
With all the swords and maces, drums and dust;
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun is in a net,"
Or "Water hath o'erwhelmed the arching sky!"
The clearest sight could not behold the world,
Or gaze upon the sky and stars for spears;
Thou wouldst have said: "The billows of the sea
Are rising," as the host marched troop by troop.
They brought the camp-enclosure from the palace
Forth to the plain, and shoutings frayed the skies.

V. 785 The custom was that when that famous Sháh
Upon his elephant let fall the ball
Within the cup, and girt his loins, no place
Remained for any one throughout the realm
Save at the Sháh's own gate. Such was the token
To all his realm of that famed king of chiefs.
The Sháh remained upon his elephant
On that broad plain to see the troops march past.
First to defile before the world's new lord
Was Faríburz with golden boots, with mace,
And sword. Behind him was his flag sun-blazoned.
He rode a chestnut steed, his lasso coiled
Was in the saddle-straps. He passed along
In pride with Grace and lustre, his retainers
Were buried in their gold and silver trappings.
The world-lord blessed him, saying: "May the greatness
And Grace of heroes ever be thine own,
Thy fortune triumph in each enterprise,
Thy whole existence be a New Year's Day;
May health be thine in all thy goings forth,
And no infirmity on thy return."

Vol III

Behind him was Gúdarz son of Kishwád,
Whose counsel brought the world prosperity.
A lion clutching mace and scimitar
Was charged upon the flag that followed him.
Upon his left hand marched the brave Ruhhám,
And on his right the noble Gív; Shídúsh
Behind him bore the banner lion-charged,
Which threw a violet lustre on the ground,
While thousands of exalted warriors followed,
All cavaliers and armed with lengthy lances.
Behind Gív and accompanied by troops
His sable banner came charged with a wolf,
While of Ruhhám, that man of high ambition,
The flag rose cloudward tiger-charged. These sons
And grandsons of Gúdarz were seventy-eight
In number, and they crowded that broad plain,
Each followed by his flag distinct in hue— V. 786
All valiant men with swords and golden boots.
"The whole world," thou hadst said, "is 'neath Gúdarz,
The chiefs' heads are beneath his scimitar."
He called down blessings on the crown and throne
As he approached; the Sháh returned the blessings
On him, on Gív, and all his warriors.
The next behind Gúdarz was Gustaham,
The son of Gazhdaham the vigilant;
His weapon in the battle was a spear,
His comrades were a bow and poplar arrows;
And when a shaft went flying from his arm
'Twould pierce a rock or anvil to the core.
He was attended by a mighty host
With maces, scimitars, and rich array.
His banner blazoned with a moon waved o'er him,
And raised its head resplendent to the clouds.
He called down benedictions on the Sháh,
Who gloried in him. Next came shrewd Ashkash,

Endowed with prudent heart and ready brain.
His troops were from Balúchistán and Kutch,
And very rams to fight. No one had seen
Their backs in battle or one finger mailless;
Their banner was a pard with claws projecting.
Ashkash felicitated Kai Khusrau
At large upon the happy turn of fortune.
V. 787 Meanwhile the Sháh upon his elephant
Surveyed the troops, whose ranks stretched out two miles,
And in abundant satisfaction blessed
His sleepless fortune and his glorious land.
Behind Ashkash was well approved Farhád,
Who tendered all the troops, and everywhere
Was like their foster-father in the fight.
He had a banner charged with a gazelle,
Whose shadow fell upon him as he rode.
His troops were all equipped with Indian swords,
With Turkman armour and with Sughdian saddles.
They all were princely scions of Kubád,
And all were dowered with God's Grace and with justice;
The face of each was like the shining moon,
And like the shining sun in battlefield.
Farhád beheld the throne's new occupant,
And called down blessings on the youthful Sháh.
Guráza, eldest offspring of Gívgán,
Came next accompanied by all his kin,
A favourite in whom the Sháh rejoiced.[1]
Upon his saddle was a lasso coiled;
He bore a banner blazoned with a boar;
His troops were warriors and lasso-flingers.
These cavaliers and heroes of the plain
Saluted many times and then marched past.
Behind him Zanga son of Sháwarán

[1] Reading with P. §

Vol. III

Came rushing with his gallant hearts and chieftains.
Behind him was his flag charged with an eagle,
And as a moving mountain so moved he.
Ofttimes he called down blessings on the Sháh, V. 788
His mien and stature, sword and signet-ring.
All that were from the country of Baghdád
Were armed with lances and steel swords, and marched
Beneath the eagle while their general
Himself was seated on an elephant.
Behind him was the valiant Farámarz
Of noble stature, Grace, and majesty,
With tymbals, elephants, and many troops,
All eager for the fray, and mighty men
Brought from Kashmír, Kábulistán, Nímrúz,
All noble and the lustre of the world.
He had a banner like his valiant sire's—
That Rustam who could be surpassed by none—
With seven heads, "The heads as of a dragon
That had escaped from bonds," thou wouldst have said.
In favour like a fruitful tree he came,
And uttered many a blessing on the Sháh,
Who with a heart that joyed at Farámarz
Gave him much prudent rede and said to him:—
"The nursling of the elephantine chief
Will be pre-eminent among the people.
Thou art the son of wary-hearted Rustam,
Thou art from Zál—Sám's son—and Narímán.
Now is the land of Hindústán thine own,
All from Kannúj up to Sístán is thine;
So bear thyself that harm may not befall
Him that assayeth not to fight with thee.
In every place be thou the poor man's friend, V. 789
Be noble unto those of thine own kin,
See heedfully what friends thou hast, and who
Are men of wisdom and can soothe thy griefs,

Give, entertain, and never say: 'To-morrow.'
How know'st thou what to-morrow will bring forth?
I have bestowed on thee this kingship. Hold it.
Make no war anywhere in wantonness,
Be not in youth acquisitive of treasure,
Aggrieve not any that hath not grieved thee,
And trust not thou this treacherous dwelling-place;
Tis sandarac and ebony by turns.
Thy duty is to leave a noble name,
And mayst thou never have a sorry heart.
For thee and me alike the day will pass,
And turning heaven reckon up thy breaths.
Thou need'st a happy heart, a body hale;
Consider if a third thing is to seek.
May He who made the world be gracious to thee,
And smoke fill thy foes' hearts."

The chief, on hearing
The words of this new master of the world,
Dismounted from his fleet steed, and invoked
Full many a blessing on the young Sháh, saying:—
"Mayst thou wax even as the new moon waxeth."
He kissed the ground and, having done obeisance,
Turned and departed on his longsome journey,
While matchless Rustam, with his brain distraught
At losing Farámarz, accompanied
V. 790 His son two leagues, instructing him withal
In warfare, feast, and wisdom, wishing him
V. 791 A life of joy; then sadly turned and went
Back from the desert to the tent-enclosure.
The Sháh got off his lusty elephant,
And, mounting on a rapid-footed steed,
Withdrew in state to his pavilion,
With aching heart and deeply pondering.
When Rustam had returned the wine was brought;
Khusrau filled up a mighty bowl, and said:—
"Mirth as thy mate sufficeth, and no sage

Will name to-morrow. Where are Túr and Salm
And Farídún? All lost and one with dust!
We go about and toil and gather wealth,
Yet frustrate all the wishes of our hearts,
Since in the end the dust will be our share,
And not one of us will escape that day.[1]
Fleet we the darksome night with goblets brimmed,
And when day cometh with its measured steps
We will command that Tús shall blow the trumpet,
That tymbal, kettledrum, and clarion sound;
Then shall we see o'er whom the turning sky
Will stretch its hand in love in this campaign.
And yet what profit is our toil to us
Since from the first what is to be will be?
We shall be quit alike of good and ill;
Why should a wise man gorge himself with care?
Still by the aid of Him who made us all
I will take vengeance for my father's fall."

THE STORY OF FARÚD THE SON OF SIYÁWUSH

§ 9

The Prelude

Let no king, great and warlike though he be, V. 792
Intrust his army to an enemy,
One from whose eyelids tears of envy pour,
Tears such as leeches know no drugs to cure;
For such a man, if of a noble race,
Will chafe to be denied the highest place,
To be a slave with wish insatiate,

[1] The speaker, however, proved to be an exception.

And only speak as others may dictate.
No wisdom can the monarch's heart attend
Who calleth such a man as this a friend,
For if heaven hostile to his wishes prove,
And hath no blessing for him in its love,
He will be prone to act no friendly part;
The thwarted wish will rankle in his heart.
No sage would reckon him a man at all
That hath not wisdom for his pedestal,
And thou wilt see, when thou shalt hear this tale,
How far an evil nature may prevail.

§ 10

How Tús went to Turkistán

When Sol arose in all its majesty,
And sat upon its lofty eminence,
Ascendant in the Sign of Aries,
While all the world became like golden wine,
The tymbals sounded from the court of Tús
With blare of trump and roll of kettledrum.
The battle-shout went up throughout the realm,
The air was full of war-cries, earth of turmoil.
The neighs and the shouts frayed Luna from her course,
While from the clash of arms and trumpeting
Of elephants thou wouldst have said: "The Nile
Hath overflowed the world!" The air was yellow,
V. 793 Red, blue, and violet as Káwa's standard
'Mid cavaliers—the kinsmen of Gúdarz—
Waved. Kai Khusrau with crown and mace and trumpets
Came to the entering in of his pavilion.
Tús with the golden boots and Káwa's flag
Set forth and with the great men that wore torques

And crowns—the aspiring kindred of Naudar—
Went proudly from the host before Khusrau.
The banner o'er them bore an elephant,
Its golden staff-head rising to the clouds.
They went together, like a darksome mountain,
And sun and moon ceased shining. When they came
With flags and helms in haste before the Sháh
He bade the chieftain Tús present to him
The warriors of distinction in the host,
And thus addressed them: "Tús is chief; he hath
The flag of Káwa; do as he commandeth."
Then in their sight he gave his signet-ring
To Tús, and said: "He is your chief and leader."
To Tús himself he said: "Be true to me,
And mark mine institutions and commands:
No one must be molested on the march,
Such is the custom of my crown and throne.
Let no cold blast befall the husbandman, V. 794
Or artisan, or one that armeth not
Against thee; strive but with antagonists.
Refrain from troubling those who are at ease
Since all will have to quit this Wayside Inn.
Thou shalt on no account pass by Kalát,
For, if thou dost, things will go hard with thee.
To Siyáwush (his soul be as the sun,
His place all hopeful in the other world!)
The daughter of Pírán once bare a child[1]
But little shown in public by his sire.
He is my brother and resembleth me.
He is a youth of mine own age, high-fortuned,
And liveth with his mother at Kalát;
A world-lord he who hath the Grace and troops.
He knoweth no Íránian e'en by name,
And from that quarter thou must turn thy bridle,
For he hath troops and famous men of war

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 291.

Upon a mountain steep and hard to reach.
He is a brave and warlike cavalier,
Great through his native worth and famed of person,
And therefore thou must take the desert-road:
It is not well to touch the claws of lions."
Tús answered: "In thy counsels is success,
By that way which thou biddest will I go,
For good alone must come of thy behest."
He then departed quickly, and the Sháh
Returned with loyal Rustam to the throne,
Where sitting with that elephantine hero,
The lords, archmages, and the stainless princes,
V. 795 He spake at large about Afrásiyáb,
His own heart's anguish and his father's wrongs.
Tús for his part with all his warriors
Came to a place where two roads met; the one
Went through a desert dry and waterless,
The other by Kalát and toward Charam.
The elephants and kettledrums were halted
Till Tús the general should come up, that so
The host might take the road that pleased him best.
When Tús had at his leisure reached the chiefs
He spake about the waterless, hot road;
Then to Gúdarz: "Although this arid waste
Yield ambergris for dust and musk for soil,
Still on a long and toilsome march we need
Repose and water. Our best route will be
Kalát, Charam, encamping at Mayam,
V. 796 With streams and fertile country on both sides:
Why choose a desert and its miseries?
I went along that way in former times,
When Gazhdaham was leader of the host,
And never saw so troublesome a road
Although the ups and downs are few enough.
'Tis best to march along the other route,
And measure not the desert and its leagues."

Gúdarz replied: "The noble Sháh made thee
Commander of this host; lead as he bade;
Make not the troops' march grievous. They should not
By disobedience to the great king's orders
Be injured thus."
Tús said: "O famous warrior!
Think not such things; this will not vex the Sháh,
And therefore need not be a grief to thee."
He spake and bade the army to proceed,
And march toward Kalát and to Charam;
And, since Khusrau's commands he minded not,
See what a Tempest proved at last his lot!

§ 11

How Farúd heard of the Coming of Tús

News reached Farúd: "The bright sun's face is darkened
By dust raised by the feet of elephants V. 797
And camels; earth is like the river Nile.
Thy brother's army marcheth from Írán
Against Túrán for vengeance, purposing
To take the road that leadeth to Kalát.
I know not where their battlefield will be."
The inexperienced youth on hearing this
Grew very sore of heart and dark of soul.
He came down from the hold, unbarred the gate,
And going forth surveyed the lofty mountain.
At his command they brought in all the camels,
The sheep, and horses; none remained on waste
Or hill; he drove them all toward Mount Sapad
And toward Ambúh, returned, secured the gate,
And mounted on a rapid-footed steed.
When from Mayam the sound of drums arose,
And from Charam dust-clouds like ebony,

Jaríra, gazing from the castle-roof,
Felt her heart throb in terror of that host.
To her, his mother, came the young Farúd,
And said: "O chief of ladies! from Irán
A host hath come with elephants and tymbals,
And Tús the general is in command.
V. 798 What sayest thou? What is the course to take?
We must prevent him from attacking us."
Jaríra said to him: "O warrior!
Be all thy days as fortunate as this!
Thy brother is the new Sháh of Írán:
A world-lord shrewd is Kai Khusrau, and he
Well knoweth both thy name and native worth.
One father's blood and bone are in you both,
And Siyáwush was peerless in the world.
Well may the age applaud him! At the outset
Pírán gave me to him; he would not else
Have sought a Turkman spouse. Thus thy descent
On both sides is illustrious and royal.
Now, since thy brother seeketh to avenge,
And vindicate, the soul of Siyáwush,
Thou shouldst be foremost in the race for vengeance,
In making ready and exacting it.
Don Rúman mail and go with raging heart,
And shouts of battle ringing in thy head,
For, since he seeketh vengeance on your grandsire,
Thy part should be revenge, not policy,
In that this grief may well make leopards wail,
And crocodiles come groaning from the river.
The birds too and the fishes in the water
Call curses down upon Afrásiyáb,
For in the whole world not one sovereign
That girdeth girdle is like Siyáwush
In prowess, manhood, fortune, and high birth,
In glory, weight, intelligence, and justice.
Thou art the son of that world-famous chief,

Art of the Kaian seed and look'st it too!
Thou must gird up thy loins then to avenge V. 799
Thy sire and prove thy birth and native worth.
See who the leader is of yonder host,
Show hospitality, invite the lords,
And set upon the tables wine and gifts
Of scimitars, of helmets, of horse-armour,
Of coats of mail, and Indian swords. Thy brother
Is wealth sufficient for thee in this world.
Shall such just vengeance fall to aliens?
At this conjuncture lead his troops thyself,
New in revenge as he is new in reign."
Farúd said: "Which of them must I address
Since I must have some helper 'mid these men,
These men so haughty on the day of battle,
Because I know not one of them by name?
How shall I send them greeting and a message?"
Jaríra answered: "In the dust afar
Raised by the host look for two cavaliers,
Bahrám and Zanga son of Sháwarán.
Search for the blazons of these two great heroes,
For thou and I have nothing hid from them.
Oh! may thy head and name survive for ever,
And may the soul of Siyáwush be bright!
He and these twain were never separable,
They were his lords, he was their over-lord.
Go with Tukhár, but with no further escort,
And do not in thy heart misprize my words:
When thou shalt ask about the chiefs and warriors
The brave Tukhár will point them out, for he,
Well knowing all the Íránians, great and small, V. 800
Will show thee sheep and shepherds."
"Noble lady!"
Replied Farúd, "thy rede enlighteneth
Thy kin and folk."
A watchman from the look-out

Came, told Farúd about that host, and said:—
"The mountains, vales, and plains are filled with troops,
And thou wouldst say: 'The sun is put in duress!'
The expanse of rock up to the castle-door
Is all flag, elephant, and warrior!"

§ 12

How Farúd and Tukhár went to view the Host

Tukhár departed with Farúd—a youth
Whom fortune had abandoned. Whensoever
The sky above us is untowardly
No gentleness or rage availeth thee.
They chose the summit of a lofty mountain,
Commanding all the army of Írán,
And marvelled at the troops and their equipment.
The youth said to his confidant Tukhár:—
"Conceal not aught of what I ask of thee.
Tell me the names of all that thou beholdest—
The man of rank, the bearer of the flag,
The lord of partisan and golden boot—
All whom thou recognisest of Írán."
The Íránian host defiled between two mountains,
And what with golden helm and golden shield,
With golden ax and golden partisan,
Thou wouldst have said: "No gold is left unmined,
A cloud hath risen and rained jewelry!"
V. 801 The roar of kettledrums along the pass
Affrayed the vultures as they flew o'erhead,
While thirty thousand sword and buckler men
Marched bravely on in all points dight for war.
Now when Tukhár had scanned the host, the prince
Began to question him. That expert answered:—
"I will clear up what is obscure to thee:
Know that yon flag charged with an elephant,

Those horsemen, and those blue steel scimitars,
Belong to noble Tús the general—
A bad opponent when he seeketh vengeance.
Behind him is another standard bearing
A blazing sun: 'tis that of Faríburz,
Son of Káús, a general, thine uncle,
A man of Grace and purpose. Next to him
There is a mighty flag, its charge a moon,
With many valiant warriors. The chief
Call Gustaham the son of Gazhdaham,
Whom no two-headed dart or club affrayeth.
Next yon tall flag charged with an onager,
Encompassed by a band of warriors,
Is over Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Whose troops are mighty men. The flag behind
That hath a moon on red, with musk-black fringes,
Belongeth to Gív's son Bízhan who spurteth
Blood to the sky. The flag charged with a tiger—
One that would make a mighty lion burst,
And, thou wouldst say, is leaping from its field—
Is borne by brave Shídúsh, while that behind him,
Whose blazon is a wild boar, 'One to bring,'
As that wouldst say, 'the heavens to the shears,'
Pertaineth to a brave chief hight Guráza,
Who counteth it but sport to fight a lion.
The next flag blazoned with a buffalo,
With cavaliers behind and chiefs in front,
Is famed Farhád's, the choicest of the chiefs:
Thou wouldest say: 'His stature is sky-high.'
The banner with a wolf for its device V. 802
Betokeneth the valiant chieftain Gív.
The banner with the lion wrought in gold
Is floating o'er Gúdarz son of Kishwád.
The streaming standard blazoned with a pard
Precedeth proud, imperious Rívníz.
The banner that is charged with a gazelle

Belongeth to Nastúh son of Gúdarz,
And to his troops; that with the mountain-sheep
Pertaineth to another son—Bahrám.
They all are lion-men—brave cavaliers;
To name each one were tedious."
Thus he told
The blazons of the chiefs to prince Farúd,
Who viewed all, great and small. His heart grew glad,
His cheek flushed,[1] and he spake thus to Tukhár:—
"We shall take vengeance for my sire with ease!
I will not leave in Chín or in Máchín
A cavalier, when battling for revenge,
But catch the Dragon[2] and reduce their throne
To straits."
Now when the Íránians had descried
Farúd upon the mountain with Tukhár,
Tús the commander was incensed, and caused
The drums and elephants to halt. He said:—
V. 803 "We need an enterprising cavalier
To hasten to the mountain-top to learn
Who these two warriors are and wherefore there.
If they be ours let him bestow on them
Two hundred lashes on their heads, if foes
Bind them and drag them hither faces downward;
If they be slain still let him drag them hither
Along the dust and have no fear of any,
While if they shall prove spies, who want to take
The number of our forces secretly,
Let him cleave both asunder on the spot,
Then fling them down the mountain and return;
But if a countless host be ambushed there,
Whereof a straggling few have shown themselves,
Let him return and give the intelligence
To us forthwith, and we will drive them thence."

[1] Reading with P. [2] Afrásiyáb.

§ 13

How Bahrám came to Farúd upon the Mountain

Bahrám son of Gúdarz said to the chief:—
"This matter shall not be concealed from us.
I will go forth to do as thou hast said,
And scale the mountain-top."
He struck his steed,
And went full of surmise toward the height.
Farúd said to Tukhár: "Who is this man
That cometh hither with such insolence?
Good sooth! he taketh no account of us
At all, but cometh up the steep apace!
He rideth a bay charger with a lasso
Hung in his saddle-straps."
The counsellor
Replied: "He is not one to treat with rudeness.
I know him not by token or by name,
But take him for a kinsman of Gúdarz.
When Kai Khusrau departed from Túrán
He took a helmet of Afrásiyáb's;[1]
It is methinketh on that horseman's head, V. 804
And he hath royal mail to correspond.
He must be of the kindred of Gúdarz;
So let us ope our lips and question him."
Bahrám, when he came nearer to the crest,
Cried as a cloud might thunder: "Who art thou
Upon the mountain-top? Dost thou not see
Yon countless host, or hear their clamouring
And din of drums? Or art thou not afraid
Of Tús their watchful leader?"
Then the prince:—
"Thou wast not rudely treated: be not rude.
Good words, O veteran! Let no harsh challenge
Pollute thy lips. Thou art no warlike lion,

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 377.

And I am not a desert-onager;
We are not to be treated in this fashion.
Thou art in no way my superior
In courage or in manliness or strength,
While as for head, foot, hand, heart, brain, and wits,
Tongue speaking fluently and eyes and ears—
See if I too possess them and, if so,
Forbear to threaten in thy foolishness.
If thou wilt answer I will ask thee somewhat,
And shall rejoice if thou advise me well."
Bahrám said: "Ask away! Thou art in heaven
And I am on the earth."
"Who is your leader,"
Inquired Farúd, "and wherefore make ye war?"
Bahrám said: "Tús is leader for he hath
The drums and Káwa's flag. Of warriors
There are Gúdarz, Ruhhám, and Gív, Shídúsh,
Gurgín, Farhád the valiant, Gustaham,
With Zanga son of Sháwarán, and chief
Of all the clan of fighting-men—Guráza."
Farúd returned: "Why nam'st thou not Bahrám,
And leavest thus the matter incomplete?
V. 805 In him of all the offspring of Gúdarz
We most rejoice, and yet thou nam'st him not!"
Bahrám replied to him: "O lion-man!
Who spake to thee in such wise of Bahrám?"
Farúd said: "From my mother heard I of him.
She said to me: 'Now when the host approacheth
Meet it and summon forth Bahrám, and also
A noble, Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Because they are thy father's foster-brothers,
And thou mayst well inquire for news of them.'"
Then thus Bahrám: "O fortune's favourite!
So thou art Fruit of that Imperial Tree!
Thou art Farúd, young prince! Live long and happy!"
He answered: "Yea, I am indeed Farúd:

The fallen Cypress hath put forth a Shoot."
Bahrám rejoined: "Display to me thy person,
Display to me the mark of Siyáwush."[1]
Thereat Farúd showed to Bahrám his arm.
A mole of ambergris on rosy flesh
Was there—a picture such as none on earth
Could skill to limn with compasses from Chín.
Bahrám perceived: "He cometh from Kubád
Through Siyáwush," then blessed him, did obeisance,
And scaled the lofty steep. The prince dismounted,
Sat on a rock, rejoicing, and thus said:—
"Exalted, shrewd, and Lion of the fight!
Were my two eyes to see my sire alive
In sooth it would not be a greater joy
To me than to behold thee glad and happy,
Accomplished, wary, and a paladin.
I came upon this mountain-top to ask V. 806
About the heroes of the Íránian host,
And learn who are their chief and men of name.
I will provide a feast such as I can,
Will entertain their paladin with joy,
Give many gifts of horses, maces, belts,
And scimitars, then march forth seared of heart
Before the host against Túrán for vengeance.
The quest befitteth me who am fierce fire
When mounted on my saddle in the combat.
Be pleased to ask the paladin to come
With glad heart to the mountain, there to spend
A week that we may well advise together.
Upon the eighth day, when the tymbal soundeth,
And Tús the general mounteth on his steed,
I will make ready to avenge my father,
And, in the anguish of my heart, provide
A conflict which shall teach the warrior-lion,

[1] Similarly Gív desired to see the birth-mark of Kai Khusrau, Vol. ii. p. 372.

While vultures' feathers testify aloft,
That 'tis no common noble of the world
Who girdeth him for vengeance such as this."
Bahrám replied: "O prince young and accomplished,
And valiant cavalier! I will report
Thy words to Tús, and kiss his hand while urging
Compliance. Still our chieftain is not wise,
His head and brains brook not good counselling.
He is accomplished, rich, and nobly born,
But nameth not the Sháh. When Gív brought home
That glorious one, Tús was provoked with him,
Gúdarz, and Gív, supported Faríburz,
And said: 'I am descended from Naudar:
The kingship of the world is rightly mine.'
V. 807 He very well may disregard my words,
And in his anger quarrel with myself.
If any one but I shall come to thee
Let him not look upon thy head and helmet.
Tús said to me: 'See who is on the summit,
But ask him not what he is doing there.
To talk with sword and mace will be enough,
For why should any one be there to-day?'
When he is calm I will return to thee
With good news and conduct thee to our host,
Rejoicing; but if any one approach
Except myself put little faith in him.
More than a single horseman will not come
To thee, such is our noble leader's rule.
Consider well what is the wisest course,
Take refuge in the hold and quit this spot."
Farúd took from his belt a turquoise mace
With golden haft. "Accept of this," he said,
"A keepsake from me; it will prove of service.
If Tús the general be well-disposed
We will have merry hearts and great content,

And I will furnish further other things,
Steeds, sells, gold, crowns, and royal signet-rings."

§ 14

How Bahrám went back to Tús

Bahrám returning said to Tús: "May wisdom
And thy pure soul be mates! This is Farúd,
The son of guiltless, murdered Siyáwush!
He showed to me the mark which all the race
Inherit from Káús and Kai Kubád."
The overbearing general replied:— V. 808
"The host, the trumpets, and the drums are mine.
My words to thee were: 'Bring the man to me,
Ask him no questions.' If he be a king
Who then am I, and wherefore am I here
With this array? A man of Turkman race,
Like some black raven on the mountain there,
Is hindering the progress of the troops!
Among the froward offspring of Gúdarz
I can see naught but mischief to the host.
Thou wast afraid of one unskilful horseman!
It was no savage Lion on the height.
He saw our host, and duped thee. Thou hast gone
Both up and down for naught!" Then to the chiefs:—
"O men of name and slayers of the foe!
I need some noble and aspiring man
To face the height and Turkman, to behead him,
And bring his head to me before the host."
Rívníz girt up his loins for that encounter,
Which cost his life. Then said Bahrám to Tús:—
'O paladin! stain not thy soul so rashly.
Revere the Ruler of the sun and moon;
Respect the Sháh, for yonder is his kinsman—
A famous horseman and a warrior;

And even if a hundred cavaliers
Should go against him to the mountain-top
They would not 'scape his clutches with their lives:
Thou wilt but bring glad hearts to misery."
V. 809 This angered Tús, who would not be advised,
But bade some chiefs to hasten to the mountain,
And many valiant men rushed forth and raised
Their heads to make an onslaught on Farúd,
But "Hold not," thus spake brave Bahrám to them,
"This matter lightly; he on yonder height
Is of Khusrau's own kin, one hair of whom
Is better than a hundred paladins.
He that ne'er saw the face of Siyáwush
Will find repose in gazing on his son."
Now when Bahrám told of Farúd the men
That had set forth retraced their steps again.

§ 15

How Rívníz was slain by Farúd

Then for the second time the son-in-law
Of Tús came forth—the laughing-stock of heaven—
And left the road that leadeth to Charam
For Mount Sapad, his fierce heart set on outrage.
Farúd descried him from the mountain-top,
And, drawing from its case his royal bow,
Said to Tukhár the veteran: "Tús hath spurned
The message, for a horseman not Bahrám
Hath come! My heart is confident but heavy.
See if thou canst remember who he is.
Why is he clad in mail from head to foot?'
Tukhár replied: "A valiant cavalier,
Rívníz by name. He is an only son
With forty sisters like the jocund spring.
He is unscrupulous, sly, plausible,

Accomplished, young, and son-in-law to Tús."
Farúd returned: "Such talk is not for war-time.
If he approach for combat I will send him
To sleep upon his sisters' skirts. If merely
Mine arrow make him feel its wind in passing,
And he surviveth, hold me not a man.
Which shall mine arrow slay—the horse or rider? V. 810
How sayest thou, O veteran Tukhár?"
Tukhár replied: "The time for strife hath come.[1]
Loose at the man; perchance the heart of Tús
May be perturbed for him. Tús knoweth not
Thy resolution for thou soughtest peace;
If he attacketh thee in wantonness
He will but bring disgrace upon thy brother."
When sword in hand Rívníz drew nigh, Farúd
Strung his curved bow, shot down a poplar shaft,
And pinned the Rúman helmet to the head
Of him that came. He fell. His fleet steed left him.
Rívníz came headlong to the dust. When Tús,
The general, beheld this from Mayam
The mountain disappeared before his eyes!
Now wisdom hath a saw in this regard:—
"Man's evil nature is its own reward."

§ 16

How Zarásp was slain by Farúd

Then Tús said to Zarásp: "Let thy heart flame
As 'twere Ázargashasp, don horsemen's armour,
And take good heed of thine own life and person.
Thou mayst perchance avenge this noble chief,
Or if not I myself will seek for vengeance."
Zarásp departed and assumed his helm.
With vengeful heart and windy pate he went

[1] Inserted from C.

Toward Mount Sapad, like some fierce, vengeful lion,
V. 811 And scaled the mountain, with uplifted head,
Loud shouts, fierce gestures, and impetuous heart.
Farúd, that raging Lion, told Tukhár:—
"Another challenger is on his way;
See now who this Íránian horseman is
That cometh galloping upon the mountain."
Tukhár declared at once: "It is the son
Of Tús, by name Zarásp, who wheeleth not
His charger from an elephant of war.
His sister was the consort of Rívníz.
This atheling hath come for vengeance too!
As soon as he can see thine arm and casque
Let loose a poplar shaft that he may come
Down from his charger headlong to the dust.
Sure am I that the heart of Tús will be
As 'twere a leaf in winter at his death,
And that insensate chief will understand
That we are not here to be sport for him."
When in the sight of all the Íránian host
Zarásp drew near upon the mountain-top,
The valorous Farúd urged on his charger,
Shot at Zarásp and pinned him through the mail
And loins against the saddle. His spirit flamed
Upon the point. He fell. His windfoot steed
Abandoned him and galloped back full speed.

§ 17

How Tús fought with Farúd

A shout ascended from the Íránian host,
And all the warriors put on their helms.
Tús with a full heart and with weeping eyes
Donned his cuirass in haste. He greatly mourned
Those gallant chiefs and trembled like a leaf.

He mounted on his saddle and appeared
As 'twere the mountain-mass that men up pile
Upon the back of lusty elephants,
And turned his charger's reins toward Farúd
With heart revengeful and with head a-fume.
Tukhár the spokesman said: "A Mountain cometh V. 812
In fury toward the height. 'Tis Tús the chief!
Contend not with the veteran Crocodile.
Secure thee in the hold and wait on fortune.
Expect no merrymake since thou hast slain
Alike his son and son-in-law in battle."

The young Farúd, wroth with Tukhár, replied:—
"When war and strife confront us what care I
For Tús or elephant or mighty lion,
For warrior-leopard or for tiger? These
But give a man the heart to fight, and serve not
To scatter earth upon the raging fire."

Then said Tukhár the much-experienced: "Kings
Despise not counsel. Iron though thou be,
And able to uproot a mount of flint,
Yet art thou but a single cavalier;
And thirty thousand warriors of Írán
Will come against thee to the mountain-top.
No strong-hold will be left here, stone or dust:
They will sweep all away, and furthermore
If evil by this means shall come to Tús
His downfall will cause sorrow to Khusrau,
And so defeat the vengeance for thy sire—
A breach which nevermore will be repaired.
Why combat with a Lion in thy rage?
Go to the hold and fight not foolishly."

This, which he should have spoken at the first,
He left unsaid till then; so to Farúd
All through this worthless, foolish minister
Resulted battle and the loss of life.
The youth had eighty moon-faced female slaves

At home who stood upon the roof to watch him,
V. 813 And babbled ceaselessly. He could not brook
The thought of a retreat before their eyes,
But raised his reins and rushing on like wind
Set to his string another poplar shaft;
But first Tukhár said: "If thou meanest fight,
The best for thee, or else thou mayest not conquer
The noble Tús, will be to overthrow
His steed, for monarchs do not war afoot,
However much they may be put to it;
Besides one wooden arrow from a bow
Will never set a period to his life,
And when the general shall reach the summit
His warriors will follow, and thou hast not
The power to oppose; thou hast not looked
His arrows in the face."
The youth attended
To what Tukhár said, strung his bow, and shot.
The poplar arrow struck the general's steed—
A bow-shot worthy of a cavalier—
The charger came down headlong and expired
While Tús both raged and blustered. He returned
To camp, his buckler hanging from his neck,
On foot, all dusty, and distraught in mind,
Farúd the while with gibes pursuing him:—
"What ailed the noble paladin, and how
Will he proceed amid the ranks of war
Who cannot fight a single horseman here?"
The women-slaves began to laugh, and sent
Their peals of laughter through the sky. They cried:—
"The old man staggereth down the mountain-slope,
Affrighted at the arrows of a youth!"
When Tús descended from the height the chiefs,
Full of concern, approached him, did obeisance,
And said: "O famous paladin of earth!
What can be better than thy safe return?

We have no cause to bathe our cheeks in tears."
The noble Gív was grievously distressed
Because the valiant general had come back
Afoot, and said: "This youth exceedeth bounds V. 814
In turning thus our chieftains' faces pale!
What though he be a king and weareth earrings,
Is he to flout so great a host as this?
It is not right that we should acquiesce
In his pretensions thus. If Tús displayed
Some hastiness, Farúd hath filled the world
With tumult. We would die for Siyáwush,
But we must not forget this injury.
Farúd hath given to the winds Zarásp,
That noble cavalier sprung from Naudar!
The body of Rívníz is drowned in blood!
What further shame is ours? Farúd, though he
Jamshíd's own son, Kubád's own marrow, be,
Hath made a new departure witlessly."

§ 18

How Gív fought with Farúd

Gív spake, armed in hot haste, and came forth proudly
Like wild sheep on the mountain. Seeing him
Farúd heaved from his breast a chilly sigh,
And said: "This warrior-host discerneth not
Between uphill and down! Each combatant
Is braver than the last—the crown of hosts—
But wit is lacking in their paladin;
A witless head is like a soulless body.
I fear me they will fail in their revenge
Unless Khusrau himself invade Túrán;
Then back to back will we avenge our sire,
And haply get our foes within our clutches.
Now tell me who this noble horseman is, V. 815

Whose hand and brand will shortly ask for tears?"
Thereat Tukhár glanced at the plain below,
And said to him: "It is the raging Dragon,
Whose neezings make birds topple from the air,
Who put Pírán thy grandsire's hands in bonds,
And brake two Turkman hosts![1] He hath unfathered
Full many a little child. His foot hath been
On many a river, mount, and wilderness.
Full many a father too hath he unsonned,
And treadeth underfoot the lion's neck.
'Twas he that bare thy brother to Írán,
And crossed Jíhún although he saw no boat.[2]
They call him Gív—a very Elephant
Or river Nile upon the day of battle.
When thou shalt set thy thumbstall to the bow-string
Thy poplar arrow will not pierce his mail,
Because he weareth that of Siyáwush;[3]
So draw thy bow and let the arrow fly
Against his steed. The great beast may be wounded,
And Gív the rider may return afoot
With shield on neck as did their general."
The brave prince bent his bow until the top
Was at his shoulder, shot, and struck Gív's charger
Upon the breast. Gív came down and retreated.
Then from the battlements of Mount Sapad
A shout rose. Gív's brain shrank before the jeers,
But all the mighty men approached him, saying:—
"Praise be to God, exalted warrior!
Because the horse is hurt and thou art not,
Nor art thou captured but can'st go again."
Bízhan the warrior came to Gív like wind,
And uttered words most unacceptable:—[4]
V. 816 "My father—lion-quelling paladin,
Whose might is greater than an elephant's!

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 378 *seq.*
[2] *Id.* p. 392.
[3] *Id.* p. 377.
[4] Reading with P.

Why did a single horseman see thy back?
Thy hand was wont to be the heart of fight,
But now because a Turkman shot thy steed
Thou wentest reeling like a drunken man!"

Gív answered saying: "Since my horse was wounded
I should have forfeited my life to him
Immediately."

He spake in savage tones,
Which when Bízhan perceived he showed his back,
And Gív in fury at his levity
Lashed at Bízhan's head with a riding-whip,
And said: "Did no one ever teach thee this—
That circumspection is required in war?
Thou hast no wisdom, providence, or brains,
And may he cease to be that nurtured thee."

Bízhan was pained because his sire was wroth,
And swore an oath before the Almighty Judge:—
"I will not take the saddle off my steed
Until I have avenged Zaráspor perished."

Departing with a heart oppressed by care,
And head all vengeance, unto Gustaham
He spake thus: "Let me have a steed of thine—
A handy one, such as will climb with ease
The mountain-side—so that I may assume
My mail that one of us may seem a man.
A Turkman hath ascended to the heights,
So as to draw the eyes of all the host,
And I desire to go and fight with him
Because my soul is darkened by his deeds."

But Gustaham: "This is not well. Climb not
The height so rashly! When we have to march
The world will be all ups and downs and waste.
Now of my horses fit to carry armour
I have but two remaining, and if he
Destroy one I shall not obtain another V. 817
To take its place in action, strength, and size.

Zarásp—a world-lord—with Rívníz, and Tús,
Who holdeth all the world of no account,
And thine own sire, that hunter of fierce lions,
Who recketh not how heaven's wheel may turn,
Have all retreated from him with sore hearts;
None made a fight against that Mount of Flint.
Would that we had a vulture's wings or eagle's,
For none will get inside the hold afoot!"

Bízhan replied to him: "Break not my heart,
Break not mine arms and shoulders too just now,
For I have sworn a great oath by the moon,
The world's Judge, and the Sháh's own diadem,
That if I am not slain I will not ride
Back from the mountain but avenge Zarásp."

Then Gustaham replied: "This is not good,
For wisdom doth not recognise such fierceness."

Bízhan responded: "I will go afoot,
And so avenge Zarásp: I need no horse."

Then answered Gustaham: "I would not have
A single hair to perish from thy head;
And if I had a hundred thousand steeds,
Whose manes and tails were full of royal gems,
I would not keep them or my treasure, life,
Or iron mace or falchion back from thee.
Go thou, inspect my horses each in turn,
And take whichever of them thou preferrest.
Bid that be saddled. If 'tis slain so be it."

He had one charger that was like a wolf,
Long in the barrel, tall, and spirited:
They mailed it for the brave, young atheling.
Gív, mindful of Farúd's deeds, fumed at heart
Thereat, then sent and summoned Gustaham,
And uttered many a saw concerning youth.
v. 818 He sent Bízhan the mail of Siyáwush,
Besides a royal helmet of his own.
When Gustaham had brought the mail Bízhan

Incased himself as quick as dust and went
To Mount Sapad as one on vengeance bent.

§ 19

How Bízhan fought with Farúd

Farúd said to Tukhár: "Another chief
Hath come! Look forth, see who he is, and who
Will weep for him."
That man of words replied:—
"There is not one to match him in Írán,
For he is Gív's son and a valiant hero
Victorious like a lion in all combats.
Gív hath no other son, and this is dearer
To him than life and wealth. Direct thy hand
Against the steed, and break not the Sháh's heart.
Bízhan too hath the mail, and Gív hath linked
The gorget of the helm, of Siyáwush
Thereto. These neither double-headed dart
Nor shaft can pierce. Bízhan may fight afoot.
Thou wilt not shine as his antagonist;
He graspeth, look! a sword of adamant."
Farúd's shaft struck the charger of Bízhan:
Thou wouldst have said: "It had no life." It fell,
And when Bízhan had disengaged himself
He made toward the summit, sword in hand,
And shouted: "O thou valiant cavalier!
Remain and see now how a Lion fighteth,
And realise how heroes though unhorsed
Will still advance to battle with the sword.
Thou shalt behold it if thou wilt await me,
For thou shalt never think of fighting more."
Farúd above was angered too because V. 819
Bízhan withdrew not, and again that Lion
Discharged a shaft. Bízhan the brave held up

His shield above his head. The arrow pierced
The shield but missed the mail. Bízhan sped on,
And, when he reached the summit, drew his sword.
Farúd the noble turned away from him;
The ramparts rang with cries. Bízhan pursued
Apace, sharp sword in hand, and gashed the bards
Upon the noble steed which came to dust.
Farúd howbeit gained the castle-gate,
The garrison secured it with all speed,
And showered many stones down from the walls
Upon Bízhan, who knew that 'twas no spot
To loiter at. He cried: "O famous one!
Hast thou—a warrior and cavalier—
Thus turned from one on foot and felt no shame?
Woe for the heart and hand of brave Farúd!"

He left the scene of combat, came to Tús,
And said: "To fight so brave a warrior
Would need a famous lion of the desert,
And if a mount of flint should turn to water
In strife with him the chieftain need not marvel:
Imagination boggleth at such prowess!"

The general Tús swore by the Lord of all:—
"I will send up this hold's dust to the sun.
To avenge beloved Zarásp the cavalier
I will attack without delay, will make
This Turkman wretch a corpse, and with his gore
Engrain the stones like coral to the core."

§ 20

How Farúd was slain

Now when the shining sun had disappeared,
And dark night led its host across the sky,
V. 820 The daughter of Pírán approached her son—
Farúd—with anxious mind and aching heart,

And lay down near her darling, but all night
Remained the spouse of grief and misery.
She dreamed that from the lofty castle rose
A flame in front of him she loved so well,
Illuming Mount Sapad and burning all
The castle and the women-slaves. She woke
In pain, her soul in anguish and dismay,
Went out upon the wall and looking round
Saw all the mountain filled with mail and spears.
Her cheek flushed up and fuming at the heart
She hastened to Farúd, and cried to him:—
"Awake from slumber, O my son! the stars
Are bringing down disaster on our heads!
The mountain is all foes, the castle-gate
All spears and mail!"
He said: "Why such to-do?
If life is o'er for me, and thou canst count not
On further respite for me, mine own sire
Was slain in youth, my life is wrecked like his.
Gurwí's hand put a period to his days,
And now Bízhan is eager for my death;
Yet will I struggle, perish wretchedly,
And not ask quarter of the Íránians."
He gave out mail and maces to the troops,
He placed a splendid helm upon his head,
And with a Rúman breastplate girt about him
Came with a royal bow grasped in his hand.
Now when the shining sun displayed its face,
And proudly mounted to the vault of heaven,
The war-cries of the chieftains rose on all sides, V. 821
While massive maces whirled amid the din
Of clarions, tymbals, pipes, and Indian bells.
Farúd descended from the castle-ramparts
With all his gallant Turkmans. Through the dust
Raised by the horsemen, and the feathered shafts,
The mountain-top was like a sea of pitch.

There was no level ground or room to fight;
The rocks and stones played havoc with the steeds,
While shouts ascended as the armies strove.
Tús ready armed for battle, grasping shield
And trenchant falchion, led the way in person,
Escorted by the chieftains of the host
Afoot. Thus they attacked till noon was high,
And then the troops of brave Farúd were thinned,
The hills and valleys had been filled with slain,
The youth's good fortune had abandoned him.
The Íránians marvelled at him, none had seen
So fierce a Lion, but as battle pressed him
He saw his fortune adverse; of the Turkmans
No cavalier remained with him; he fought
V. 822 Alone; he turned and fled down toward the hold.
Ruhhám sought with Bízhan to intercept him:
They charged him from above and from below.
When on the lower ground Bízhan appeared,
With stirrups firmly pressed and reins held loose,
The youth espied the helm, drew out his mace,
And went like some fierce lion at his foe,
Not knowing what the vaulted sky decreed.
He thought to strike Bízhan upon the head,
And smash both head and helmet with one buffet.
Bízhan was staggered by the young man's stroke,
And lost both sense and power. Ruhhám behind
Saw this and shouted, clutched his Indian sword,
And struck the lion-man upon the shoulder;
His hand fell useless. Wounded he cried out,
And urged his steed which, as he neared the hold,
Bízhan came up and houghed. Farúd himself
Afoot with certain of his followers,
Thus stricken in the battles of the brave,
Reached and secured with speed the castle-gate.
Woe for the heart and name of brave Farúd!
His mother and the slaves drew near, embraced him,

And sadly laid him on his ivory throne:
His day, his season for the crown, were over.
His mother and the female slaves plucked out V. 823
The scented tresses of their musky hair,
While the beloved Farúd plucked out their lives:
The throne was strewn with hair, the house all sorrow.
Then with a faint glance and a sigh he turned
Toward his mother and the slaves, and said,
With one last effort to unclose his lips:—
"It is no marvel that ye pluck your hair;
The Íránians will come with girded loins
To sack the hold and make my slave-girls captive,
Make castle, castle-wall, and rampart waste.
Let all whose hearts and cheeks burn for my life
Go fling themselves down from the battlements
That none may be the portion of Bízhan.
I follow soon because he severeth
My blameless life and is, in this my day
Of youth, my death."
He spake, his cheeks grew wan,
His spirit soared away 'mid grief and anguish.
As 'twere a conjurer this drunken sky
Deludeth us with tricks—threescore and ten—
At whiles employing blast or cloud and then
The sword or dagger or the agency
Of some unworthy wight. At whiles to one
Plunged in calamity 'twill grant relief,
At whiles allot crown, treasury, and throne,
At whiles chain, dungeon, bitterness, and grief!
Man must accept his lot whate'er it be;
Mine own affliction is my poverty.
The man of wisdom, had he died at birth,
Had suffered not the heat and cold of earth,
But, living after birth, hath want and stress,
Constrained to weep a life of wretchedness.

Woe for his heart, his usance, and intents!
His pillow is the dust in all events.

§ 21

How Jaríra slew herself

V. 824 Now when in failure thus had passed away
Farúd, the hapless and inglorious son
Of Siyáwush, the slave-girls scaled the roof,
And dashed them to the ground. Jaríra kindled
A pyre and burned the treasures. Sword in hand
She locked the stable of the Arab steeds,
Hamstrung, and ripped them up. All blood and sweat
She sought the couch of glorious Farúd,
Upon whose coverlet a dagger lay,
And, having pressed her cheeks upon his face,
Ripped up herself and died upon his breast.
The Íránians forced the portal of the hold,
Prepared for pillaging, but when Bahrám
Approached those walls his heart was rent with sorrow.
He sought the couch of glorious Farúd,
With cheeks all tears and heart a-fume, and thus
Addressed the Íránians: "Here is one by far
More wretched and dishonoured than his sire,
For Siyáwush did not destroy his slaves,
Nor was his mother slain upon his couch,
Though round him likewise all his palace flamed,
And all his home and goods were razed and burned.
Still heaven's hands are long enough to reach
The wicked, and it turneth not in love
V. 825 O'er men unjust. Shall ye not shame before
Khusrau who, charging Tús so earnestly,
Sent you to take revenge for Siyáwush,
And gave you much advice and parting-counsel?

When he shall hear about his brother's death
He will cut short respect and clemency,
And for Ruhhám and passionate Bízhan
The world will have but little pleasure left."
With that came Tús the general with the drums
Along the road that leadeth to Kalát,
While with him were the chiefs Gúdarz and Gív,
And therewithal a host of warriors.
The general marched along to Mount Sapad,
Advancing swiftly and without remorse;
But when he reached the throne where wretchedly
The poor, slain man lay pillowed with his mother,
While on one hand beside the pillow sat,
All tears and wrath, Bahrám, and on the other,
With all the men of battle crowding round
About him, Zanga son of Sháwarán,
While tree-like on the ivory throne the hero—
A moon in face, a teak in stature, slept—
A Siyáwush upon his throne of gold—
With coat of mail and helmet, mace and girdle,
While Gív, Gúdarz, the other men of name
And gallant chiefs, bewailed him bitterly,
Then Tús poured out his heart's blood down his cheeks
In anguish for Farúd and his own son,
While Gív, Gúdarz, and all the warriors
With sighs and tears turned and upbraided him:—
"Thy fury beareth thee remorse as fruit:
Sow not the seeds of fury in the garden.
Thus in thy haste and fury hast thou given V. 826
A youth of Kaian stock with all his Grace,
His stature, form, and bearing to the wind,
Hast given Zarásp, that chief sprung from Naudar,
And given too—that victim of thy rage—
Rívníz! Ill fortune hath left naught undone!
But parts and wisdom in the passionate
Are like a sword that groweth blunt with rust."

While thus they spake Tús wept; his rage and fury
Abated; he replied: "From evil fortune
No lack of toil and moil befalleth man."
He gave directions to his men to build
Upon the mountain-top a royal charnel
Wherein they placed a throne of gold, the mail,
Sword, mace, and girdle, then prepared the corpse,
Requiring roses, camphor, musk and wine,
And with the camphor they embalmed his head,
His body with rose-water, musk, and gums.
They set him on the throne and left him there;
That famed, accomplished, lion-hearted man
Thus passed away. Beside the prince they set
Rívníz and great Zarásp, while Tús, with beard
Like camphor, shed a stream of tears of blood.
'Tis always thus! However long we stay
Proud Elephant and Lion must away!
The hearts of stoneand anvil quake with fear
Of death; no root and leaf escape it here.

§ 22

How Tús led the Host to the Kása Rúd, and how Paláshán was slain by Bízhan

v. 827 When Tús the general had made an end
Of fighting with Farúd, and left the heights,
He halted at Charam three days. The blare
Of trumpets rose upon the fourth; then Tús
Led forth the host and sounded pipe and tymbal,
While all the earth from mountain unto mountain
Turned ebon. Whatso Turkman troops he saw
He slew and flung them down upon the road,
Left all the marches neither woof nor warp,
And thus proceeded to the Kása rúd,
Where he encamped the army: all the earth

Was covered by his tents.

"Troops from Írán
Are at the Kása rúd!" Such tidings reached
Túrán, and from the Turkmans there came forth
Shrewd Paláshán, a youthful warrior,
The leader of their host, to view the foe,
And count the camp-enclosures and the flags.
Within the lines there was a rising ground
On one side, and unoccupied by troops:
There Gív was sitting with Bízhan, conversing
On matters great and small. Appeared the flag
Of Paláshán, come from the Turkman host,
Upon the road, whereat the gallant Gív
Unsheathed his sword. "I will go forth," quoth he,
"Behead, or bring him captive to our folk."
Bízhan said: "Man of name! the Sháh bestowed
A robe of honour on me for this end;
According to his order I must gird V. 828
Myself to fight the warrior Paláshán."
"Haste not to battle with this savage Lion,"
Gív answered. "God forbid that thou shouldst fight him,
And straiten mine own day. A Lion he,
This desert is his feeding-ground, he preyeth
On none but warriors."
Bízhan replied:—
"Oh! put me not to shame before the world-lord
By speaking thus, but let me have the armour
Of Siyáwush. Be mine to hunt this Leopard."
Then gallant Gív gave him the coat of mail.
Bízhan, when he had made the buckles fast,
Bestrode a rapid charger, and rode off
Upon the desert with a spear in hand.
Now Paláshán, who had brought down a deer,
Was roasting some kabáb upon a fire,
And eating with his bow upon his arm,

The while his horse was ranging free to graze
It saw afar the charger of Bízhan,
Neighed loudly, and ran in; so Paláshán
Knew that a horseman came prepared for fight,
And shouted to Bízhan: "I fling down lions,
And fetter dívs. Declare thy name; thy star
Shall weep for thee."

He said: "Bízhan am I—
A brazen-bodied dív when fight is toward.
My grandsire is a Lion of the fray,
My sire is gallant Gív, and thou shalt see
My prowess. This brave day, when battle breatheth,
Thou, like a carrion wolf[1] upon the mountains,
Eat'st ashes, smoke, and blood! How cometh it
That thou art leading troops upon the waste?"

He answered not but gave his mighty steed
V. 829 The rein. The warriors closed, the dark dust flew.
Their spear-points brake; both took their scimitars,
Which shivered with their strokes. The riders shook
Like leaves upon a tree, the steeds were drowned
In sweat, and staggered. Then the noble Lions,
The combatants, drew forth their heavy maces.
Thus went it till Bízhan with mace on shoulder
Sent up a shout, struck valiant Paláshán
Upon the waist, and brake his spine. His corpse,
All helmed and mailed, fell headlong from his charger.
Bízhan, dismounting with the speed of dust,
Cut off the warrior's head and carried it
Together with the arms and steed to Gív,
Who had been troubled o'er the fight, and thought:—
"How will the wind of battle blow to-day?"
And groaned and fidgeted upon the watch
Until Bízhan's dust rose upon the road.
The youth came bringing head and mail and charger,

[1] Bízhan compares Paláshán at his meal to a wolf at a deserted camp-fire.

And placed them all before his sire who cried:—
"For ever be victorious, O my son!"
They went with joy toward the chief's pavilion,
And brought to him the breastplate, helmet, steed,
And head of Paláshán. Tús gladdened so
That thou hadst said: "He will pour out his soul."
"Son of the Backbone of the host," said he, V. 830
"Head of the famed of our Sháh's diadem!
Live ever joyfully, aspiring still,
And banished far from thee be foeman's ill."

§ 23

How the Íránians suffered in a Snowstorm

Thereafter tidings reached Afrásiyáb:—
"The marches of Túrán are like a sea:
A host hath reached the Kása rúd, and earth
Is blackened in revenge for Siyáwush."
The king said to Pírán: "Khusrau hath made
His object clear; perchance we may prevent him
By marching forth with flags and drums in force;
If not the army from Írán will come,
And we shall see not shining sun or moon.
Go gather troops together from all quarters;
Few words are needed."
On the Íránian side
A tempest rose and none took thought of fight;
A dense cloud came like flying dust, their lips
Congealed with cold, the tents and camp-enclosures
Were turned to ice, snow carpeted the mountains,
And for a sennight's space earth disappeared.
There was but little food or rest or sleep:
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth's face is turned to stone."
They slew and ate their horses. Multitudes

Of men and cattle perished. None at last
Possessed a charger. When the eighth day came
The sun prevailed, the earth was like a sea,
The troops were mustered, and Tús spake of fight;
V. 831 He said: "The host hath suffered greatly here;
'Tis well that we proceed upon our march.
Cursed be these fields and fells, all from Kalát
And Mount Sapad down to the Kása rúd!"
Then from the warrior-throng thus spake Bahrám:—
"I needs must tell the general my mind
Concerning this. Thou makest us keep silence!
Thou fightest with the son of Siyáwush!
I told thee: 'Do not so: it is not right.'
See what a loss hath followed and what ill
May yet confront thee, for the buffalo
Is still within its hide!"
"Ázargashasp
Is not more famed than was Zarásp the brave,"
Said Tús, "nor was Farúd slain innocent.
'Twas written thus, and what hath been hath been.
Look through the host and see whom thou canst find
In courage and in aspect like Rívníz,
Through whom my cup was filled with wine and milk.
His form was youthful but his words were sage.
Now let us speak no further of the past,
Or whether he was justly slain or not;
And since Gív took a present from the Sháh
That he might set that mass of faggots blazing,
Which now is in the way, 'tis time to do it,
And light up heaven with the conflagration;
Thus we may gain a passage for the troops."
Gív said to him: "This will not be a toil,
Or, if it be, a toil not unrequited."
Bízhan was grieved: "I cannot give," he said,
"Consent to this. Thou rearedst me in stress
And hardihood, without a chiding word:

It must not be that I a youth sit still, V. 832
While thou an old man girdest up thy loins."
Gív said: "My son! I took this enterprise
Upon my shoulders; 'tis the time for arms,
Not for indulgence and decrepitude.
Be not in dudgeon at my going, I
Can burn a flinty mountain with my breath."
He passed the Kása rúd albeit with stress,
The world for warp and woof had ice and snow,
And when he reached the barricade of faggots
Its length and breadth were more than he could tell;
He used a javelin-point to kindle fire,
Threw it upon the mass and burned the pile.
For three weeks conflagration, wind, and smoke
Allowed no passage through the burning mass,
But when the fourth week came the army went
Across the river for the fire was spent.

§ 24

How Bahrám captured Kabúda

Tús, when the host was mustered, left the fire
For Giravgard. They marched in fair array,
Camped on the hills and plains, took due precautions,
And hurried out the scouts on every side.
Tazháv the cavalier—one used to fight
With lions—dwelt at Giravgard and kept
The herds there, driving them from hill to hill.
News came: "A host hath come forth from Írán:
The cattle must be driven out of reach."
He sent a warrior with all dispatch
To tell a herdsman of Afrásiyáb's—
Kabúda hight, an able man withal,
And there was need for his ability:—
"Depart at dark and keep thyself unseen; V. 833

Observe how large the Íránian army is,
And see whose are the standards and the crowns.
My purpose is to make a night-attack,
And fill the mountains and the plains with blood."
When it was dark Kabúda drew anigh,
Like some black dív, the army of Írán.
That night Bahrám, whose lasso snared the heads
Of elephants, was on the outpost-guard,
And, when Kabúda's charger neighed, Bahrám
Pricked up his ears, sat firm, and strung his bow;
Then urged his mighty charger from the spot.
Without a word he let an arrow fly,
Though darkness hid Kabúda from his sight,
And struck the royal herdsman on the belt;
His face turned black; and falling from his steed
He begged for life. Bahrám said: "Tell me truly:
Who sent thee hither? Whom wouldst thou attack?"
Kabúda said: "If thou wilt grant me quarter
I will reply to all thy questioning:
My master is Tazháv. I am his servant,
And sent by him; so put me not to death,
And I will guide thee to his dwelling-place."
Bahrám replied: "Know that Tazháv to me
Is as a bullock to a rending lion."
He cut Kabúda's head off with a dagger,
Secured it to his royal saddle-straps,
Took it to camp and flung it down in scorn
As that of one unfamed, no cavalier
To fight.
The voice of chanticleer and lark
Arose, and yet Kabúda came not back:
Tazháv the warrior was sad at heart,
Aware that evil had befallen him;
Then summoned all the troops that were about
Available, and promptly led them out.

§ 25

How the Íránians fought with Tazháv

Now when the sun had set up on the plain V. 834
Its standard, and its sword had turned the rear
Of night to violet, Tazháv the chieftain
Led forth his men. Shouts from the look-out reached
The Íránians: "From Túrán a host hath come
To fight. Their leader is a Crocodile
With flag in hand."
Then from the nobles Gív
Went forth to him, escorted by a troop
Of valiant warriors, fiercely asked his name,
And said: "O lover of the fray! hast come
With such a force as this to meet the claws
Of Crocodiles?"
The bold Tazháv replied:—
"A lusty heart and lion's claws are mine.
Tazháv am I, I fling down men and pluck
The heads of valiant Lions from their trunks.
By birth and worth I am Íránian,
Sprung from the warriors and the Lions' seed.
Now I am marchlord of the country round—
A chosen chief, the king's own son-in-law."
Gív said: "Nay say not so, 'twill dim thy glory.
Would any leave Írán and settle here
Unless he lived on blood or colocynth?
If thou art marchlord and king's son-in-law
How is it that thou hast not mightier powers?
With such a band as this seek not the fray,
Nor go with vehemence against the brave;
For I who speak—a hero worshipful
And famous—trample on the heads of marchlords.
If thou with all thy troops wilt do my bidding,
And hence depart Íránward to the Sháh,

Go first of all to Tús our general,
Apply to him, and hearken to his words.
I will take care that thou shalt have a gift
From him—goods, slaves, and steeds caparisoned.
This seemeth well to me, O prudent man!
What say'st thou? Shall I have to fight to-day?"
v. 835 Tazháv the traitor said: "O gallant one!
None lowereth my flag. Now I have here
The throne and signet, horses, flocks, and soldiers;
Moreover in Írán no person dreameth
Of such a king as is Afrásiyáb.
Slaves too have I, and herds of wind-foot steeds,
Which wander over mountain, vale, and plain.
Look not upon my little band but me,
And at the mace upon my saddle-bow,
For I will maul thy troops to-day till thou
Repent thy coming."

Then Bízhan exclaimed:—

"O famous chief—engrosser of the fight,
Exalted and shrewd-hearted paladin!
In age thou art not as thou wast in youth.
Why givest thou this counsel to Tazháv?
Why so much love and amity for him?
Our business is to draw the sword and mace,
And to cut out these peoples' hearts and brains."

He urged his steed; the battle-cry went up;
They laid upon their shoulders sword and mace.
A cloud of murky dust rose in the midst
So that the sun became invisible,
The world grew gloomy as a winter's cloud,
And men beheld not shining star or moon.
Bold Gív who used to rob the sky of lustre
Was in the midst, Bízhan the deft of hand,
Who dallied not in action, led the van.
Tazháv, who wont to fight the rending lion,
And wore his crown, opposed them with Arzhang

To help him and Mardwí the Lion—two
That wearied not of fight yet gat small fruit
That day, for brave Arzhang withdrew himself,
The more part of the Turkman troops were slain,
And froward fortune turned its head away.
Tazháv the valiant fled. That famous Lion,
Bízhan, pursued him, shouting eagerly,
And with a spear in hand. Thou wouldst have said:— V. 836
"It is a maddened, roaring elephant!"
One spear-blow struck Tazháv upon the waist,
And all his lustihood departed from him.
The man reeled, but the Rúman coat of mail
Gave not, nor did the fastenings of it break.
Bízhan flung down his spear and made a clutch,
Like leopard springing at a mountain-sheep,
And then, as falcon bindeth lark, snatched off
That crown of great price which Afrásiyáb
Had set upon his head, a crown that never
Was absent from his thoughts and from his dreams.
He urged his steed toward the castle-gate,
Pursued thus by Bízhan at lightning-speed,
And, when he neared the castle, Ispanwí
Came wailing with her face suffused with tears,
And cried out loudly to him: "O Tazháv!
Where are thy host, thy mettle, and thy might
That thou shouldst turn thy back upon me thus,
And leave me in this castle shamefully?
Give me a seat behind thee; let me not
Be left inside the castle for the foe."

The heart of proud Tazháv was set on fire,
And his cheeks flamed. She mounted swift as wind
Behind him on his steed and clasped his waist.
He rushed along like dust with Ispanwí;
They made toward Túrán. The charger sped V. 837
Awhile till man and beast were both fordone,
And then Tazháv addressed his handmaid, saying:—

"O my fair mate! here is a grievous case!
My charger is exhausted with this work,
Foes are behind, in front is a ravine,
And though we race Bízhan some distance yet
Still they will have their will of us at last;
So as they are not enemies to thee
Remain behind while I urge on my horse."
Then Ispanwí alighted from the steed:
Tazháv's face was all tears at losing her,
Yet sped he on to reach Afrásiyáb,
And all the while Bízhan was in pursuit,
Who when he spied the moon-faced Ispanwí,
Her musky hair descending to her feet,
Came to her, took her with all gentleness,
Made room for her behind him, and returned
Toward the army of the paladin.
He reached the entrance of the tent of Tús,
Rejoicing, whence arose the sound of drums,
Because Bízhan, that horseman brave and wary,
Was coming with his quarry from the fight.
Tús and the chiefs—those lovers of the fray—
Then set themselves to pillaging the hold,
And afterward they went to seek the herds
That roamed about the desert of Túrán.
They took, as warriors are wont, their lassos,
And quickly furnished all the host with steeds,
While in the palace whence Tazháv had fled
Were fierce Íránian horsemen lodged instead.

§ 26

How Afrásiyáb had Tidings of Tús and his Host

v. 838 Now when Tazháv with wet eyes and in dudgeon
Came to the presence of Afrásiyáb
He spake thus: "Tús the general arrived,

And brought a host with trump and kettledrum,
While as for Paláshán and other nobles,
Their heads were brought down to the dust in anguish.
The foeman fired the marches and the fields,
Destroying all the herds."
Afrásiyáb
Was grieved thereat and sought a remedy.
He spake thus to Pírán the son of Wísa:—
"I bade thee: 'Gather troops from every side,'
But thou hast loitered through old age or sloth,
Or disaffection; many of our kin
Are slain, and watchful fortune's face is from us;
But now we may not tarry, for the world
Hath grown strait even to the vigilant!"
Then all in haste Pírán the general
Went from the presence of Afrásiyáb,
Called up the troops from all the provinces,
Served arms out, paid the soldiers, and marched forth.
The frontier passed he gave each man his post,
The right wing to Bármán and to Tazháv— V. 839
Two cavaliers whose strength was that of lions—
The left wing to the valiant Nastíhan—
One in whose clutches lions were as lambs.
The world was filled with blast of clarions,
And clang of cymbals and of Indian bells,
Air was a blaze of or, gules, and purpure
With all the spears and divers-coloured flags,
While what with troops, steeds, elephants, and camels
There was no passage left 'twixt sea and sea.
Pírán went forth in haste. Afrásiyáb
Departed from his palace to the plains,
And numbered all the army man by man
To see how many noble warriors
There were. He made the total five score thousand—
All lion-men and wielders of the sword—
Then bright and glad oft blessed Pírán, and said:—

"Thou settest forth with joy to victory:
Ne'er may thine eye behold the bale of time."
The army marched along troop after troop,
No plain was visible or sea or height;
Pírán commanded: "Quit the accustomed route,
Take the short road; the foeman must not hear
Of these my noble and illustrious troops,
So may I bring this great host like a mountain
Down unawares upon yon army's head."
He sent intelligencers out forthwith,
And shrewdly sought to learn how matters stood;
Then, stubbornly proceeding on his march,
Advanced toward Giravgard prepared for battle.
V. 840 The chiefs reported what the spies announced:—
"Tús the commander tarrieth where he was:
No sound of drums hath risen from the troops,
For all of them are drinking themselves drunk,
And wine is in their hands both day and night.
He hath no mounted outpost on the road,
Not recking of the army of Túrán."
Pírán, when he had heard this, called the chiefs,
Spake unto them at large about the foe,
And said thus: "Never in the fight have we
Held such a vantage o'er the enemy!"

§ 27

How Pírán made a Night-attack on the Íránians

Out of that noble host Pírán made choice
Of thirty thousand horse with scimitars,
Who marched at dead of night; no tymbal sounded,
No trumpet blared, none raised the battle-cry.
Now when the wary chief led forth his troops
Seven leagues remained betwixt them and the foe,
And first they came upon the Íránians' herds

At large upon the desert of Túrán,
Took many beasts and bore them off withal—
Mishap unparalleled! The overseers
And herdsmen were all slain, the Íránians' fortune
Had grown averse. Thence like a murky cloud
The Turkmans marched upon the Íránian host—
All drunken and disposed in groups unarmed;
Howbeit Gív was in his tent alert,
Gúdarz the chieftain sober. Then arose
The war-cry with the crash of battle-axes,
And Gív—that fight-engrosser—was astound.
There stood in front of his pavilion V. 841
A steed caparisoned in battle-gear.
The gallant hero lion-like arrayed
His body in the mail of Siyáwush,
And, raging like a leopard at himself
In shame for his own indolence and sloth,
"Up! Up!" quoth he. "How is it that to-night
My brain is filled with fumes instead of war?"
Then having mounted rushed forth like a blast.
He saw the heaven dark with night and dust,
And entering the chief's pavilion
Exclaimed: "Up! Up! The enemy hath come
While we—the warriors of the Sháh—are sleeping!"
Departing thence he visited his sire,
An ox-head mace in hand. As quick as smoke
He went about the host, awoke the sober,
And chode Bízhan: "Is this the place for wine
Or fighting?"
The Íránians were hemmed in,
The war-cry rose, the tumult dazed the drunken,
A cloud ascended and its rain was arrows.
Soft pillows were beneath the drunkards' heads,
Above were sword, hot mace, and scimitar.
Now when dawn showed forth from the Sign of Leo,
And gallant Gív surveyed the host, he saw

The waste all covered with Íránian slain,
And watchful fortune's head averse from them.
Gúdarz too looked about on every side;
The foemen's number grew continually;
Against the little force there ranged itself
A host like ants and locusts. Tús too looked,
And saw no fighting-men save Gív, Gúdarz,
And other cavaliers all sore bestead.[1]
V. 842 The flags were rent, the kettledrums o'erturned,
And the survivors' cheeks like ebony,
For sires had lost their sons and sons their sires,
And that great host was utterly o'erthrown,
Since so the swiftly circling vault, which now
Affordeth pleasure and now pain, decreed.
Unable to resist they turned their backs,
Abandoning their camp in their confusion,
Disorganised, without their drums and baggage,
And sorely stricken both on left and right.
On this wise fared they toward the Kása rúd—
A strengthless mob. With vengeful souls and tongues
All jeers the Turkman horsemen followed Tús,
And thou hadst said that maces from the clouds
Rained in the rear on hauberk, helm, and mail.
None made a stand, the warriors took refuge
Among the mountains, foundered like their steeds,
And had no spirit, strength, or staying power.
Now at the heights the Turkman host turned back,
Exhausted by the fight and long pursuit,
And Tús no farther feared the foe's assault.
The Íránian troops bewailed their many lost,
Who if they lived were wounded or in bonds—
Alike a cause for tears. No crown or throne
Remained, no tent, no steed, no warrior;
The land was barren and provided nothing,
While nobody went forth to seek the wounded.

[1] Inserted from C.

The son bewailed the father bitterly,
And burned in anguish for the suffering.
The use and custom of the world is this:
To keep back from thee what its purpose is.
Its juggling tricks behind a veil are done, V. 843
It acteth harshly and capriciously,
While in greed's grip we travail long, and none
Can tell appearance from reality.
From wind thou camest and to dust wilt go:
What They[1] will do to thee how canst thou know?
The more part of the Íránian troops were slain,
The rest had come back wounded; at their beds
No leeches were, but grief and tears of blood.
Tús battle-maddened was beside himself,
So to Gúdarz the hoary veteran,
Deprived of child and grandchild, home and land,[2]
There came the other veteran warriors
With broken hearts to seek his leadership.
He placed a watchman on a mountain-top
To keep his eyes intently on the foe,[3]
While outposts went their rounds on every side
To find perchance a cure for this distress.
He bade a noble of the Íránians
To girdle up his loins to give the Sháh
The news of what the captain of the host
Had done, and how, by their ill day oppressed,
They had small profit from their vengeance-quest.

[1] The Powers supreme that be.

[2] With regard to the first part of this line, the loss of Gúdarz' sons and grandsons properly seems to belong to the subsequent battle (p. 89); the last part seems more applicable to the historical than to the legendary Gúdarz.

[3] "Il plaça sur la montagne une sentinelle pour observer la route d'Anbouh" (Mohl).

§ 28

How Kai Khusrau recalled Tús

The courier carried to the Sháh the tidings
Of that eclipse of fortune. Brave Khusrau
Was troubled when he heard, his bosom throbbed
With grief. To anguish at his brother's case
Was added anguish on the troops' account.
V. 844 That night he uttered malisons on Tús
Till cock-crow. Summoning a prudent scribe,
And pouring out the fulness of his heart,
He wrote a letter in a wrathful strain,
With eyes all tears in mourning for his brother,
To Farìburz the son of Sháh Káús—
A letter for the chieftains of the host.
First in the letter came the praise of Him,
Who made both earth and time, thus: "In the name
Of Him Who is the Lord of sun and moon,
And giveth power alike to good and bad!
From Him come triumph and defeat, from Him
Both good and bad get might and their desire.
He fashionèd the world and place and time,
He fashionèd ant's foot and massy mountain,
And hath bestowed life, lustihood, and wisdom,
High throne and majesty and diadem.
No man can free himself from that control;
The lot of one is Grace and throne, another's
Misfortune, want, grief, suffering, and hardship;
Yet see I that All-holy God is just
In everything, from yonder shining sun
To darksome dust.
Tús with the flag of Káwa,
And forty warriors wearing golden boots,
I sent out with a host against Túrán,
And, first fruit of revenge, my brother perished!

Let not Irán have such another chief!
Let not the host have such another leader!
Alas! Alas! my brother, young Farúd—
The head of nobles and the stay of heroes!
I was in tears of anguish for my sire,
A long while was I burning in that sorrow,
And now my brother is the cause of tears!
I know not who are friends and who are foes.
'Go not,' I said to Tús, 'toward Charam;
Breathe not upon Kalát or Mount Sapad,
Because Farúd is with his mother there.
He is a warrior of royal race;
He knoweth not this army whence it is, V. 845
And if they be Íránian troops or what;
He will come forth to stop the way and stake
His head upon the issue of a fight.'
Alas! that warrior of royal birth
Whom wretched Tús hath given to the wind!
If he had been commander heretofore
It had been evil hap for Sháh Káús,
And furthermore he slumbereth in battle,
And only rouseth to sit down to drink.
There is no prowess in his neighbourhood,
And may a soul so darkened cease to be!
When thou shalt read this letter stir thyself;
Put far away from thee food, rest, and sleep;
Send Tús back with all speed, observe mine orders,
And heed not other counsels. Thou art chief,
The captain of the host; 'tis thine to wear
The golden boots and hold the flag of Káwa.
Illustrious Gúdarz will counsel thee
In all; haste not to fight, keep far from wine,
Abstain from slumber, seek not at the first
To fight through anger, tarry as thou art
Until the wounded are restored to health;
Then Gív will lead thy van for he possesseth

Grace, stature, and the clutches of a leopard;
Bring from all sides material for the war,
And God forfend thou think of banqueting!"
They sealed this letter with the Sháh's own signet,
Who thus enjoined the messenger: "Depart
Upon the road; repose not night or day,
And take another horse at every stage."
So sped the messenger until he came
To Faríburz and gave him the dispatch,
Who summoned Tús and Gív and all the chiefs,
V. 846 Spake of the past, read the Sháh's letter to them,
And then a new Tree fruited in the world.
The nobles and the Lions of Írán
All called a blessing down upon the Sháh,
The leader Tús gave up the royal standard,
The drums, the elephants, and golden boots
To Faríburz, and said to him: "They come
As worthy comrades to a worthy man.
May fortune always give thee victory,
Be every day of thine a New Year's Day."
Then Tús took all the kindred of Naudar,
Those warlike cavaliers and their command,
And making no delay upon the road
Came from the field of battle to the Sháh,
And kissed the ground before him, while Khusrau
Vouchsafed not so much as to look at him,
And only spake to utter malisons,
Disgraced Tús in the presence of the court,
And said at last: "Thou man of evil mark!
Let thy name cease among the illustrious.
Dost thou not fear the holy Lord of earth?
Hast thou no awe or reverence for heroes?
I gave to thee a royal helm and girdle,
And sent thee forth to fight against the foe.
Did not I say: 'Go not toward Charam'?
Yet didst thou go and give my heart to sorrow,

Didst first of all take vengeance on myself,
And minishedst the race of Siyáwush!
My noble brother—brave Farúd—whose peer
The age had not thou slewest, and to fight
With him 'twould need a host of men like thee!
Thereafter when thou wentest to the fray V. 847
Thou wast absorbed in minstrelsy and feasting!
Thou hast no place among the throng of men,
The things for thee are chains and straps and madhouse;
Nor hast thou business with the men of rank,
Because thou hast no wise considerance.
Thy white beard and descent from Minúchihr
Have given thee hope of life; else had I bidden
One of thine enemies to be thy headsman.
Go! Let a prison be thy home henceforth,
And let thine evil nature be thy jailor."
He drave Tús out, put him in bonds, and tore
The root of gladness from his bosom's core.

§ 29

How Farílburz asked a Truce of Pírán

So Faríburz, since he was paladin
As well as prince, assumed the casque and bade
Ruhhám display his name and native worth
By going from the mountain to Pírán
To treat with him: "Go to Pírán," he said,
"Convey to him a friendly embassage,
And say: 'The process of the turning sky
Hath been fraught ever thus with hate and love:
It lifteth one to heaven on high, another
It maketh vile, sad, and calamitous,
Him specially that seeketh warriors' hurt.
Now night-attacks are not the wont of heroes
And mighty men that brandish massive maces.

If thou wilt cease from arms we too will cease;
If thou preferrest war then we will fight,
V. 848 But let there be a one month's armistice
In order that the wounded may recruit.'"

The brave Ruhhám went out from Faríburz,
And took with him the message and the letter.
He went his way, the Turkman outposts saw him,
And asked him who he was and whence he came.
Ruhhám replied: "A warrior am I,
A man of prowess, weight, and watchfulness—
The bearer of a message to Pírán
From Faríburz the son of Sháh Káús."

A horseman of the outpost went like dust
To tell the tidings, and thus spake: "Ruhhám,
Son of Gúdarz, hath come to see the chief."

Pírán commanded him to be brought in,
And treated with all honour and respect.
The eloquent Ruhhám approached in dread
Of what the foe might purpose, but Pírán,
On seeing him, received him graciously,
And placed him on the throne. Ruhhám then told
His business, and Pírán said: "'Tis no trifle;
Ye stirred up strife; we marked no sloth in Tús;
He crossed the border like a savage wolf,
And slaughtered great and small remorselessly.
What multitudes he slew or carried off!
Our country's weal and woe were one to him.
Still now, although they took us unaware,
The Íránians are repaid for their ill deeds;
So if thou art the captain of the host
Demand of me according as thou needest.
If thou wilt have a month of armistice
None of our horsemen shall go forth to fight.
If thou wilt fight I too am fain for war;
Prepare and set the battle in array.
V. 849 If ye will use the month that we accord

In marching from the frontiers of Túrán,
And in a swift retreat to your own borders,
Ye will behold your reputation saved;
But if not we will close with you in fight;
Ask not for any armistice henceforth."
He gave a robe of honour to Ruhhám,
One suited to a man of his repute,
And brave Ruhhám conveyed to Faríburz
A letter like the one that he had brought.
When Faríburz had gained a month's delay
He clutched in all directions like a lion.
They loosed the fastenings of the money-bags,
They gathered bows and lassos from all sides;
They went about, reorganised the host,
And partially regained what had been lost.

§ 30

How the Íránians were defeated by the Turkmans

When with the ending of the month came war,
For they observed their compact honourably,
The soldiers' shouts went up on every side,
And all set forward to the battlefield;
The din of trumpet, drum, and bell shook heaven,
While what with chargers' crests, reins, hands, and swords,
Bows, battle-axes, lances, maces, bucklers,
And lassos, gnats could find no way. "The world,"
Thou wouldst have said, "is in the Dragon's maw, V. 850
Or heaven level with earth!"
Upon the right
Was Gív son of Gúdarz, an archimage
And marchlord, on the left the skilled Ashkash,
Who shed blood in a river when he fought;
Before the standard at the army's centre

Was Faríburz, the son of Sháh Káús,
With men of battle. He harangued his troops,
And said: "Till now our prowess hath been hidden,
But we will fight to-day as lions fight,
And make the world too narrow for our foes;
Else will our maces and our Rúman casques
Laugh at the host for this disgrace for ever."
They made a heavy rain of arrows fall
Like autumn tempests beating on a tree.
For arrows and the dust of shouting troops
No bird had room to fly, the falchions shone
Like diamonds and flamed amid the dust.
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth is a negro's face;
The stars are warriors' hearts." The multitudes
Of maces, spears, and trenchant scimitars
Brought Doomsday on the world. Gív from the centre
Advanced with lips a-foam and raised his war-cry.
He with the noble kinsmen of Gúdarz,
With whom the issue lay for good or ill,
v. 851 Strove with their spears and arrows, showering sparks
From steel. Gúdarz fought fiercely with Pírán,
And slew nine hundred of his kin. Lahhák
And Farshídward saw how their mighty host
Was going up in dust and charged on Gív,
Upon his mace-men and his valiant troops.
Shafts fell in showers from the chieftains' bows
Upon those famous warriors clad in mail
Till none could see the surface of the ground,
Earth was so hidden by the mass of slain,
While no man turned his back upon another
Or left his post. At length Húmán spake thus
To Farshídward: "We must attack the centre,
And, routing Faríburz, deprive the host
Of his support; it will be easy then
To beat the right wing and to seize the baggage."
They fell upon the centre, Faríburz

Fled from Húmán, the fighting line was broken,
The haughty chiefs gave way, each took his course,
Not one Íránian warrior stood his ground.
They saw the drums and standard in position
No more, and so with eyes bedimmed with fighting
They turned their backs upon the enemy,
And in that action only grasped the wind.
The tymbals, spears, and standard were o'erthrown,
Men could not tell the stirrup from the rein,
For they had lost all stomach for the fight; V. 852
The mountains and the plains were drenched with blood.
Then Faríburz, as foes were gathering
On every side, made for the mountain-skirt
With those Íránians whose life was whole,
Although for such a life one needs must weep.
Gúdarz and Gív with many warriors
Of fame among the troops still held their own;
But when Gúdarz observed the centre bare,
No flag of Faríburz, no chiefs or troops,
He turned with heart afire as if to flee:
'Twas Doomsday for the kindred of Gúdarz.
Gív said to him: "O ancient general!
Much hast thou seen of mace, and sparth, and arrow,
And if thy purpose is to flee Pírán
I needs must scatter dust upon my head.
Of chieftains and of veteran warriors
There will remain not one alive on earth.
For thee and me there is no cure for dying.
Death is the very last calamity,
And, since our ruggéd hour hath come upon us,
The foe should see thy face and not thy back.
I will not quit my post, let us not shame
Thy father's dust. Hast thou heard never then
This ancient saying from some man of lore:—
'When buttressed back to back two brethren stand
A mountain-mass is but as dust in hand'?

Thou art alive with seventy valiant sons,
And thou hast many Elephants and Lions
Among thy kindred. Break we with our swords
The foe's heart and uproot him though a Mountain."
Gúdarz, when he had heard the words of Gív,
And marked the helmed heads of his warrior-kin,
Repented of his cautious rede and took
A firmer stand. Guráza, Gustaham,
With Barta and brave Zanga came to them,
And made a compact by a binding oath :—
V. 853 "Though maces stream with blood we will not quit
This field, but, back to back, strive to retrieve
Our honour lost."
They took their stand and plied
The mace. Full many a noble foe was slain,
But fortune favoured not the Íránians.
Then old Gúdarz said to Bízhan: "Depart
Hence quickly, take with thee thy mace, and arrows,
Direct thy horse's reins toward Faríburz,
And bring me Káwa's standard. It may be
That Faríburz will come with it himself,
And flush the face of earth with violet."
Bízhan on hearing this urged on his steed,
Came like Ázargashasp to Faríburz,
And said to him: "Why art thou hiding here?
Employ thy reins as warriors use to do,
And stay no longer on the mountain-top;
But if thou wilt not come entrust to me
The flag and horsemen with their blue steel swords."
But Faríburz, no mate for wisdom then,
Cried out: "Away! Thou art in action rash
And new to war. The Sháh gave me the standard,
The host, crown, throne, and leadership. This flag
Becometh not Bízhan the son of Gív,
Or any other warrior in the world."
Bízhan laid hand upon his blue steel sword,

Struck at the standard, clove it in the midst,
Seized half thereof and, rushing from the throng,
Made off to bear the banner to the host.
Now, when the Turkmans saw it on the way,
A band of lion-hearted warriors
Went toward Bízhan and drew their iron sparths,
And blue steel swords, to fight for Káwa's standard.
Then spake Húmán: "Yon is the violet flag
Wherein is all the virtue of Írán;
If we can take it we shall make the world V. 854
Strait to the Sháh."
Bízhan strung up his bow
As quick as dust, discharged a shower of arrows
Upon his foes, and, as he drove them back,
Prepared a banquet for the ravening wolf.
The cavaliers hard by said unto Gív
And Gustaham: "The Turkmans are retreating;
Perchance Bízhan is coming with the standard."
The brave chiefs of the Íránian host advancing
With massive maces slew the Turkman horse
In numbers. Famed Bízhan arrived apace,
And thence the chieftains held the ground for him
Up to the host. Like lion fierce he came
With Káwa's flag, the soldiers gathered round it,
And air grew violet-dim with horsemen's dust.
Once more the Íránian host advanced to fight,
And in the foremost rank Rívníz was slain,
Who was as dear as life to Kai Káús,
A younger son, a prince who wore a crown,
Beloved by Faríburz. When that head fell
Full many a noble hero rent his clothes,
And Gív exclaimed: "Chiefs, valiant warriors!
Upon this field of battle Faríburz,
The son of Sháh Káús, esteemed Rívníz
Above all else. The grandson and the son
Of old Káús—Farúd the son of Siyáwush

And now Rívníz—have perished all in vain!
What greater wonder hath the world in store?
V. 855 We must not let his crown fall to the foe
Amid the ranks of war, for that would be
Disgrace upon disgrace through it and through
The slaughter of Rívníz."
Now brave Pírán,
The noble chieftain, heard the words of Gív,
And o'er that crown the battle rose afresh.
On both sides many fell and fortune quitted
The Íránians, yet Bahrám the warrior
Charged lion-like the foe and carried off
The crown upon his spear-point, while both hosts
Stood wondering, the Íránians full of joy
At rescuing that crown so late assumed.
The combat waxed more fierce, none turned aside,
They raged and smote each other on the head
Until the day grew dark, and eyes were baffled.
Eight of the kinsmen of Gúdarz survived;
The rest had fallen on the battlefield.[1]
Of Gív's seed there had perished five and twenty—
Men who were fit for diadem and treasure—
With seventy of the offspring of Káús,
All cavaliers and Lions in the fight,
Besides Rívníz that crownèd warrior,
No unit merely in the reckoning.
Nine hundred horsemen, kinsmen of Pírán,
Were missing in the battle on that day,
While of the lineage of Afrásiyáb
The fortunes of three hundred slept, howbeit
The field, the day, and therewithal the standard—
The lustre of the world—were with Pírán:
V. 856 'Twas not the Íránians' day for combating;
Their combat-seeking ended in mishap,

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 4. The eight survivors include Gúdarz himself and his grandson Bízhan.

They turned their faces from the battlefield,
Abandoning the wounded to their fate.
Now Gustaham had had his charger killed
As fortune turned away, and he in mail
Went spear in hand afoot like one bemused.
Bízhan, approaching him as day grew dark,
Said to him: "Ho! Get up and ride behind me:
There is none dearer to me than thyself."
So both of them bestrode a single charger.
When day was done they sought the mountain-skirt,
Abandoning the battle in a rout.
The Turkman cavaliers, with joyful hearts
Released from travail and anxiety,
Returned to their own camp with haughty mien
And fit for fight, while on the Íránian side
The ears were deafened by heart-rending cries,
As all mourned on the mountain friend or kinsman.
Such is the process of this ancient sky!
Turn as it may there is no remedy,
And still it turneth o'er us loving none,
But treating friend and enemy as one,
Well may it be a cause of dread to all
Whose fortune's head is bending to a fall!

§ 31

How Bahrám returned to look for his Whip on the Battlefield

That night, when both the armies were at rest,
Bahrám came to his sire in haste and said:— V. 857
"O mine illustrious sire and worshipful!
When I retrieved that crown, and raised it cloudward
Upon my spear, I lost a whip of mine.
Those villain Turkmans, when they pick it up,
Will break their jests upon the great Bahrám;
The world will be all ebon in mine eyes.

The Turkman general will use a whip
That hath my name inscribed upon the leather.
I will go quickly and recover it
However great and long the toil may be.
Doth this ill come upon me from the stars
That my renown may go down to the dust?"
Said old Gúdarz: "O son! thou wilt but end
Thy fortunes. Wilt thou face the foemen's breath
So madly for a stick bound round with leather?"
Gív said: "My brother! go not forth. New whips
Have I in plenty—one whose haft is gold
And silver, two with handles of fine pearls
And other gems. When Farangís unlocked
The treasury and gave so many arms
And belts to me I took this whip and breastplate;
The rest I left unheeded in Túrán.[1]
Moreover Sháh Káús bestowed upon me
V. 858 A whip resplendent as the moon with jewels,
And five I have besides of golden work
Inwrought with royal gems, and all the seven
Will I bestow upon thee. Go not forth
And wantonly provoke a new engagement."
Said brave Bahrám to Gív: "I cannot hold
This shame of small account. Your talk is all
Of colour and design, mine of a name
Now wedded to disgrace. I will recover
My whip or, by endeavouring this, will bring
Mine own head to the shears."
Bahrám misread
God's purpose, and his fortune proved averse.
The fool is all agog to take his leap
Just when his fortune falleth into sleep!
Bahrám pricked forth by moonlight to the field,
And bitterly bewailed the slain, those luckless
And heart-seared ones. The body of Rívníz

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 376.

Was whelmed in blood and dust, his tunic rent.
Bahrám the Lion wept for him and cried:—
"Alas! O young and valiant cavalier!
Men slain like thee are but a pinch of dust!
For nobles palaces, for thee a trench!"
Among his brethren flung on that broad plain
He roamed. One, stricken by the scimitar,
Of all those chiefs still lived. He marked Bahrám,
Wailed, asked his name, and said: "O Lion! I live,
Though flung among the slain, and I have craved
For two days bread and water and a robe
To sleep upon!"
Bahrám made haste to him
With loving spirit and a kinsman's heart,
Began to weep and lacerate his cheeks, V. 859
Rent his own raiment into strips to bind
The wounds, and said: "Fear not; 'tis but a scratch,
And merely needeth binding. Thou shalt go,
When I have bound it, to the host again,
And speedily recover of thy hurts."
He thus restored one that was lost but knew not
That he himself was doomed to lose his way.
He said: "Stay here, youth! till I hurry back.
While I was fighting for the crown I dropped
My whip; when I have found it I will come,
And take thee to the army with all speed."
Thence hasting to the centre of the field
He searched about until he found the whip,
Which was amid a heap of wounded men
With much dust showered thereon and blood withal.
Alighting from his steed he took it up,
And heard the sound of neighing. His steed likewise
Perceived the neighing of some mares, became
As nimble as Ázargashasp, rushed off,
And turned its head toward them while Bahrám
In dudgeon followed after in his tunic

And helmet, with the sweat upon his face
With hurrying, until he reached the horse
And, having caught it, mounted carrying
In hand an Indian sword; but, when he spurred,
The steed moved not a foot. Both man and horse
Were covered o'er with dust and sweat. Bahrám
Was so chagrined that with his scimitar
He slew the steed. Thence to the battlefield
He went as swift as wind. There all the plain
Was covered with the dead, and all the ground
V. 860 Like cercis-bloom. "How can we make our way
Upon the plain," he said, "without a horse?"
The foe grew ware of him and from the centre
There hasted forth a hundred cavaliers
To capture him and from the battlefield
Convey him to Pírán. Bahrám the Lion
Strung up his bow and showered shafts upon them—
A hero's shafts—so who could bide about him?
He slew or wounded most of them and sprang
Like some fierce lion at his enemies.
The rest withdrew and sought Pírán, exclaiming:—
"Behold a Lion both in pluck and might,
Who though afoot will do his kind in fight!"

§ 32

How Bahrám was slain by Tazháv

The troops on their return informed Pírán
Of that youth's deeds, and much talk passed thereon.
Pírán inquired: "Who is this man? What name
Hath he among the noble?"
One replied:—
"Bahrám the lion-queller, the host's lustre."
Pírán said to Rúín: "Arise. Bahrám
Can not escape. If thou canst take him living

The age will rest from strife. Take troops enough,
For he is famed and valiant."
Hearing this V. 861
Rúín went off on hostile thoughts intent.
Bahrám perceived him quick as dust and showered
Shafts on him, sitting on a mound the while,
A Lion bold with shield before his head.
Rúín son of Pírán was arrow-pierced,
The others lost all keenness for the fight.
They came disheartened to the paladin,
Full of concern and dudgeon, saying thus:—
"None ever fought so, and we have not seen
In any stream so fierce a crocodile."
Pírán was sore distraught at this account,
And trembled like the leaf upon the tree;
Then mounting on his fiery steed went forth,
Accompanied by many warriors,
And coming to Bahrám said: "Famous chief!
Why is it that thou combatest afoot?
When thou wast in Túrán with Siyáwush[1]
Thou usedst to be prudent, shrewd, reserved:
We should eat bread and salt together, we
Should sit together and become fast friends.
With such high lineage and native worth,
Such lion-manhood and exceeding prowess,
Thy head must not be levelled with the dust,
And kin and country sorrow for thy sake.
Come let us make a covenant by oath
On such wise as shall satisfy thy heart;
Then will I make affinity with thee
And, having made it, will advance thee more.
Thou canst not fight against these famous troops
On foot! Be not a traitor to thyself."
Bahrám said: "Paladin wise, shrewd, and ardent,
My lips have tasted nothing for three days,

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 249 *seq.*

And day and night have I been combating;
V. 862 But yet I must resume the fight forthwith
Unless thou wilt provide me with a steed
To bear me back to the Íránians,
Back to the old Gúdarz son of Kishwád."
Pírán said: "Know'st thou not, O atheling!
That I can countenance no such design?
What I suggested is the better course:
Thou art a brave man; act not recklessly.
Consider that the horsemen of our host
Hold it no small dishonour to themselves
That many of the scions of the great—
Men who wore diadems, well skilled in war—
Were killed or wounded by thee in the fight,
And smirched with dust. Who will approach Írán
Now but with tingling in his blood and brain?
If there were no fear of Afrásiyáb,
And that his heart would be enraged at me,
I would, O youth! provide thee with a steed
To bear thee homeward to the paladin."
He spake thus, turned about, and went his way,
Love in his heart but prudence in his head,
While from the host Tazháv—a man whose might
Surpassed an elephant's—came forth to meet him,
And asked him what had passed. Pírán replied:—
"There is no warrior equal to Bahrám.
I gave him out of kindness much good counsel,
Showed him his course, and proffered goodly league;
Mine offers found no access to his heart;
He fain would go back to the Íránian host."
Tazháv replied: "Love will not win his soul;
Now I will go and if I capture him
Afoot will put him 'neath the stones forthwith."
V. 863 He hurried to the field impetuously,
Where brave Bahrám was all alone in arms,
And, when he saw Bahrám with spear in hand,

Cried loudly like a furious elephant,
And said to him: "Thou wilt not get away
In this fight from these famous warriors.
Dost thou expect to go back to Írán?
Dost thou expect to lift thy head on high?
Thou hast cut off our princes' heads. Abide,
For now thine own time draweth to a head."
He bade his mates: "Lay on and give it him
With arrow, double-headed dart, and dagger."
The troops closed in a body on Bahrám,
All who were chief among the valiant men,
While he the hero having strung his bow
Dimmed with his shafts the brightness of the sky.
When arrows failed he took his spear in hand,
Till plain and hill were like a sea of gore,
And when the spear was cloven he still shed blood
With mace and sword like raindrops from a cloud.
The fight continued on this wise: Bahrám
Was wounded by the shafts of his brave foes,
And, when the hero's strength and vigour failed,
Tazháv came up and struck him from behind
A sword-cut on the shoulder. Brave Bahrám
Fell from the hillock on his face; the hand
That used to wield the sword was smitten off;
He ceased from combating and all was over.
E'en fell Tazháv grew hot of heart for him,
And, as in shame and grief he turned his reins,
He felt the warm blood tingling in his veins.

§ 33

How Gív slew Tazháv in Revenge for Bahrám

When bright Sol showed its back, Gív, heart-oppressed
About his brother, spake thus to Bízhan:—
"Joy of my heart! my brother cometh not!

V. 864 We must go forth and ascertain his case;
Let us not have to sorrow for the slain."
The valiant pair departed swift as dust
Toward the battlefield—the place of strife.
They sought him everywhere and, having found him,
Rushed anxiously toward him, shedding tears
Of blood. He lay—a wreck of gore and dust;
One hand was severed; all was over with him.
The gallant Gív fell from his charger's back,
And roared out like a lion. At the sound
Bahrám moved, turned, and gaining consciousness
Spake thus to Gív: "O seeker after fame!
When thou hast shrouded me upon my bier
Avenge me on Tazháv; that Bull may not
Withstand the Lion. From the first Pírán,
The son of Wísa, proved a friend to me,
Unlike the chiefs of Chín who sought revenge,
And then Tazháv, the injurious, gave these wounds,
Forgetting birth and rank."
Gív, when Bahrám
Had spoken this, wept tears of gall and said:—
"I swear by God the Judge Omnipotent,
By white day and by azure night that till
I shall avenge Bahrám my head shall see
No covering save a Rúman helm."
All vengeance
And grief he mounted, Indian sword in hand.

V. 865 Now when the world's face dusked Tazháv returned
From outpost duty. Spying him afar
Brave Gív rode toward him with a freer breath
On seeing him thus parted from the host,
No chiefs or warriors near. Gív loosed his lasso,
And caught the foe about the waist forthwith,
Then placed the lasso 'neath his thigh, wheeled round,
And lightly dragged Tazháv from saddle-back,
Flung him to earth disgraced and all forlorn,

And springing from the saddle bound his hands.
Gív, mounting, like a madman haled Tazháv
Along the ground who begged for mercy, saying:—
"No fight is left in me, thou valiant man!
What have I done that of this countless host
Thou givest me to-night a glimpse of Hell?"
Gív struck him with the whip two hundred times
Across the head, and answered thus: "No words!
Dost thou not know, thou wretch! that thou hast set
A fresh tree in the garden of revenge—
One that will reach to heaven, one whose trunk
Is fed on blood while daggers are its fruit?
Since thou must hunt Bahrám thou shalt explore
The Crocodile's strait gullet, for the ill
That robbed Bahrám of life wrung Gív's heart too."
"Thou art the eagle and the lark am I,"
Tazháv replied. "I bore Bahrám no grudge,
Nor caused his death; the cavaliers of Chín
Had slain him ere I came."
"Pernicious wretch!"
Said Gív, "spare thine excuse and futile words."
Gív dragged him to Bahrám, the wounded Lion, V. 866
And said: "Behold this faithless head! I pay
The savage with the meed of savagery.
I thank the Maker, the Omnipotent,
That fate hath granted to me time enough
To take thy foeman's life before thine eyes."
Tazháv begged quarter, saying: "That hath been
Which was to be. How will it profit thee
To take my head?"
Then wallowing in the dust
Before Bahrám he cried: "O noble man!
I will be thy soul's slave and wait upon
The keeper of thy tomb."
Then said Bahrám
To Gív: "Whoever liveth hath to die.

Though he hath done me hurt he need not taste
The pangs of death, so spare his guilty head
That he may keep my memory alive."
But Gív, who saw his brother with such wounds,
And him that did the hurt a captive, seized
Tazháv's beard with a shout and headed him
As 'twere a lark! Bahrám wept blood and marvelled
At heaven's processes, then raised a cry
Whose like, so strange it was, none ever heard:—
"If I shall slay, or thou slay in my presence,
My brothers or my kinsmen will be slain!"
This said, the brave Bahrám gave up the ghost.
'Tis ever thus with this world! He that would
Obtain the reins must bathe his hands in blood,
Slay or be slain! Shun thou ambition's mood.
V. 867 Brave Gív wailed o'er Bahrám and strewed dark dust
On his own head, then, having bound his brother
Upon Tazháv's steed, mounted presently.
He brought the body from the battlefield,
And had a royal sepulchre prepared.
He filled the skull with spicery and musk,
Enwrapped the corpse in silk of Chín, and set it
In royal state upon an ivory throne
To sleep, suspending over it a crown,
And painting the tomb's portal red and blue:
Thou wouldst have said: "Bahrám hath never been."
The famous warriors were absorbed in grief
For fortune changed, and for Bahrám their chief.

§ 34

How the Íránians went back to Khusrau

When bright Sol topped the mountains, and the head
And crown of white day showed, the scattered troops
Began to gather, and their converse ran:—
"Full many of the Íránian host are slain!

Our leader's fortune hath deserted him,
So mighty were the Turkmans' hands in fight!
The army must not tarry longer here:
We verily must go before the Sháh,
And see how fortune turneth. If his heart
Be not intent on war then thou and I
Have no occasion to exert ourselves.
The sires have lost their sons, the sons their sires,
And most are wounded or in sore distress;
But if the Sháh shall bid us to engage,
And shall equip a noble host, then we
Will march, our hearts filled with revenge and strife,
And make the world too narrow for our foes."

Thus minded they retreated from those marches,
Their eyes surcharged with tears, their hearts with anguish,
As brother sorrowed over brother's blood, V. 868
And sighs were on their tongues for kinsmen slain.
They marched together to the Kása rúd,
Farewelling with their tongues their fallen friends.

The scouts that went forth from the Turkman host
Saw none remaining on the battlefield,
And tidings reached Pírán the son of Wísa:—
"The land is cleared of the Íránians."

Pírán, on hearing this, without delay
Sent forth spies secretly on every side
And, being certified that that proud foe
Was gone indeed, released his heart from care.
He set forth with an escort at the dawn,
And went about to view the battlefield.
The plain and mountains, valleys and ravines,
Had tents and tent-enclosures numberless.
He gave them to the soldiers, marched away,
And marvelled at the process of the world:
One day a rise, another day a fall,
Now all is gladness and then terror all,

In sooth our best course is the cup to raise
That maketh earth look bright, and fleet the days.
Pírán sent one to tell Afrásiyáb,
Who heard and joyed released from care and trouble.
The multitude light-hearted in their gladness
Adorned the road whereby Pírán must pass;
They decorated all the roofs and doors,
And poured out drachms in showers upon his head.
As soon as he approached Afrásiyáb
The king went forth with gifts to welcome him,
And called down many a blessing on him, saying:—
"Thou hast no peer among the paladins."
Then from the palace of Afrásiyáb
For two weeks rose the sounds of harp and rebeck,
While on the third Pírán resolved to go
Rejoicing to his home. The Turkman king
V. 869 Made ready presents for him: thou wouldst be
Impatient if I told of the dínárs,
The royal jewels, belts of gold with gems,
The Arab steeds with golden furniture,
The Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
The splendid throne of teak and ivory,
The couch of turquoise and the amber crown,
The girls from Chín, the boys from Rúm, with beakers
Of turquoise filled with musk and spicery.
This wealth Afrásiyáb sent to Pírán,
And added many other gifts beside,
While as the general left the royal presence
The king addressed him thus: "My loyal hero!
Be prudent, keep the fellowship of priests,
And guard the army from the enemy.
Dispatch in all directions trusty men
To act as spies and privily withal,
For Kai Khusrau is now possessed of wealth;
Beneficence and justice deck his land.
Since noble lineage and crown and throne

Are thine desire not any good beside.
Be not secure because the foe hath gone,
But seek fresh tidings as occasion serveth.
Thy soul will suffer if thou sleep'st at ease
So long as Rustam is the paladin—
The only man that giveth me concern—
For his whole business is to seek revenge.
I fear that he will rouse himself and lead
The armies of Írán against Túrán."
Pírán, as captain of the host and kinsman,
Accepted all the counsel of the king,
And set forth with his troops toward Khutan.

Now that the story of Farúd is ended
Hear the campaign wherein Kámús contended.

PART II

THE STORY OF KÁMÚS OF KASHÁN

ARGUMENT

THE poet, having offered up his praises to the Maker, goes on to tell of the wrath of Kai Khusrau with the host. Ultimately, however, at Rustam's request, he restores Tús to favour, and sends him against Túrán. Tús is again unsuccessful, and is beleaguered on a mountain. The news reaches Kai Khusrau, who dispatches Rustam with reinforcements, while Afrásiyáb sends Kámús of Kashán and the Khán of Chín with vast hosts to assist his general Pírán. Fierce fighting follows, and Kámús is slain by Rustam.

NOTE

In its earlier scenes this campaign is a variant of the preceding one. In both Tús commands the Íránians and is defeated, in both the Gúdarzians suffer great losses, in both there are a snow-storm and a night-attack, and in both the Íránians take refuge on a mountain. Naturally the details vary, but the general similarity is unmistakable. Nothing but the existence of a variant can account for the fact that Tús is put in command again after his behaviour in the first campaign, and there is a legend, probably known to Firdausí, which puts a different complexion on the matter.[1] In the poem the difficulty is got over by the intervention of Rustam, who begs the culprit off, as he does later on in the case of Gurgín.[2] In the second night-attack, in which the positions of assailants and defenders are reversed, Húmán takes just the part that Gív is represented as taking on the first occasion.

If we are content to regard the account given in the poem of the latter part of this campaign merely as Firdausí has presented it, perhaps we may identify the Kashán with which Kámús' name is associated as that mentioned by Tabarí[3] and situated in

[1] See p. 14. [2] See p. 331. [3] ZT. iv. 184.

Ferghána, which is now a province of Russian Turkistán. We ought not, however, to overlook the probability that reminiscences of the Parthian civil wars of the days of Gotarzes and Vardanes have been embodied in the story. In this case, as in that of the wars of Gushtásp and Arjásp later on, what in reality were civil broils came in time to be looked back upon as wars between Írán and Túrán. With the historical fact of the great Persian satraps ranging themselves in opposing camps before us, there seems no reason why the Kashán originally intended may not have been the one in Persia on the highroad between Ispahán and Tihrán. Firdausí's account, however, clearly favours that in Turkistán, and we must not forget that the nomads took part in the contention between the rival Parthian princes.[1]

§ 28. The story of Rustam's fight with Ashkabús is famous both on account of its own merits and for the curious legend told in connexion with it. One day, it is said, at the court of Mahmúd a discussion arose as to the merits of Firdausí as a poet, and it was arranged between his supporters and detractors in the presence of the Sultán that he should put one of the legends, of which nothing but the bare facts remained, into verse the same day, to ascertain how far his version could be considered an improvement on the original. The story chosen was that of Rustam's fight with Ashkabús of Kashán. Firdausí's rendering of the episode delighted the assembly, the lines about the stringing and discharging of the bow especially fascinating Mahmúd, who repeated them several times and praised them highly. That night Firdausí dreamed that he met Rustam at the gate of Makná Bád. The hero was on foot, fully armed, of terrible aspect, and with bow in hand, just as the poet had described him. Rustam greeted the poet graciously, but wept and said: "I desire to pay my debt to thee, but have not power to do so. However, when I took the torque from the neck of the foe, and desired not to retain it, I made a hole in the ground yonder with the head of my spear, and buried the torque there. Go now and take it up." He pointed out a little hillock on the sand, and, having placed an arrow upon his bow, shot at it. Firdausí remembered the dream and, some time afterward, happening to pass by Makná Bád in attendance on the Sultán, he made the story known. The mound was excavated, and several torques of red gold were discovered. The Sultán gave them to Firdausí, who refused to keep them for himself, and distributed them among the other court poets.[2]

[1] See p. 10.

[2] C. Persian Preface, pp. 39–41.

§ 1

The Prelude

V. 870 In His name Who is Lord of moon and sun,
The name revealed by wisdom to the heart,
The Lord of being and uprightness—One
That brooketh not perverseness on thy part—
The Lord of Saturn, Mars, and Sol, from Whom
Our gospel are, our hopes, and dread of doom!

I know not how to praise Him though in thought
I pour my soul. He fashioned space and time;
The emmet's foot with proofs of Him is fraught.
From yonder circling sun to earthly grime,
Bright fire, air, water, all are witnesses,
And give thy soul assurance, that He is.

Let it be thine the Maker to revere,
Who hath no need of aught, no need of crown
And throne, of minister and treasurer,
Of less or more, of fortune's smile or frown;
Yet, though He needeth naught, His slaves are we,
And bow before His bidding and decree.

Since He created wisdom and the mind,
Past doubt, and set the heaven and stars on high,
In Him supreme the sole Creator find,
And Source of happiness and misery,
V. 871 Of night and day, of circling sphere above,
Of food and sleep, of anger and of love.

Of Rustam's wondrous deeds there is no scant,
His legend in the hearts of all is rife;
A crocodile in water, elephant
On land, wise, shrewd of heart, a man of strife,

Consummate both in war and valiancy,
A man of knowledge, wit, and weight was he.

His battle with Kámús I next present
In mine own words but based on document,
So turn now to the rustic minstrel's lay,
Mark what that man world-proven hath to say.

§ 2

How Khusrau reviled Tús

The troops with Faríburz, Gúdarz, and Gív—
The shatterer of hosts—went to Írán
In grief with tearful cheeks. When they had reached
The road toward Charam and had Kalát
Above, the waters of Mayam below,
They spake about the conflict with Farúd,
And all their gain was anguish and remorse.
Fear of the Sháh filled every heart with pain,
For they were guilty and their eyes wept blood.
They came before Khusrau with souls abashed,
With wounded livers, and as men in fault
For having slain their monarch's blameless brother,
And yielded crown and signet to the foe;
They came with hearts seared and with folded arms,
As slaves are wont, before their sovereign.
Khusrau regarded them with angry looks;
His heart was full of pain, his eyes of tears,
And thus he spake to God: "O righteous Judge!
Thou gavest to me fortune, throne, and prowess,
But now I shame before Thee. Thou dost know,
Far better than I know, the why and how
Of things, or else I should command to set
A thousand stakes forthwith upon the open,
And Tús and all that carried arms with him

V. 872

Should be impaled. I mourned my father's death,
My heart was filled with sorrow, pain, and trouble,
And now there is new vengeance for Farúd,
For I must needs smite off the head of Tús.
I said: 'Avoid Kalát, avoid Charam,
Though people should shower drachms upon thy head,
Because Farúd is with his mother there.
He is a hero of the Kaian race—
A warrior.' Should he know vile Tús or why
The army marched? Of course he would attack,
And from the mountain slaughter many chiefs.
Why did inhuman and insensate Tús
March in such haste against that hold? Good sooth!
The Master of the sky no longer favoureth
Him and the host. The kindred of Gúdarz
Fared ill through him. Be he, his elephants,
And drums accursed. I gave him robes of honour
And gifts, and sent him forth to fight—my brother!
Away with chiefs like Tús son of Naudar!
May no such paladins be generals!
Alas! alas! the son of Siyáwush—
Farúd—with that stout heart, that mace and sword,
Who, like his sire, was slain though innocent,
Slain by my general and by my troops!
None know I worse than Tús, and he is ripe
For chain and pit. Brainless and veinless too
The wretch is as a dog to me."
He writhed
With stricken liver to avenge his brother
And father's blood, dismissed the troops disgraced,
V. 873 Wept his heart's blood, and shut to them the door
Of audience, being wounded to the soul
With anguish for Farúd. The warriors
Went sad and sorry to the court of Rustam,
And thus excused themselves: "God willed it so!
Who wished to fight Farúd? Still when the son,

Of Tús was slain the chieftains' heads grew dark
At that disgrace and, when his son-in-law
Rívníz fell too, misfortune's worst was done.
Who knew the name and bearings of Farúd,
And wished to wound him through our monarch's heart?
Plead with the Sháh. Perchance he will refrain
From vengeance on the host. Was not Rívníz,
The son of Kai Káús, slain grievously
In fight as well—a younger son and warrior,
Dear to the father of moon-faced Khusrau?
Such is the issue that all battles have,
To this a crown, to that a narrow grave!"

§ 3

How Khusrau pardoned the Íránians

When Sol had gilt earth's face, and darksome night
Was taken in the toils, shouts rose before
The palace portal and the peerless Rustam
Came to the Sháh, and said: "O great Khusrau!
Throne, crown, and signet-ring rejoice in thee.
The Sháh is wroth with Tús and with the host,
But pardon their wrong-doing for my sake.
When Tús beheld his son and son-in-law
Both slaughtered, prudence left his brain and heart,
For first, he is not wise but choleric,
And next, a son's life is no light concern;
So when Rívníz was slain before his face,
And that proud cavalier Zarásp withal,
No wonder if he blazed. The Sháh should not
Take vengeance on him. Then again the host V. 874
Was ill disposed toward thy glorious brother
Because he had not visited the Sháh.
Know that the date when each must die is fixed,

And be not grieved hereat. Our spirit passeth,
Or else is made to pass. Three hundred spells
Will not delay it."

Kai Khusrau replied:—

"O paladin! I sorrowed for this youth,
But now thy rede is solace to my soul,
Though still I ache at heart."

Then Rustam kissed
The ground before the monarch of the world.

So when the sun had shot its rays on high,
And hastened to ascend upon its curve,
When it had rent its turquoise robes of gloom,
So that its ruddy, shining form showed through,
The general, Gív, and other warriors
Approached the Sháh with blessings, and Tús said:—
"Live fortunate till time shall be no more.
Be earth the basis of thy crown and throne,
And heaven the guardian of thy Grace and fortune.
My heart is sorrowful, my liver wounded
With pain for my misdeed, my mind is full
Of shame, my tongue is all excuse, my soul
All fault, I burn as 'twere Ázargashasp
In anguish for the pure souls of Farúd
And of Zarásp. If I am guiltier
Than others I am writhing for my deed.
When valued with Bahrám and with Rívníz
Mine own life is not worth a single mite;
So if the Sháh will cease from wrath with me,
And with this noble but offending host,
I will go forth to cancel this disgrace,
And will exalt our fallen heads anew;
V. 875 I will share all the army's toils myself,
Be it to keep my life or lose my head.
Henceforth I will not look at throne and crown,
My head shall see naught but a helm of Rúm."

The monarch graciously received these words;

His heart grew fresh as roses in the spring.
He counselled much with Rustam, with the chiefs
And warriors, then sent Tús 'gainst Túrán
With elephants and shawms and kettledrums.
The company dispersed without delay,
And Rustam also homeward took his way.

§ 4

How Khusrau sent Tús to Túrán

When bright Sol showed, and when from night's bent bow
Dawn brake, Tús with the great men of the host
Came to Khusrau who said: "Trace of this feud
Is never lost. Begun by Salm and Túr
It had fresh impulse given by Minúchihr,
But never was a Sháh so shamed as I,
Or earth so glutted with his warriors' gore!
The hills have girt them with Gúdarzians' blood
For whom weep bird and fish by land and sea.
O'er the Túránians' waste the Íránians' hands
And feet and trunks lie scattered! Are your counsels
Auspicious? Are ye all heart-stirred to vengeance?"
The gallant warriors, with folded arms
Before that sunlike and aspiring one,
All kissed the ground together—warriors,
Such as Ruhhám, Gurgín, Gúdarz, and Tús,
Kharrád and Zanga son of Sháwarán,
Bízhan and Gív and other men of might.
They said: "Well starred, good-hearted Sháh who hast V. 876
The heart withal to pluck out lions' hearts!
We all of us are slaves of thine and hang
Our heads in reverence, O Sháh! before thee.
If now the Sháh so biddeth we will all

Pour out our souls in fight, nor shall he mark
Aught ill from us if sun and moon shall lour not."
Khusrau then summoned Gív and seated him
Upon the throne of greatness, praised him much,
Bestowing many a gift and mark of favour,
And said: "Thou seekest toil on mine account,
But sharest not my treasures. Tús though leader
Must not employ the drums and elephants
Against thy counsel rashly. Didst not see
How in Bahrám's case (may his soul rejoice!)
Great skill in warfare fashioned for itself
A dark, strait dwelling through the quest of fame
And ill advice? Brief though our sojourn be
Fame should remain behind us, not disgrace."
Khusrau gave money, called the commissaries,
Spake much with Tús, and sought a lucky day
According to the stars for setting forth.
The chieftain Tús then came as general,
Received the standard, elephants, and drums,
And did obeisance while the soldiers shouted.
The earth heaved underneath the chargers' tramp;
V. 877 A dust-cloud gathered from the horses' hoofs;
The trumpet's blast went up. What with the mass
Of mail and Káwa's flag earth's face all turned
To violet. "The sun," thou wouldst have said,
"Is quenched, the sky and stars are all asleep."
The Sháh abode upon the plain with mace
And elephant till Tús the general
Had passed, who on an elephant outspread
A turquoise litter and thus Shahd-ward sped.

§ 5

The Message of Pírán to the Army of Írán

A cameleer bore blast-like to Pírán
This message: "I have reached the river Shahd
In arms and ready to contend with thee."
Pírán, on hearing this, was sorely grieved
That, 'gainst his will, he needs must pack the loads,
And went forth with his chiefs—choice cavaliers
And brave—to learn about the Íránian host,
How many chiefs, and who, were there with Tús.
He drew his troops up on his side the stream,
And sent a greeting to the Íránian chief.
He said: "I everywhere showed kindliness
To Farangís and to the Sháh. I cried,
And seethed as on fierce fire, for Siyáwush;
But now the antidote doth bear the bane,
I share in all these ills."
Tús was distressed,
Grieved at the words and sufferings of Pírán,
And said: "Go to Pírán of ardent soul, V. 878
And say: 'If thou speak'st sooth we have no quarrel.
Drop fealty, abandon thy surroundings,
And bar this door of fear and road of loss.
Go to the Sháh alone, he will requite thee,
Give thee a royal crown and paladinship.
When he recalleth thy good deeds thy pangs
Will pain him to the heart. Gúdarz and Gív
And other chieftains, nobles shrewd of heart,
Agree herein.'"
The envoy went like wind
Back to Pírán and told what he had heard
From Tús and from Gúdarz of ardent soul.
Pírán made answer: "I by night and day
Will ope my lips to praise the chieftain Tús.

I will go over, taking of my kin
Those who are wise and list to mine advice,
And send them, bag and baggage, to Írán.
An honoured head is more than crown and throne."
He did not purpose acting in this way,
But sought to gain occasion by delay.

§ 6

How Afrásiyáb sent an Army to Pírán

Pírán dispatched a camel-post by night
To tell Afrásiyáb: "Troops have arrived
With shawms and tymbals from Írán, commanded
By Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús, whom I have duped
And much advised with. Choose a warrior-host
Or else the war will be inglorious.
We may uproot the foe and fire their land,
V. 879 Else in their vengeance for prince Siyáwush
The Íránian army ne'er will rest from strife."
Afrásiyáb thereat convoked his captains,
Told what had chanced, and said: "Prepare for war."
Afrásiyáb arrayed a power that dimmed
The eye of Sol; that host, so great that earth
Was hidden, on the tenth day reached Pírán,
Who having victualled and disposed the troops,
And loaded up the baggage, marched in haste,
Regarding not his promise, to the Shahd.
A scout came in to Tús and said to him:—
"Bind thou the drums upon the elephants
Because Pírán, perceiving downfall nigh,
Spake guilefully. We see the tyrant's standard
And army drawn up on the river-bank."
Tús put his battle in array. They ranged
The elephants and tymbals on the plain.
The two lines, like two mountains, clashed in fight—

The Íránian horsemen and the Turkman troops.
The dust-clouds of the hosts so dimmed the sun
That fire rose from the stream—the flash of sword, V. 880
Of dart and javelin—and thou hadst said:—
"Earth planted air with tulips!" With the stir
Of horsemen with their golden belts, and all
The golden helmets and the golden shields,
A cloud in hue like sandarach arose,
And earth became like ebony with dust.
The horsemen's heads beneath the mighty maces
Seemed anvils 'neath smiths' hammers. Thou hadst said:—
"The river is a wine-press running blood,
The air is like a reed-bed with the spears!"
Then many heads were caught in lasso-coils,
Then many an honoured form was cast away.
The shroud was mail, the pillow blood and dust;
The bosom had been hacked by scimitars.
Earth was a cercis-bloom, air ebony;
The din of tymbals filled the starry heaven.
What though the ambitious man a crown may gain,
Or but the battle's surge of blood and dust,
Yet from this world of our's depart he must,
Whate'er his portion—antidote or bane.
I wot not of the end but, this I know,
It is a cause for tears to have to go.

§ 7

How Tús slew Arzhang

There was a famous Turkman named Arzhang,
One whose renown in warfare reached the clouds.
He sent the dust up from the battlefield,
And challenged the Íránians. Tús from far
Saw him and shouted, drew his sword and asked

That son of Zira: "What name bearest thou?
Who is thy fellow in the Turkman host?"
He said: "Arzhang am I, a warrior—
A noble Lion who can bide his time.
Now will I make the earth quake under thee,
And cast thy head upon the field of fight."
V. 881 Tús, hearing but disdaining all reply,
Smote with the glittering falchion in his hand
That chieftain on the helm, and thou hadst said:—
"His body never bore a head at all!"
Pírán grieved sorely and the Turkman host,
And none came forth, but all the warriors
And chieftains of Túrán drew scimitar
And massive mace, and shouted to each other,
Those Lions: "Let us charge and make the world
Strait to the heart of Tús."
Then said Húmán:—
"To-day we will prepare. Be not cast down.
If any noble of the Íránians
Shall come to challenge us we will dispatch
A man to fight him and will mark the issue,
But not provoke them rashly. What we need
Is respite for a day, but when the host
Is stirring, and the tymbals sound in camp,
Then from beyond the stream be onslaught made
With mace in hand if God and fortune aid."

§ 8

How Húmán fought with Tús

Húmán bestrode and spurred his eagle-steed.
Thou wouldst have said: "He is an iron wall,
Or Mount Alburz in mail!" He came before
The host to fight and grasped a glittering spear.
Tús too advanced; earth rang with clarion-blare.

"And so from luckless Wísa," he exclaimed, V. 882
"A miserable Tree like this up-springeth!
Hast thou indeed come forth to fight since thou
Hast come forth mounted and with spear in hand?
By the Sháh's life and head I would oppose thee
Without my breastplate, mace, and Rúman casque,
Just like a pard that clutcheth at its prey
Among the mountains. Thou shalt see how heroes
Fight if thou venturest."

Húmán replied:—

"Be not o'er-weening for it is not good.
Though fate hath come upon one luckless chief,
And by thy hand, hold not the rest in scorn.
Arzhang had deemed himself no man at all
If matched with me upon the day of battle.
But have the Íránian warriors no shame?
Doth not the warm blood boil in any breast
In that their leader hath to champion them?
Have their hands failed to fight? Where are Bízhan
And Gív—those noble ones—and where Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, that taker of the world?
If thou art paladin why hast thou left
The centre for the field? The wise will own not
Thy kinship and the sane will hold thee mad.
Go, hold up Káwa's standard; generals
Come not to fight in person. Look for one
On whom the Sháh bestowed a robe of honour,
Some warrior in quest of crown and signet,
And order him to battle with the Lion,
And bring the hand of the high-handed down.
Ill would befall this noble host of thine
If thou wert slain by me, thy troops become
Abandoned, spiritless, and, if they lived, V. 883
Discomfited. Save Rustam son of Zál,
And Sám the cavalier, I see no noble
Like thee within Írán whose ancestors

Were men renowned and Sháhs. No need of army
If thou wilt fight in person! Go thy way
That some aspirant from the host may face me;
Besides, if thou wilt list to true advice,
Wherein my soul and heart confirm my tongue,
The bravest smart when they encounter me."
Tús said: "Exalted man! I am the leader,
But am withal a horseman of the fray.
Thou art a leader of the Turkman troops
Thyself! Why then hast thou come on the field?
If thy heart will accept advice of mine
Seek, 'tis my counsel, for a league with me.
Come with the noble captain of thy host
Before the Sháh because, while one surviveth,
These troops will rest no jot from this revenge.
Give not thyself thus madly to the wind,
And may my counsel ne'er recur to thee.
Leave those who should be slain to fight with us,
For not one guilty shall escape our vengeance,
So act the wise man's part. The Sháh directed:—
'Harm not Pírán. He is my foster-sire,
Experienced, and my friend. Strive not with him
Unjustly, wantonly, and see that he
Hear thine advice.'"
Húmán said: "Right or wrong,
When bidden by a king of glorious race,
V. 884 We must go forth: we have no remedy,
But must surrender all our heart to him.
Pírán himself desireth not this strife,
For he is noble, good, and generous."
While Tús was parleying, the face of Gív
Resembled sandarach, he left the host
Like wind, "O Tús of glorious race!" he cried,
"A wily Turkman with his lips afoam
Hath come between the lines; why should he speak
So long with thee apart? Seek not the door

Of peace, speak only with thy scimitar."
Húmán, on hearing, raged and said to Gív
Of sleepless fortune: "Wretchedest of all
The free! perish Gúdarz son of Kishwád!
Upon the day of battle at Ládan
Thou sawest me with Indian sword in hand
Where not one of his seed survived that read not
The inscription thereupon. For thee, thy fortune
Is like the face of Áhriman, and mourning
Is ever in thy house. If Tús slay me
Men still will use the mace and kettledrum.
Pírán is living and Afrásiyáb,
Who will avenge me promptly, but if Tús
Shall perish by my hand none of his troops
Will reach Írán. Bewail thy brothers' pangs,
Why railest thou at Tús son of Naudar?"
"What wrath is this?" said Tús, "I am thy foe; V. 885
Come let us wheel about, begin the encounter,
And bend our brows in battle."
Then Húmán:—
"All heads beneath a crown or helm must die.
Since death must come 'tis best upon the field,
And by the hand of some skilled cavalier,
A leader, prince, and ardent warrior."
Then, grasping each his massive mace, they charged.
Earth reeled, day darkened, and a dust-cloud gathered
Above the scene of strife. Thou wouldst have said:—
"The night hath come on them by day, the sun—
The lustre of the world—is blotted out!"
Those mighty maces clashed and bent like bows
Of Chách, the ring of steel rose to the sky,
The wind of that contention reached the Shahd!
Thou wouldst have said: "Stone heads are in those helms,
Those warriors' blows have blackened death's own face!"
They took in hand their Indian scimitars,

And sent sparks streaming out of stone and steel
V. 886 Till with the chieftains' might the trenchant blades
First bent, then shivered. Dust-smirched and athirst
Each warrior clutched the other's leathern belt,
And pressed with all his weight upon the stirrups,
But neither came to dust. Húmán's belt snapped.
He leapt upon a fresh steed while Tús took
His quiver, strung his bow, and set thereon
A poplar arrow. He began to shower
His shafts upon his noble foe and wheeled
To left and right as horsemen use to do.
The points of steel and eagle-plumes bedimmed
The mid-day sun, the world became as 'twere
Night's second watch, its face like diamonds.
Pierced by a poplar shaft Húmán's steed fell;
He raised his shield to save his face and head.
On seeing him afoot upon the field,
And holding not his own, the Turkman chiefs
Brought him a noble mount, but when Húmán
Had seated him upon the bark-lined saddle,
With Indian sword in hand, the men of name
And warriors all drew near to him and said:—
"It groweth dark, there is no time, and strife
Is over for the day. May evil eyes
Be far from thee and fighting end in feast."
V. 887 Húmán the warrior turned his rein (Tús raising
His own lance to him), left the field, and sought
Pírán. A shout rose from the Turkman host:—
"How didst thou fare when face to face with Tús,
O warrior? Our hearts were full for thee!
God only knoweth what we felt!"
That Lion
Replied: "O brave and veteran warriors!
The day will bring us triumph, we shall take
Yon shining flag, all joy will be your portion,
And I shall have the stars of heaven for mine."

Tús for his part was shouting through the night
Till cock-crow: "Is Húmán the man for me?
A raging lion should my foeman be."

§ 9

How the Íránians and Túránians fought the second Time

Now when high heaven had made its Crown of Jet,
And flung Pastilles on Lapislazuli,
The pickets hurried forth on every side,
And set the watch around the camps, but when
Sol showed in Cancer, and the world became
Fair as a Rúman's face, from both the camps
The sound of tymbals rose, the world was filled
With the blare of clarions, air was thick with flags,
Which gleamed red, yellow, black, and violet,
The warriors bared their weapons, and rode forth V. 888
To battle. Thou hadst said: "Heaven, earth, and time
Don iron," while the radiant sun was veiled
By dust of caracoling cavaliers,
And, what with neigh of steeds and din of drums,
Heaven kissed the earth. Húmán the chieftain wheeled
Before the ranks, a shining dart in hand,
And cried: "When I shall raise the battle-shout,
Urge on my charger and seethe up with rage,
Then draw ye forth your falchions as one man,
And hold your shields of Chín above your heads.
See nothing but your horses' crests and reins,
I want no bow, I want no lance's point,
But armed with sword and club and massive mace,
As is the use and wont of warriors,
Throw down your reins upon your horses' necks,
And give and take the buffets as they come."
This said, the gallant horseman lion-like
Went to Pírán: "O paladin!" he cried,

"Unlock the weapons of our warriors,
Keep not dínárs within the treasury,
And hoard not arms. If we prevail to-day
Thy heart shall pluck the fruit of favouring stars."
On his side Tús arrayed his host as 'twere
The eye of chanticleer. The warriors blessed him,
And hailed him as the paladin of earth,
Who triumphed in the battle, and whose valour
Sent dust up from Húmán. Then to Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, said Tús: "Let all wot well
That if we march forth, and our foes prevail,
Our trust must be in God, not in ourselves;
V. 889 He may assist us, else the day is lost.
At present let the chiefs with golden boots
Remain with Káwa's standard. Let none quit
The mountain; this is not the day and season
For strife and stir. Good sooth! the enemy
Out-number us two hundred times or more!"
Gúdarz replied: "If God will but avert
Our evil day the fact of more or less
Importeth not. Daunt not the Íránians,
For if the sky turn over us for ill
To wait is no avail. Array the host;
Dash not our souls with what may be."
So Tús,
The chieftain, put the battle in array—
Men, drums, and elephants of war; the footmen
Went with the baggage to the heights, Gúdarz
Was on the right, Ruhhám shared with Gurgín
The left, the troops were ranked, anon the sky
Shook with the roar of drum and clarion,
V. 890 The heart of circling heaven was rent, the sun
Was choked with dust, none saw the ground beneath him,
The murky clouds rained showers of diamonds,
Fire flashed from helm and sword, the spear-heads gleamed,

And massive maces whirled. Thou wouldst have said:—
"The air is mace and iron, and the earth
Horseshoes and mail." The plains and dales ran blood,
And swords were lamps that lit a world of night.
No one knew head from foot, such was the din
Of drum and clarion! Tús said to Gúdarz:—
"Night cometh and the astrologer hath told me:—
'To-day until the night's third watch is passed
The warriors from their scimitars will pour
Blood on the field, like rain from some dark cloud;
But victory, I fear me, in the end
Will rest with our revengeful foes.'"
Shídúsh,
Ruhhám, Gív, Gustaham, Kharrád, Fárhád,
And brave Barzín came forth between the hosts,
Came liver-wounded, eager for revenge,
Like troops of dívs upon a murky night,
While in all quarters din assailed the clouds.
Húmán on his side mountain-huge led forth
His army troop on troop, and none could tell,
Amid the mass of maces, mallets, swords,
And spears, the stirrups from the reins. He said:— V. 891
"Our work to-day must not be like the fight
Of yesterday, but we must sweep the earth
Of foemen lest they seek revenge hereafter."
Then Tús advanced with foot-men, elephants,
And kettledrums, while spear-men, pavisers,
And javelin-men drew up before the horse-men.
"Leave not your posts," he said, "and hold your shields
And spears in front of you, and we will see
The massive mace-play of their chivalry."

§ 10

How the Túránians used Sorcery against the Host of Írán

Among the Turkmans there was one Bázúr
By name, adept in magic, versed in guile
And sorcery, and learnéd in the tongues
Of Chín and ancient Persia. To that warlock
Pírán said: "Scale the mountain-top and send
V. 892 Snow, cold, and blast upon the Íránians."
That sorcerer sped thither, and forthwith
Came snow and storm. The Íránian spearmen's hands
Failed in the snow and stress. Amid the tumult
And icy blast the warriors' war-cry rose,
And arrows rained. "Let all the army charge,"
Pírán bade. "While their hands freeze to their spears
None can show prowess."
With a shout Húmán
Charged like a lusty dív. They slaughtered so
That 'twixt the lines there was a sea of gore,
The vales and wastes were filled with snow and blood,
The horsemen of Írán were overthrown,
Till corpses left no room to wheel; the ground
Was blocked by snow and fallen. Tús the leader
And other chiefs cried bitterly to heaven:—
"O Higher than all knowledge, sense, and reason,
Not at, or in, but everywhere! we all
Are Thy transgressing slaves and in our straits
Appeal to Thee, for Thou wilt help the helpless,
And art the Lord of fire and icy blast.
Deliver us from this excessive cold;
We look for aid to Thee and Thee alone."
A sage approached Ruhhám and showed the height
V. 893 Where bold Bázúr was stationed with his spells.
Ruhhám wheeled round and quitting field and host,
And girding up his mail-skirts to his waist,

Clomb to the mountain-top. The warlock saw him,
And, grasping a steel mace of Chín, advanced
To fight. ` Ruhhám, approaching, quickly drew
His trenchant scimitar and hacked away
The warlock's hand. Like Doomsday came a blast,
And swept the murk from heaven. Staying thus
The sorcerer's hand the brave Ruhhám descended,
Regained the plain, and mounted while the air
Resumed its azure vault and radiant sun.
Ruhhám said to his sire: "'Twas sorcerer's work,
And how he played the mischief as we fought!"
The Sháh's troops saw the field a sea of blood
Strewn with Íránian heads and headless trunks.
Then spake Gúdarz to Tús: "No need have we
For elephant or drum-beat. Let us all
Draw sword and charge, and slay or else be slain.
Good sooth! our time is coming to an end;
This is no day for lasso, shaft, or bow."
Tús said: "O thou experienced veteran!
The sky is ridded of that icy blast.
Why should our heads be scattered to the winds,
Now that the Helper giveth Grace and strength?
Expose not thou thyself, for in this strife
Our warriors will avail to do our will.
Go not to meet thy fate or recklessly
Advance against our foes but tarry thou
With Káwa's standard at the army's centre,
And blue steel sword in hand. Bízhan and Gív
Together lead the right; upon the left
Is Gustaham; Ruhhám is with Shídúsh V. 894
Before the lines; Guráza's lips are foaming
For vengeance. If I shall be slain, retreat
Back to the Sháh, but death is nobler far
For me than shame and every foeman's jeers.'
Such is the world, all anguish and all woe
Seek not addition if thou canst forbear,

For that will bite thee some day and will ne'er
Prolong existence for thee here below.
Again arose the blast of clarions,
The clangour of the gongs and Indian bells.
What with the din of warlike cavaliers,
The gleam of sword and crash of battle-ax,
What with darts, maces, shafts, and javelins,
The earth became as 'twere a sea of pitch.
The plain was filled with trunkless heads and arms,
The crashing of the maces filled all ears,
But, since the face of cruel fortune loured
The Íránian warriors showed the foe their backs.
Then Tús, Gúdarz, and gallant Gív, Shídúsh,
Bízhan, and lion-like Ruhhám all took
Their lives in hand and went in quest of fame
Before the embattled lines. All those with Tús,
The nobles and the chiefs, poured out their blood
Before the host, but those behind them fled.
Then said an archmage to that warrior-chief:—
"The army is no longer at thy back:
The foe must not surround thee and destroy
Both host and general."
Tús said to Gív:—
"Our soldiers' brains and wisdom are no mates
Since they have left us thus, and in their folly
Turned from the fight; go thou and rally them;
Protest our foemen's jeers, our monarch's shame."
Gív went; the host returned; the plain and desert
Seemed filled with slain. Then Tús addressed the captains:—
"This is a struggle and a strife of chiefs!
V. 895 But since the cheek of day is darkling now,
And all the land is like a sea of blood,
Seek we a resting-place if night can rest.
Our slain perchance a bed of sand may have,
And coverlet of earth by way of grave."

§ 11

How the Íránians retreated to Mount Hamáwan

The Íránians drew back with heads abashed
And livers wounded for their friends, and when
The moon rose o'er the mountains as it were
A king triumphant on his turquoise throne,
Pírán the chieftain called his warriors,
And said: "Not many of the foe remain,
And, when the Topaz Sea shall dash its waves
Upon the Realm of Lapislazuli,
I will destroy those that survive and make
The Sháh's heart writhe."
The troops went off rejoicing,
And all the night before the tent-enclosure
Sat sleepless through the sounds of harp and rebeck;
But for their part the Íránians mourned, the sires
Lamented for their sons, the killed and wounded
Hid all the plain, earth ran with great men's blood.
To right and left the field was strewn with hands
And feet unsortable. All night men raised
Their stricken friends, bound up and stitched their wounds,
Left strangers to their fate, and burned the slain.
Full many of the kindred of Gúdarz
Were hurt or killed or captive. At the news
He wailed, earth shook beneath the Íránians' cries,
The chiefs all rent their raiment, he himself V. 896
Cast dust upon his head, exclaiming: "None
With hoary head hath seen such ills as mine!
Why must I still survive with my white hairs
Now that so many of my sons are laid
In dust? Since that dark day when I was born
I have not doffed my tunic. When I went
With heroes and my cavaliers to war

My grandsons and my sons supported me,
But none of them surviveth our first fight
Upon Túránian soil! May be my sun
Was once for all extinguished with Bahrám,
And hence I see so many chieftains slain."
Tús, hearing of Gúdarz, wept tears of blood,
And turned as pale as sandarach. He raised
A bitter Magian cry: "Had not Naudar,
That holy man," he said, "set in life's garth
My feet and roots then travail, pain, and grief,
Woe for the dead and anguish in the strife,
Had ne'er been mine, for since I girt my loins
My heart hath oft been pierced though I survive.
Now where there is a pit inter the slain,
Restore each trunk its head, and bear the baggage
Toward Mount Hamáwan. Take all the army,
The tents, and tent-enclosures to the mountain.
We will dispatch the Sháh a camel-post;
His heart will burn and he will send us troops.
I purposed when I sent the cavalier
To carry news of us before the battle,
That Kai Khusrau should send the son of Zál
To lead the reinforcements to the field."
He loaded up and, thinking of the slain
With anguish, called his men to horse again.

§ 12

How the Host of Túrán beleaguered Mount Hamáwan

V. 897 Now when the bright sun showed its crown, and strewed
The Ivory Throne with Camphor, Tús, good sooth!
What while the foe were sleeping with fatigue,
Had marched ten leagues, and fared thus day and night
With heart all sorrow and unbroken fast.
He reached Mount Hamáwan and ranked his troops

Upon its outskirts. Every eye was bloodshot,
Their hearts were seared, their souls like ravens' plumes
With anguish. Then spake Tús to Gív and said:—
"O full of wisdom and illustrious chief!
For three days we have marched with neither food
Nor sleep! Come eat a little and repose
At ease without thy mail; Pírán no doubt
Will follow us anon intent on fight.
Go to the mount thyself, and leave behind
The freshest of our soldiers with Bízhan."
Gív bare the wounded, weary of the world
And sick of life, up to the mountain-hold,
And chose the freshest of his troops for duty.
"This mountain-top," he said, "must be our home.
We must recruit."
The outpost-guards descended
To hold the approaches that no foe might pass,
And, what with challenges and sound of gongs,
Thou wouldst have said: "The stones and rocks cry out!"
Now when the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops
The Turkmans' hearts were full of eagerness.
A sound rose from Pírán's pavilion
As of an earthquake. He led forth the host V. 898
Like fire, and told Húmán: "The contest surely
Will soon be over. All their cavaliers
Are slain or, being wounded, cannot fight."
He beat the drums; a shout rose from the waste;
He led in person. When they reached the field
They only found a camp without an army,
And one who went to spy came to Pírán,
And said: "There is not an Íránian here!"
A shout of triumph rose, the troops awaited
The orders of Pírán who thus addressed
The wise men: "Sages famed and worshipful!
What shall we do now that our foes have fled?"

The horsemen of the host, both old and young,
Wroth with the paladin, exclaimed: "The Íránians
Have fled defeated, and the battlefield
Is full of dust and blood! This is no time
To fear them. We should follow up the foe.
Strange if thou partest with thy wits and wisdom
The fugitive from wind plunged into water,
And we had better hasten than delay."
Pírán replied: "In war the foot of haste
Is feebler than delay's. A sea-like host
Is gathering before Afrásiyáb;
Let us delay till that great power with all
Its warriors and fighting-men shall come;
Then will we leave none living in Írán:
Such is the counsel of the wise. Enough.
Húmán said to Pírán: "O paladin!
Vex not thy soul so much on this account.
V. 899 A host—all paladins and cavaliers,
Brave men who wield the lasso and the sword—
Have left their ground, their tents, and tent-enclosures,
Abandoned all and fled. Be sure of this,
That they were forced to flee and once for all
Show us their backs. We will not let them reach
Khusrau and muster at his court afresh;
Then from Zábulistán will Rustam march
Upon us, this delay cause fearful loss.
Now is the time for me to fall on them,
And put in practice ruse and artifice.
We have the certainty of laying hands
Upon Gúdarz and Tús the general,
The royal standard, elephants, and drums:
Shall we do better by delaying here?"
Pírán replied: "Be still thus shrewd and ardent.
So do because thy star and rede are good,
And heaven's vault is not so high as thou."
He set forth with his army in pursuit,

And bade Lahhák: "Now tarry not but ply
The rein with ten score cavaliers and loose not
The girdle from thy loins till thou hast seen
Where the Íránians are."
He went like wind,
And took no thought of rest and food. At midnight
The Íránian outpost-guards caught sight of him
Upon the dusky plain, and from the mountain
Rose shout and sound of gong. 'Twas not the time,
He saw, to tarry, went back to Pírán,
And gave him tidings of the Íránian host:—
"'Tis on Mount Hamáwan with front well guarded."
Pírán said to Húmán: "Ply rein and stirrup
In haste, take with thee cavaliers enough, V. 900
Take nobles, warriors, and men of name,
For with their flag and troops the Íránians
Have taken refuge on Mount Hamáwan.
This war involveth further toil, so sharpen
Thy wits to find a remedy; if thou
Canst capture Káwa's legacy—his standard—
Then daylight will be darkened to our foes.
If thou prevailest cleave the flag and staff
To pieces with thy trenchant scimitar.
Lo, I will follow after thee like wind,
And dally not."
Húmán chose thirty thousand
Túránian horse with shields and scimitars.
Now, when the shining sun displayed the face
That filleth earth with love, that army's dust
Appeared afar and from the look-out rose
The watchman's shout: "An army from Túrán
Appeareth! Upward to the darksome clouds
Its dust ascendeth!"
Tús, on hearing this,
Assumed his mail, rose din of trump and drum,
And all the Íránian chivalry in mass

Ranged on the mountain's foot. Whenas Húmán
Beheld that mighty army brandishing
Sword, mace, and spear, and raging like fierce lions
With Káwa's standard in their midst, he shouted
Thus to Gúdarz and Tús: "Ye left Írán
With elephants and drums to be avenged
Upon Túrán and to invade our coasts;
Now to the mountain have ye fled like game,
In utter rout and all fordone with fight!
Feel ye no shame hereat and no disgrace?
Are food and rest and sleep in rocks and stones?
To-morrow, when the sun shall top the hills,
Will I turn this thy stronghold to a sea.
V. 901 Will bring thee from this lofty mountain down,
Will make thy hands fast in the lasso's coils,
And send thee to Afrásiyáb, deprived
Of provand, rest, and sleep, and thou shalt know
That this thy shift is but a shiftless one,
And one to be deplored."

He sent Pírán
A camel-post full speed. "What sort of fight
Did we expect?" he said. "Our thoughts were other,
And we made ready to attack the foe,
But all the mount is troops and kettledrums,
The standards wave behind Gúdarz and Tús!
Take order that as soon as bright day shineth,
And when the world's Light showeth in the sky,
Thou mayst be here with troops in war-array,
And make the plain's face dark with hosts of men.'

The message roused Pírán; no time was lost;
That night he marched on with a sea-like host.

§ 13

How Pírán went in Pursuit of the Íránians to Mount Hamáwan

When Sol, aweary of its veil of gloom,
Had bursten through it and come forth, Pírán,
The leader, reached Mount Hamáwan, and earth
Was hidden by the dust of troops. "Abide,"
Thus said he to Húmán, "here where thou art;
Set not the troops in motion for a while.
I will hold parley with the Íránian leader,
And say: 'Why hast thou set up Káwa's standard?'
Who told him of Mount Hamáwan and now
When there what hopeth he?"
In hate and vengeance
He came anear the Íránian host and cried:—
"Illustrious Tús, the lord of elephant,
Of mace and kettledrum! five months have passed V. 902
Since thou provokedst war, and on the field
The noblest kinsmen of Gúdarz lie headless,
While thou hast fled, thy soldiers panting after,
And like a mountain-sheep hast taken refuge,
Full of revenge and rancour, in the heights!
But thou wilt surely come within the toils."
Exalted Tús replied: "I mock thy falsehoods.
Thou didst set wreak afoot among the mighty
Throughout the world for Siyáwush. Hast thou
No shame of thy vain words? Hot though they be
They will not bring me to those toils of thine.
Ne'er may the world possess a paladin
Like thee among the men of might and name.
Thou by an oath didst ruin Siyáwush,
And wreck earth with his blood, thou madest him
Stay in Túrán; now war and vengeance stay
In earth through him. Alas! for that great prince

And noble man whose face once gladdened all!
Thou by this practice, such deceit and lies,
Wilt gain no lustre in a true man's sight.
We could not forage on the battlefield,
And therefore have I marched to Hamáwan.
News now hath reached the monarch of the world,
Who with his mighty men will come anon.
The great men of the host have gathered—Zál
And Rustam of the elephantine form;
And when the Sháh is fairly on the march
I will not leave Túrán field, fell, or crop.
Since thou art here behold a task for men:
This is no time for ruse and ambuscade."
Pírán on that sent forward troops to seize
V. 903 The approaches, and the army mountain-like
Moved, troop on troop, upon that mountain-skirt.
Pírán, when thus the foemen's foraging
Was straitened, laid his plans.
"We," said Húmán,
"Must get possession of the mountain's foot,
And I will deal so that the Íránians
Shall never gird themselves for vengeance more."
Pírán replied: "The wind is in our face,
And none would think of fighting with it so;
But as they have not room for foraging,
And nobody would guard a barren rock,
They will no longer heed their general;
With warlike eyes grown dim the troops will come
To seek not fight but quarter; 'tis a day
For grace and not for setting in array."

§ 14

How the Íránians made a Night-attack

Gúdarz and Tús suspected this; the chiefs
Were in dismay. Said old Gúdarz to Tús:—
"We must fight now. If we have three days' provand
We have not more, and not one road is open!
We have no tents, no huts, no baggage-train,
And this great host will starve! So, when the sun
Is wan of face and night's dark veil is seen, V. 904
Choose we brave cavaliers, descend the heights,
And try our fortune in a night-attack,
To perish one by one, or else to gain
The hero's crown. Such is the end of battles!
One hath the dust, another rank and glory."
Tús hearkened to Gúdarz; his heart was full
Of pain and of the ancient feud. He bode
Till night appeared. The sun set; all was dark.
When one watch passed, and men had fallen silent,
Tús made him ready, called the men of action,
Gave one wing to Bízhan, one to Shídúsh
And bold Kharrád; the glorious flag he gave
To Gustaham with much advice and counsel,
Then, shouldering with Gív, Ruhhám, and others
The massive mace, made for Pírán and shocked
Like fire the Turkman centre. All the field
Grew like a sea of blood, a mighty shout
Rose from the host, the standard of Pírán
Was cloven, and his troops were panic-stricken.
Húmán, when he had heard that cry, bestrode
His Arab black, came up, saw many slain,
And many turning from the fight dismayed,
Wept tears of blood upon his breast, and shouted:—
"Was there no outpost here? Had ye no stomach
For fight? We are three hundred to their one;

It is ill sleeping on the field of battle!
V. 905 Ho! out with sword and mace, and up with shield
Of Chín. Now that the moon o'er yonder height
Is drawing forth its sword, cut off the foe
On every side and let none, combatant
Or laggard, 'scape."
Arose the clarions' blast,
The warriors pressed forward, and surrounded
The Iránian cavaliers like savage lions.
Sparks flashed from helm and sword: thou wouldst have said:—
"The sky is raining maces from the clouds!"
Night, scimitars, and dust concealed the stars
And shining moon. Thou'dst said: "The Íránians
Are walled by coats of mail and in a murk
As of a sea of pitch!" Then to his men
Húmán exclaimed: "Enough! slay not the chiefs;
Bring me them captive and not arrow-pierced."
They shouted back: "Their plight is hopeless now.
Lay on, lay on with mace and javelin,
And crown these chieftains' heads with crowns of blood."
Then Tús said to Ruhhám and Gív: "Good sooth!
Our lives are but a jest! Unless the Almighty
Shall save our souls and bodies from this scath
We are but poised upon an eagle's wings,
Or struggling in the waters of the deep!"
Like savage lions leaping from their lairs
They charged together, while the sound of drum
And pipe and clang of Indian bells and gongs
Rose from the foe, men could not see their reins,
The horses' crests, or spear-points at their eyes.
"Ye have no room," exclaimed Húmán, "for fight
V. 906 Or flight, and evil fortune drave you forth,
That ill might reach the guilty."
'Mid such strife
Abode that warrior-three with paltry powers!

Much thought they then of Rustam, everywhere
The prowest in the fray, and of Shídúsh,
Bízhan, and Gustaham, of great and small;
"Good sooth!" said they, "one of the Íránian host
Would help us here! We came not to a fight,
But madly to the maw of crocodiles!
Woe to the throne and portal of the Sháh,
For they will capture us anon! Great Rustam
And Zál are in Zábulistán! Írán
Will be destroyed!"
The din of mace and drum
Reached the Íránian host, and Gív and Tús
Returned not! Said Shídúsh and Gustaham,
The Lion: "Tús is long engaged!"
Guráza
Said to Bízhan: "Our leader's task is long!"
Anon the din of drums rose from the plain,
Air turned pitch-dark and earth to ebony.
The warriors made toward the voice of Tús.
The field ran blood. As they came up behind
All drew their massive maces. Tús, aware
That succour had arrived, roared tymbal-like, V. 907
Loosed rein, and pressed his stirrups, for he felt
His fortune rising, while Ruhhám and Gív,
Cheered by the voice of brave Bízhan, became
Like lions. Thus they fought till break of day,
Until the world's Light shone above the mountains,
Then they recalled the host and drew it off
Toward the rocky heights. The chieftain Tús
Harangued the troops: "From set of sun to drum-beat
Far from the noble be the evil eye,
And may our fighting end in festival.
I never heard of warriors displaying
Such gallantry as I have seen in you.
My first prayer is that Holy God will keep
Afar from us the eyes of evil ones.

He is my refuge evermore and He
Will take you out of this. I trust withal
In Him that presently and swift as smoke
An army may come up to our support.
Assuredly my speedy camel-post
Hath reached ere now the monarch of the world.
My letter will inflame his heart anew,
The elephantine chief will come to aid us,
And with a noble company of Lions.
We shall return in triumph, well content,
And eager to behold Khusrau again.
We will report to that triumphant world-king
All that hath passed in public and in private,
V. 908 And through his kindness and his satisfaction
Obtain, each one of us, the fruits of fortune."
Both hosts ceased fighting,[1] breathed themselves, and left
The battle drawn. On both sides scouts advanced
Upon that plain of valiant warriors.
Húmán came forth, saw corpses block the road,
And thus addressed Pírán: "Withdraw to-day;
The battle hath not answered our desires,
But when our warriors, approven horsemen,
And men have rested I will make a fight
Such as the sun and moon ne'er saw."
They went,
Their converse done, each on his schemes intent.

§ 15

How Kai Khusrau had Tidings of his Host

News reached Khusrau: "Pírán hath gained the day,
Tús hath retired upon Mount Hamáwan,
And many a chieftain of the host is missing.

[1] Reading with P.

The portal of the palace of Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, is void of men of war
And chiefs. The very stars are wailing them,
The rose no longer groweth in the garden,
The world through them is filled with dust and blood,
And Tús' high star hath fallen!"

Kai Khusrau,
The famous, heard, and his heart quaked. He bade
The elephantine Rustam come to court,
And with his host. The sages and the archmages,
Famed and experienced of Írán, all came;
Khusrau, the chief of chieftains, loosed his tongue, V. 909
Told how the host had fought, and said to Rustam:—
"Exalted one! our ancient state, I fear,
Is tottering, whereat my heart is full
Of dread. Thou fosterest the crown and throne,
World-ruling fortune hath its light from thee,
The heart of heaven is on thy sabre's point,
And under thee are sky and time and earth.
Thou didst dig out the White Dív's heart and brain;
The age's hopes are based upon thy love,
Earth is the servant of thy charger's dust,
And time to thee is like a loving mother.
The sun is set a-burning by thy sword,
And Venus weepeth at that mace of thine.
Thy plumed and pointed shafts make lions weary
Of fighting with thee on their day of bale.
Since thou hast been a man and worn a helm
No foe hath cast his eye upon Írán.
Now Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív and other chiefs,
With many of the warriors of this land,
Have with full hearts and eyes that flowed with tears
Fled from the soldiers of Afrásiyáb.
Full many of the kindred of Gúdarz
Fell on the day of fight and sleep in dust.
Those of the army that escaped with life

Are broken-hearted on Mount Hamáwan;
Their heads are lifted heavenward; they pray
The Almighty, who is Lord of time and place,
That elephantine Rustam may perchance
Come to them in God's strength at my command.
As I perused the letter in the night
I shed my heart's blood freely on my cheeks.
V. 910 I told the thing to no one for three days
Save only unto God the Succourer,
But now, because the matter hath surpassed
All bounds, my heart is full of care therefor.
Thou art the hope of host and general:
Mayst thou be sound in health and bright in mind;
May thy head flourish and thy heart rejoice,
Be thy pure person free from hurt of foe.
Ask me for plenty of whate'er thou wilt,
Of steeds, of arms, of treasure, and of troops.
Go with good counsels and a joyful heart:
So great a work must not be slackly done."
The hero answered: "May the signet-ring
And crown ne'er lack thee. Heaven remembereth not
A king like thee for Grace, for stature, justice,
And rede. Khusrau hath heard that ever since
Kubád assumed the imperial diadem
I have been girded in Íránian quarrels,
And have not sat at rest a single day.
Mine have been waste, gloom, lion, elephant,
Enchanters, lusty dragons, mighty men
Both of Túrán and of Mázandarán,
Dark nights, and massive maces, and withal
Long journeyings and thirsts, for I preferred
The door of travail to the stead of ease.
So many toils and hardships have I seen
That I have never asked a day of pleasure.
Thou art the world's king, and a slave am I
Girt to perform thy hests. Let not the Sháh

Grieve for the slain, but let thy foes look wan.
With belted waist will I draw near to Tús, V. 911
And gird me to avenge the Íránians,
For liver-wounded have I been and girt
With mourning for the scions of Gúdarz."
When Kai Khusrau heard Rustam's words he wept,
And said: "Without thee I desire not life,
Or majesty or crown or royal throne.
Now be the welkin in thy lasso's noose,
And crowned heads in thy bonds."
The treasurer
Unlocked the royal hoard of jewels, crowns,
Dínárs, helms, lassos, bows, and belts, oped too
The sacks of drachms. The Sháh gave all to Rustam,
Thus saying: "O illustrious warrior!
Go with the mace-men of Zábulistán,
And mighty men and warriors of Kábul,
Swift as the blast, not tarrying thyself
Or bidding others tarry. From the host
Choose thirty thousand swordsmen dight for war,
And give to Faríburz son of Káús
Some troops to go on first and seek revenge."
The peerless Rustam kissed the ground and said:—
"The bridle and the stirrups are my mates.
We will urge on the chiefs; far be repose
And idleness from us."
He paid the troops,
Went forth upon the plain, prepared for war,
And said to Faríburz: "Lead forth at dawn,
Conduct the van, and sleep not day or night
Until thou come to Tús the general.
Say to him: 'Risk not fight, use guile, gain time,
And be not rash. Lo! like a blast I come,
Not dallying upon the road. Gurgín,
Son of Mílád, approved in war, will know V. 912
What to advise thy host in weal and woe.'"

§ 16

How Faríburz asked to Wife Farangís, the Mother of Kai Khusrau

"O warrior, distributor of crowns,
Lord of the breastplate, battle-ax, and Rakhsh!"
Said Faríburz, "I have a secret wish
That I can tell to no one in the world
Except to thee, O paladin of earth,
Who well deservest ring and crown and signet,
And art the stay and refuge of the host!
In thee the warriors exalt their helms.
Know great one of Írán! and may God bless thee,
That I and noble Siyáwush were brothers,
And one in blood. 'Tis fit that I should take
His widow as my wife, exalted chief!
Urge this upon the Sháh, and thou wilt set
A crown upon my head."

Then Rustam answered:—

"'Tis thine to bid. I will achieve thy wish."

The elephantine chief went in and said:—

"O famed Khusrau! I have a thing to ask
That will exalt my head above the moon,
And I will ask it with the monarch's leave,
For God approveth. Love and justice reach
All men through thee, twin-visaged like the sky.
Now Faríburz among the chiefs and princes
V. 913 Hath not a peer; withal for rede and prowess
I do not see his match, and he desireth
This of the Sháh—the place of Siyáwush,
So that, when he is marching to avenge
His brother's blood, the guardian of his house
And wealth, the confidant in all his cares,
May be the daughter of Afrásiyáb,
None else, they twain to be as sun and moon."

Khusrau on hearing gave consent and said :—
"O famous man! the feet of fortune trample
All that reject thy counsel. Naught but good
Will come from words of thine. Live ever glorious!
I cannot urge this, as thou know'st. Such speech
To her would be misplaced, but I will give
My mother, if she will consent to listen,
The counsels most conformable with wisdom."
They went together to the moonlike dame—
The peerless Rustam and benignant Sháh,
Who said to her: "Thou memory of my sire,
In good and ill my refuge! I may govern,
But thou art Sháh to me. Thou know'st the toil
And travail of the army in this war,
How many of our mighty men have perished
In battle with Túrán! I mean to send
A host with Rustam son of Zál as chief,
While Faríburz will lead the van, and Rustam
Himself be champion. He would have thee be
The wife of Faríburz. What is thy pleasure V. 914
Therein? Be greatness and all good thy mates."
On hearing this she thought about old times,
Distressed and vexed at heart; at length in tears
She said: "I blame not Rustam; if I did
It would be misplaced now, for only heaven
Can say him nay when he requesteth aught."
Then Rustam said to her: "O dame of dames,
Extolled for spotless worth! Oh! may thy foes
All perish! Thou, may be, wilt hear my counsel.
Thou knowest that a woman cannot rest
Without a spouse, the young without the young,
And best of all a mate of Kaian race,
For man is for the woman's sake, and she
Is far more eager than her spouse for her.
Victorious Faríburz son of Káús,
Fit for the crown, the lustre of the throne,

The brother and the peer of Siyáwush,
Is ruler of the more part of Írán;
The peopled land and desert both are his.
By leave, advice, and order of the Sháh
Do I approve thee as the prince's spouse.
What sayest thou? Is he approved by thee?
Doth Faríburz appear a fitting mate?
Thou wilt do well to hearken to my words:
Heed what I tell thee and the Sháh's advice."
The Sháh of ladies held her peace awhile
In grief, ashamed to speak before her son,
Then sighing deeply answered Rustam thus:—
"O full of prowess, leader of the folk!
V. 915 Although there is none like him in Írán
He cannot take the place of Siyáwush;
Yet is my tongue, as thou mayst say, in fetters
By reason of thy words, O paladin!
What doth the famous monarch now command?
I must be girded to perform his will."
Thus, blushing like the roses in the spring,
The monarch's mother gave consent. The matter,
Since Rustam was so instant, was soon sped:
They called the archmages and drew up the contract.
Then Faríburz became Sháh's sire-in-law,
And being franked by Kai Khusrau and Rustam
Increased his quality and dignity,
And gained a robe of honour and new crown.[1]
Three days prepared, the fourth achieved, the business,
Then Rustam with his gallant warriors
Fared toward the plain, while Faríburz with troops
Went in advance, resplendent as a star
In heaven. Arose the din of clarions,

[1] "C'est ainsi que Feribourz devint, par l'ordre de Keï Khosrou, beau-pere *du roi*, et Rustem fut alors libre *de partir*. *Khosrou* combla d'honneurs le Pehlevan, et lui donna, un rang plus élevé, une robe d'honneur et une nouvelle couronne" (Mohl).

And matchless Rustam led his army forth.
The Sháh, the world-lord, with his mind all care,
Fared with him for two leagues, while Rustam turned
Two stages into one upon his way,
And rested not at all by night or day.

§ 17

How Tús saw Siyáwush in a Dream

One night, about the hour of drum-beat, Tús, V. 916
Heart-seared and full of trouble, slept and dreamed
That from the deep a radiant lustre rose
About an ivory throne, and Siyáwush
Thereon with Grace and crown, with smiling lips
And tongue fair-spoken, turned a sun-like face
Upon him. "Stay the Íránians here," he said,
"For thou shalt conquer in the fight. Lament not
The kindred of Gúdarz, for there is here
A rosary all new, and we will quaff,
How long we wot not, underneath its blooms."
With joyful heart released from pain and grief
Tús woke. Then to Gúdarz: "World-paladin!
I have beheld a vision in my sleep!
Take note that Rustam like a rushing wind
Will come anon!"
He bade the pipes to sound,
The troops upon the mountain left their posts,
The warriors of Írán girt up their loins,
And set up Káwa's standard, while Pírán
Upon the other side led forth his powers;
The dust-clouds dimmed the sun; its eye was dazed
By warriors' shouts and by the rain of arrows.
The two hosts met, but not a champion showed
Before the lines. Húmán said to Pírán:—
"We must attack. Why hesitate? The troops

Are not out hunting. Man and beast bear weight."
Pírán said: "Peace! 'Tis not the time for haste
Or argument. Yestreen from yonder lines,
And unawares, three with a paltry force
Assailed us, hungry lions they, we sheep
Whom cold is driving from the mountain-tops.
V. 917 I found the whole plain like a stream of blood,
And famous heads laid low. The Íránians hold
A barren rock, their chargers sniff at thorns
Like musk. Wait till they burn upon the crags,
And die resourceless. Leave no way to pass,
Side, front, or rear-ward. Since without your fighting
The foe will come to hand, why change delay
For haste? Why should we fight? Ten horse will serve
As scouts upon the plain. Wait we until
Our foes lack food and drink, and ask for quarter.
Unless they can subsist on thorns and flints
When provand faileth they will take to them
And die."
They left the field, went to their tents,
And scouts were posted while the warriors loosed
Their belts and turned to sleep and banqueting.
The chieftain Tús went also to his camp,
With full heart and with cheeks of ebony,
And thus addressed Gúdarz: "Affairs grow dark;
The fortunes of the Íránians are distraught.
Troops compass us, our beasts' feed is all thorny,
And food is not o'er-plenteous with the host!
Unsheathe at dawn. Rank on the mountain-skirts.
If our good star prove helpful it will give us
Our will upon our foes, while if the Judge
Of heaven shall end us with the scimitar,
No more or less can hap than His decree,
So measure not your breaths in your dismay.
Death too with high renown is goodlier

Than life with fear and overthrow."
They closed V. 918
With what their fortune-favoured chief proposed.

§ 18

How Afrásiyáb sent the Khán and Kámús to help Pírán

When from the sign of Cancer Sol reached out,
And rent the musk-hued Veil, a messenger
Came from the monarch to Pírán and said :—
"Troops throng from every side—a host whose dust
Would make a desert of the sea of Chín
Upon the battle-day. A chief is there
From Má wara 'u'n-Nahr; his head is raised
O'er circling heaven; a hundred lions' strength
Is his; he quelleth mighty elephants!
In height a cypress and in looks a moon,
A potentate whose toys are crowns and thrones,
Kámús, this chief of chiefs, will have his will
Upon Gúdarz and Tús. The troops comprise
All those that dwell 'twixt Sipanjáb and Rúm.
I reckon first the Khán of Chín, whose crown
Is heaven, his throne the earth, next brave Manshúr,
Whose falchion layeth warriors' heads in dust,
And next Kámús, the swordsman of Kashán,
Whose eyes ne'er saw defeat. His works all prosper;
When he is wroth he bringeth blast and snow."
Pírán harangued the army of Turán,
And said: "Ye chiefs and warriors of the king!
Rejoice ye, young and old! at this good news,
Sent by the king, and be ye bright of soul;
Now must we wash the trouble from our hearts
I will not leave Írán field, fell, or crop.
The pains and troubles of the king are over
In seeking vengeance and arraying troops,

V. 919 And ye shall see Afrásiyáb supreme
By land and sea, at home and in Írán."
From those approaching powers fresh messengers
Kept coming to the captain of the host
With joyful news: "O famous paladin!
Live glad and bright of soul for evermore.
Be thy heart joyful to behold these kings,
And may thy soul cease troubling. From Kashmír
All, till thou comest to the river Shahd,
Is elephants and litters, flags and troops,
While from Sakláb Kundur the lion-man
Is coming with that warring Heaven Bíward
Of Kát, with Garcha from Sagsár, Shangul
From Hind. Flags fill the air and swords the earth.
Chaghán hath sent Fartús, the Light of hosts,
Gahán hath sent Gahár, who scorcheth heroes,
With Shamírán of Shakn, first of the age,
Who scattereth poison with his spear and sword.
Now lift thy head and take thy pleasure here,
For this glad news would make an old man young."
Pírán laughed out with all his heart and soul,
Thou wouldst have said: "He that was dead reviveth!"
Thus spake he to Húmán: "I will go forth
To meet them. They have had a longsome march,
Equipped for fight and full of care. They hold
Their heads as high as doth Afrásiyáb,
For they have treasure, lustre, throne, and state.
I will go forth and see what men they are,
How many, with what chiefs and warriors,
Will do obeisance to the Khán of Chín,
And kiss the ground before his throne withal:
I will behold Kámús, the exalted one,
And find Tús an opponent in Shangul.
Returning hither I will gird myself
To rob the Íránians of the breath of life,
And, if they cannot hold their own, will make

Day dark and strait to them. I will secure
With heavy bonds about their feet and necks V. 920
Those that survive among the Íránian chiefs,
And then dispatch them to Afrásiyáb,
Not taking rest or sleep till it be done,
Behead the common soldiers that I capture,
Burn them, commit their ashes to the winds,
And take no thought about the place again.
Then will I part our army into three,
And darken the Íránian monarch's day.
I will dispatch one army unto Balkh,
And make day bitter to the Íránians,
Another to Kábulistán and bring
Kábul the ashes of Zábulistán,
And lead the third compact of mighty Turkmans
And Lions 'gainst Írán. I will spare none,
Not women, little children, young or old,
But overthrow Írán, both field and fell.
May not a hand or foot be left to them!
But till I order matters seek not fight."
Thus spake Pírán and went with wreakful heart;
Thou wouldst have said: "His very skin hath burst."
Húmán said to the troops: "Away with care!
For two days let us labour but to keep
Watch on Mount Hamáwan, for fear our foes
Steal off by night just when our flags will fill
Completely road, plain, valley, stream, and hill."

§ 19

How the Khán of Chín came to Hamáwan

Pírán on reaching his allies beheld
The plains and valleys full of horses' hoofs.
The tents and tent-enclosures filled the world
With red and yellow, blue and violet.

Amidmost each enclosure was a standard
Wrought of brocade of Chín and painted silk.
V. 921 He stood amazed and asked himself in wonder:—
"Is this a paradise, or banquet-hall,
The starry heaven, or orbit of the moon?"
He came afoot and kissed the ground before
The Khán, who, seeing him, embraced him, marvelled
At such a chest and neck, much greeted him,
Made much of him, set him upon the throne,
And said: "Oh! well is me that I should sit
In such good spirits by the paladin!"
He then asked: "Of the army of Írán
Who hath the signet, and who hath the crown?
What troops have they? Who are their warriors,
And wherefore sit they on the mountain-top?"
Pírán replied: "O monarch! live for ever,
And may the Maker bless thee who hast joyed
Thy slave's heart with thy questions. Through thy fortune
I am both well and happy, and my soul
Desireth but the dust upon thy feet.
The king inquireth of the Íránians:
They have no signet, diadem, or throne,
And, having longed for war beyond all measure,
Are left with only rocks to gaze upon;
For foiled, dishonoured, and reduced in strength,
They went in full flight to Mount Hamáwan.
Their general is Tús, a man of valour,
Who feareth not a lion in the field.
Their chieftains are Gúdarz son of Kishwád,
Gív, and Ruhhám—all men of noble birth.
Now by the fortune of the illustrious Khán
This is the last host that their chief shall see.
They come not on the plain at battle-time,
And save the flinty rocks have naught to hand."
The Khán said: "Stay, and bring thy comrades too.

Content of heart to-day will we quaff wine, V. 922
And not anticipate."
He decked the tents
Like gardens in the spring: "'Tis Paradise,"
Thou wouldst have said, "for colour and device."

§ 20

How the Íránians took Counsel how to act

Now when Sol mounted to the vault of heaven
The hearts of Tús and of Gúdarz grew troubled:—
"Why are the Turkmans still to-day? Are they
At counsel or bemused? But be they sad
Or glad I look for ill! Know that if aid
Hath come to them ill-hap hath come to us!
Consider all the Íránian troops as slain
Or, if still living, fleeing from the fight.
If Rustam cometh not upon the field
Disaster will befall us from yon host,
And we shall have no sepulture, no grave,
But horses' hoofs will trample on our heads!"
Gív said to Tús: "O general of the Sháh
What aileth thee to think upon mishap?
We need not look for ill; God is thy Helper;
We are His worshippers, and have broadcast
Much seed of good. Such fortune hath the Sháh,
The lord of scimitar and throne and crown,
That God will not withdraw His help from us,
And leave our enemies to work their will.
With Rustam's coming all our soldiers' cares
Will end. Let no man cease to trust in God
Though day should turn to night. Let not thy heart
Be straitened needlessly because our foes
Forbear to fight one day: they have not shut
Heaven's door on us. Fear not the foe's designs.

V. 923 If God most high ordaineth loss for us
Quit vain imaginings for come it will.
Let us construct a trench before the host,
As warriors use, then draw the sword, provoke
A fight and slay our foes; we shall no doubt
Perceive their aims and lay their secret bare.
News from Írán will come and there will be
Light on the boughs of our tall Cypress-tree."

§ 21

How Gúdarz had Tidings of the Coming of Rustam

Gúdarz departed from the host and clomb
The mountain-summit. From the look-out came
A grievous cry: "The Íránian warriors
Are ruined now! As yon bright sun declined
The whole world eastward grew as dark as night
With dust, which standard-bearing elephants
Sent up, and through that dust the shining sun
Was lustreless!"
Gúdarz heard that and cried:—
"Dark earth is my sole hiding-place!"
His cheeks
Became as pitch, and like one arrow-pierced
He cried: "My share is ever strife and battle,
My lot ill-hap and bane for antidote.
I had a host of sons and grandsons, men
Reputed in the land, but all were slain
For Siyáwush, and all my luck hath gone!
V. 924 I hope no more from life, my day is dark!
Would that my mother had not brought me forth,
High heaven ne'er turned o'er me!"
To the watch
He said: "Long-sighted man and bright of mind!
Look forth upon the hosts and see who cometh.

Where is the banner of the Íránian chief?
Look to our left and right."
The watchman answered:—
"I see no movement and reconnaissance
On our side, but on theirs all is astir;
Of us thou wouldest say: 'They are asleep.'"
Thereat the paladin shed bitter tears,
And cried in sorrow: "Saddle me my steed,
And for the future make my bed of brick!
I go to fill mine eyes and arms once more,
Embrace Shídúsh, Bízhan, Ruhhám, and Gív,
Those brave, impetuous cavaliers, kiss each
Farewell upon the cheek and shower tears."
His gallant bay was saddled when there came
The watchman's shout: "Rejoice, world-paladin!
And banish care, for on the road that leadeth
Toward Írán a black, day-darkening dust
Ariseth; many standards like the moon
Are lifted from the centre of a host;
The first one hath a wolf, a moon the next,
The third a dragon with a lion's head
In gold upon the staff!"
"Then live for ever,
And may the evil eye be far from thee!"
Gúdarz exclaimed. "When what thou utterest
To such good purpose shall be brought to pass
I will bestow on thee such varied treasures V. 925
That thou shalt have no need to toil henceforth.
Hereafter, when we go back to Írán,
Some day, and to the monarch of the brave,
I will forthwith present thee at his throne,
And lift thy head above the nobles there.
Now prithee leave thy look-out-post, approach
Our generals, and tell what thou hast seen;
Be quick; use whom thou wilt upon the road."
"I may not leave the look-out for the host,"

The watchman said, "but when 'tis grown so dark
That I can see no longer I will carry,
Like the Símurgh, the tidings to the troops
Down from my station here."
The paladin
Rejoined: "Be shrewd of heart and bright of soul.
Look forth from this high mountain yet again,
And see how soon they will be here."
He answered:—
"Yon host will reach Mount Hamáwan to-morrow
At dawn."
The paladin conceived such joy
As would have brought a corpse to life.
Pírán,
For his part, swift as flying dust-clouds led
Those reinforcements[1] to the battlefield.
A horseman went on first to tell at large
The joyful news which when Húmán had heard
He laughed and said: "Now surely sleepless fortune
Is with us."
From the field a shout of joy
Rose cloud-ward from the army of Túrán.
The Íránian nobles full of care and pain,
With faces sallow and with livid lips,
Dispersed themselves upon the mountain-side
To give their last instructions. Everywhere
Groups gathered and bewailed themselves, and said:—
"Woe for these warriors of royal race,
Who are forgotten by the Íránians,
V. 926 For now the lions' maws will be their tombs,
And earth be saturate with heroes' blood!"
The chief bespake Bízhan: "Arise, explore
This secret, scale the mountain-top and mark
The character and number of this host.
See by what road they are approaching us,

[1] See §§ 18 and 19.

What camp-enclosures and what thrones they have."
Bízhan the son of Gív then went apart,
And climbed the mountain's solitary peak,
Saw flags and horsemen, elephants and troops
On all sides, ran back to the general,
With heart all pain and soul all care, and said :—
"Earth's surface hath become like indigo,
So many are the troops and elephants!
The flags and spears pass count, the sun is dim
In heaven with dust, the troops are countless, boundless,
The ear is deafened by their kettledrums!"
Tús listened, sad at heart and face all tears,
Then called to him the captains, sorely grieved
About his men, and said: "Time showeth me
Naught but the woes of war. I have experienced
Full many a rise and fall, but never fear
Like this. We have but one resource: although
Our arms and troops are few we will get ready,
Attack to-night, and make earth a Jíhún
With blood. If we shall perish in the fray
There will be generals while there are kings:
Men shall not say: 'He died ingloriously,'
Although they have to lay me in the dust."
The leaders present all agreed thereto.
Now when the face of earth became like pitch,
When Venus, Mars, and Mercury were hidden,
And when the moon rose from the Sign of Pisces, V. 927
And to the navel rent the robe of night,
The watchman with a face like sandarach
Ran in to Tús and said: "O General!
The Sháh hath sent an army from Írán!"
The leader Tús laughed with the other chiefs,
And said: "O men of name and warriors!
We need not now seek fight since aid hath come,
We have our times for haste and for delay.
The elephantine hero by God's strength

Will come to our assistance with this host;
Then on the Turkmans will we satisfy
Our lust, and our renown shall reach the sun."
They thought no more about a night-attack;
The troops and leader joyed; the watchman made
Their spirits bright again, and young and old
Told those glad tidings. Tús sent forth his scouts,
Shouts and the clang of bells rose from the mount,
And all the folk, grown happy and soul-bright,
Talked of the chief of paladins all night.

§ 22

How the Khán of Chín went to reconnoitre the Army of Írán

Whenas the sun arrayed its host in heaven,
And black night disappeared, the Khán of Chín
Assembled the Túránian chiefs and warriors,
And thus addressed Pírán: "We will not fight
To-day, and we do need a day's repose,
But, while our proud chiefs and man-slaying horsemen
Rest from the travail of the tedious road,
And from their hurried march o'er hill and dale,
V. 928 I will survey the Íránians—how they fare
Upon the field."
Pírán replied: "The Khán
Is a wise king and worshipful, so let him
Do what he will to-day for he is leader."
There rose a clamour from the camp-enclosure
With sounds of kettledrum and clarion.
They mounted seats upon five elephants,
Housed with brocade of Chín of turquoise hue,
And broidered with gold thread. The seats themselves
Were gemmed with emeralds, the fittings golden,
The saddle-flaps were made of leopard-skin,

And golden were bells, gongs, and rattle-boxes.
The drivers' heads were decked with crowns, and all
Wore torques and ear-rings. With so many flags
Of painted silk the air was yellow, red,
And violet like some bázár in Chín.
The troops marched to the field as if to keep
A feast, the earth was beauteous as the eye
Of chanticleer with trappings, colours, drums,
And pipes. The kings set forth, the air was filled
With blare of clarions, the spearpoints gleamed,
The plain was black with troops. Tús from afar
Saw them and ranged in line what men he had,
The warriors of Írán girt up their loins,
And Gív brought Káwa's standard. From the plain
Of battle to the summit of the mount
The army of Írán stood troop on troop.

Now when Kámús went forward with Manshúr,
Bíward, Shangul the prescient, and the Khán
To view Mount Hamáwan, they never thought
To face a foe, but when the Khán afar
Looked forth and heard the Íránian horsemen's war-cry
It pleased him and he said: "Behold a host
Of men-o'erthrowing, warlike cavaliers!
Pírán the chieftain told us otherwise, V. 929
But brave men's qualities should not be hidden.
The chieftain masketh the pit's mouth with brambles,
And thither will his horse speed at the chase.
What better is it vainly to besmirch
The foemen's prowess on the day of fight?
I have not looked on cavaliers and chiefs
So stamped with chivalry and manliness."

"Men reck not of so few," Pírán replied,
"Upon a field like this."

"But," said the Khán,
"What shall we do?"

Pírán said: "Thou hast fared

Far over hill and dale. Let us remain
Three days to rest the troops. I will divide
The host; the day of fight and fear is over.
Half of our warlike, glorious cavaliers
Shall fall upon the foe from dawn till noon
With double-pointed dart, sword, bow, and mace;
And then till night ariseth from the hills
The other half shall strive. At dark will I
Bring up the rested troops and press the foe;
We will not let them have a moment's peace—
We and our eager cavaliers in arms."

Kámús replied: "Not good! No such delay
For me! With all these men and such strife toward
Why seek so long a respite? Let us both
Attack and straiten dale and height for them.
Hence we will march upon Írán, will leave not
Throne, crown, or diadem, lay waste all fields
And fells, and act as warriors and Lions.
No women, little children, old or young,
No Sháh, or man of rank or paladin
V. 930 Will I leave in Írán, no field or fell,
No hall or palace or four-footed beast.
Why should we pass so many evil days
To get but care and grief and needless pain?
But ope not to our foes a door to-night
To get away. As soon as morning breatheth
The troops must move. I with the king of Hind
Will bear my flag up yonder height. To-morrow
Thou shalt behold a heap of corpses there
To make the Íránians weep that look thereon."

The Khán said to Pírán: "There is no course
Save this: he is a peerless general."

The nobles all agreed to what Kámús,
The conqueror of Lions, had proposed.
The conference being o'er they went their way,
And passed all night in ordering their array.

§ 23

How Faríburz reached Mount Hamáwan

Whenas the sun had pitched a camp-enclosure
Of gold brocade upon the azure realm
A loud cry from the look-out reached Gúdarz:—
"O captain of the host! the troops have come!
They are at hand! Their dust hath dimmed the day!"
Gúdarz sprang up, had his swift charger brought,
And rode toward that dark dust with anxious heart.
He came. When near to them he spied the flag
Of Faríburz the chief, who led the van, V. 931
The well approven and the new Sháh's kinsman.[1]
Then old Gúdarz alighted as withal[2]
Did Faríburz the wise, the army's Lustre.
The twain embraced. Gúdarz wept tears of blood
Upon his breast. "Old chief," said Faríburz,
"Still forced to fight! revenge for Siyáwush
Hath cost thee dear! Alas! those cavaliers
Gúdarzian! May much good news of them
Still reach thee, may the fortune of the foe
Be over-turned! Praise to the Lord of sun
And moon that I have seen thee safe and sound."
Gúdarz wept blood for those that slept in dust.
"Observe," he made reply, "how evil fortune
Is ever bringing evil on my head!
No son or grandson hath survived this strife,
No soldiers, flags, and kettledrums are left!
But I dismiss all thought of conflicts past;
Now is the time for fighting and emprise.
The troops on plain and dale have made earth like
A raven's wing, so many are they, and all
The host of Tús is as the one black hair

[1] With a slight change of reading.
[2] Reading with P.

Upon a white bull by comparison!
The wastes and settlements of Chín, Sakláb,
Of Rúm and Hind, can have no creature left!
All must have girt themselves to fight with us!
But till thou tellest me where Rustam is
My back will not be straightened from its griefs."
"He is behind me," Faríburz replied,
"Intent on war. All through the night till dawn
He marcheth with all speed. Now where shall I
Encamp and whither lead this little band?"
Gúdarz made answer: "What did Rustam say?
His words should be reported."
V. 932 Faríburz
Replied: "Illustrious one! the peerless Rustam
Bade us not fight. 'Stay on the field,' he said.
'Ye must not show yourselves before the host,
But take your ease until my flag appeareth.'"
Then Faríburz, Gúdarz in company,
Marched toward Mount Hamáwan right speedily.

§ 24

How Pírán took Counsel with the Khán of Chín

When from his look-out the Túránian watch
Espied these troops he went back to the host.
"Gird all your loins for fight," he told Pírán,
"For from Írán an army hath arrived,
Advancing o'er the plain!"
The general
Went to the Khán of Chín, and said: "An army
Is coming from Írán, how great I know not,
Or who the leader is. What shall we do?"
Kámús said: "Keep thyself to thine own force.
Thou hast the warriors of Afrásiyáb—
An army like the waters of the sea—

Yet what hast thou accomplished in five months
Against a foe so small? Now that the earth
Is full of troops led by the Khán, Manshúr,
And me, let us display our prowess; thou
Hast locked the door but we will bring the key.
Although the world's face be as silk of Chín
With soldiers from Kábul, Zábul, and Hind,
Yet, should I fight alone, the Íránians
Were nothing. Thou wilt say of them: 'They are not.'
Thou wouldest scare me with illustrious Rustam;
Him will I slaughter first; if once I catch him
His name shall not be talked of any more.
Thou art oppressed and fearful of this host
Approaching from Sístán, but once behold V. 933
My hand in battle, when the dust-cloud riseth
Upon the plain, and thou wilt recognise
A hero in the world, what brave men are,
And what fight is."
Pírán said: "Live for ever!
May evil's hand be always far from thee.
Enough! may what thou sayest be fulfilled,
And no one prove thine equal."
Said the Khán:—
"Thou hast allowed Kámús to lead the attack;
He will perform his word, for he hath Mountains
As his allies and Elephants for mates.
Daunt not the troops, for these Íránians
Are no great matter, and I will not leave
One noble in Írán, but send up dust
From hill and vale; as for the men of worship,
I will dispatch them to Afrásiyáb
In heavy fetters and behead the rest.
We will not leave Írán a leaf, a tree,
A Sháh, a palace or a crown or throne."
Pírán with smiles did reverence to the chiefs,

And to the Khán of Chín, then went rejoicing
Back to the camp, where all the nobles sought him,
Such as Húmán, Lahhák, and Farshídward—
Great men and Lions on the day of battle.
"A host," they said, "arriveth from Írán,
Led by a sable flag; a noted scout
Went forth to spy and is but now returned.
They say 'tis Faríburz son of Káús,
A noble, loyal soldier."

Said Pírán:—

"Let us dismiss our cares. In Rustam's absence
We need not be afraid of Faríburz;
His breath is no cure for a bane like this.
But though according to Kámús indeed
The elephantine Rustam is no man
V. 934 In war, God grant he come not though Kámús
Be such a Crocodile!"

Húmán replied:—

"Why dost thou keep thy spirit dark with care?
This is not he, or army from Sístán:
Here are the blood and dust of Faríburz."

Pírán said: "I have given up the throne
And state in dudgeon with the sun and moon,
For when I heard that from Írán a host
Marched, and was coming to this battlefield,
My brain went, anguish filled my soul and head,
And from my heart I drew a chilly sigh."

Kulbád said: "Why this grief? What need is there
To weep because of Rustam or of Tús?
With all our soldiers, maces, elephants,
And scimitars we block the wind itself.
Why fear then Rustam, Tús, and Kai Khusrau?
What are the Íránians but as dust to us?
They were dispersed in flight from yonder field,
And straggled to their tents."

Anon Tús heard:—

"The land is full of beat of kettledrum,
And elephantine Rustam hath arrived
With Faríburz and soldiers from Írán."
He bade bring forth the drums, Mount Hamáwan,
Wherefrom shouts rose, grew ebon with dark dust,
And earth shook underneath the trampling steeds.
Then Tús harangued the troops, he spake at large
About Mázandarán, what Rustam did
In battle with the dívs, and how he triumphed.
The soldiers called down blessings on their chief,
They said: "Be ware of heart and bright of mind.
We may pour out our souls at this good news,
Which easeth them. When peerless Rustam cometh
Yon host will not withstand the Crocodile.
Then will we battle on this mount forthwith
To cast this shame off from the Íránians.
The standard of the illustrious Khán, the crown,
The golden shields, and throne of ivory,
His elephant-attendants' crowns of gold, V. 935
Their golden girdles and their golden torques,
Their golden cymbals and their golden bells,
Unmatched on earth, his jewelled parasol
Of peacocks' tails, these will we seize, and more,
When we are fighting with our lives at stake."
Tús said: "We are exposed to fear and blame;
Our foes surround the mount, our nobles' heads
Are snared. When Rustam cometh he will speak
Upbraidingly, not asking what hath chanced,
And say: 'Thou wast a bird caught in a net;
The cause was sodden but the fight was raw.
As with the general so with the host
I have not seen one eager for the fray!'
So let us charge like lions, and the foe
May yet be shifted on this side the mount."
The troops replied to him: "Soar not so high.
Refrain from words like these, let none advance

Till Rustam hath surveyed the scene of strife.
We will make prayer to God, the Guide to good.
By His command, Who holdeth sun and moon,
The matchless Rustam will approach this field.
Why have disaster for thy star? Bestow
Dínárs and drachms upon the poor."
The troops
Raised shouts of joy upon the mountain-top
As merrily they sought their place of rest,
Each man to spend the night as seemed him best.

§ 25

How Gív and Tús fought with Kámús

When Sol laid hand on Taurus, and the larks
Began to carol o'er the plain, a shout
V. 936 Ascended from the encampment of Kámús,
That man-o'erthrowing chief who led the van.
He massed his troops and gave out mail; his heart
Was full of fight, his head of vapouring.
He changed his robe for armour, donned a helm
Instead of crown, a breastplate for a tunic,
And chose troops panoplied in steel and iron.
The armies' dust began to show itself,
Men could not see their way for scimitars
And coats of mail. Then from the Íránian look-out
A shout rose: "On our side a host hath come;
The standard of the elephantine chief
Is visible behind it. On the other[1]
Túránian troops have clouded all the air.
Their leader is a horseman like a rock,
And earth is shaken by his charger's hoofs.
His mace's head is like a buffalo's;
Troops follow him and spearmen lead the way.

[1] Reading with P.

Thou well mayst muse at one that shouldereth
A mace like that!"
On his side Tús sent up
The drum-roll to the clouds, he heard the watchman,
His soul grew bright, he joyed, while from Gúdarz
A horseman sped to Faríburz to say:—
"The army of Túrán arrayed for battle
Is near at hand. They must not in full force
Assail us scattered thus and overthrow us.
Act as thy nature biddeth, for thou art
A noble and Sháh's son. The dust of Rustam
Is rising from the road, and he is entering
The field."
Then Faríburz joined force with Tús
And Gív. They ranged the host on Hamáwan, V. 937
And raised the glorious flag. All being ready,
Right, left, and centre, rear and baggage-train,
The clarions blared and all the host came on
As 'twere the starry sky; so when Kámús
Advanced to fight he had no need to wait,
But, like a river speeding down a height,
Led on his troops and fronted Hamáwan.
Air was like indigo and earth was hidden.
When he was near he faced toward the mount,
And with his cheeks all smiles addressed his powers:—
"It is a coward's business to oppose
The Íránians, yet a vast, brave host is here
And not Pírán, Húmán, and all that crew!
What champion have they to contend with me?"
Then shouting to Mount Hamáwan he cried:—
"Ye lion-men upon the day of battle!
Behold my breast, my stature, and my bearing,
This arm of mine, this sword and mace!"
Then Gív,
On hearing, flared up, raged, and drew his sword,
But said, when he drew nearer to Kámús:—

"None but a furious elephant can match him!"
He took and strung his bow, he called on God,
The Giver of all good, and showered arrows
From bow like clouds in spring upon Kámús,
Who, when he marked Gív's mastery, concealed
His own head 'neath his shield, and with his lance
Charged wolf-like. Air was full of dust, and earth
Of death. On drawing near his foe he speared
V. 938 Gív's waist, who reeled and, as he reeled, Kámús
Plucked out his own sword, shouted, raged, proclaimed
His name, came grimly on the cavalier,
And clave his lance obliquely like a pen.
Tús from the centre saw the fight with grief,
And thought: "Gív is not man enough; I only
Can wield a spear like that."
He left the centre
With shouts to succour Gív and join the fray.
Kámús wheeled, rode between the chiefs, and struck
The steed of Tús a sword-blow on the neck;
That prince's face became like ebony.
The charger fell, the gallant rider rose;
Then like a roaring lion took his stand,
And on the battlefield with spear afoot
Contended with Kámús before the hosts.
Two noble warriors fought one cavalier;
He of Kashán was still insatiate!
Thus, till the sun's place darkened, all the field
Was in confusion and, when it grew ebon,
Kámús and Tús gave o'er. The hosts again
Went to their several camps on mount and plain.

§ 26

The Coming of Rustam

Now when heaven's sphere grew void of sun and moon,
And when the scouts came forth from both the hosts,

The watcher in the look-out loosed his tongue :—
" The plain is full of dust, the night is dark,
The level and the upland ring with cries,
And there are many lights among the troops.
Good sooth ! the elephantine chief hath come, V. 939
And with an army from Zábul."
Gúdarz,
On hearing this, descended mid the murk
The rocks in haste, the dragon-standard shone
Though night was dark and earth was violet-dim.
He lighted from his steed, while Rustam too
Alighted and advanced like rushing wind.
The twain embraced and from them both arose
A bitter cry o'er those Gúdarzian chiefs,
And that gain-seeking which had proved a loss.
Gúdarz said : " Brave, wise, ardent paladin !
Both crown and throne receive their light from thee,
And what thou utterest is truth indeed.
More art thou to the Íránians than father
And mother, treasure, throne, and precious stones.
Without thee we are fish on land, our heads
Are petrified, our bodies in the grave.
When I observed thy goodly countenance,
Thine eager salutations and thy love,
I grieved no longer for the dear ones gone ;
Through thy good fortune only smiles remained."
Then Rustam answered him : " Be glad of heart,
And very heedful of thy noble self,
Because the world is but deceit and toil,
It showeth thee its wealth and that is all.
One man is rich, another poor ; this man V. 940
Is honoured, that despised, but all must go,
There is no remedy ; I know no worse
Calamity than death, but may that pang
Afflict not thee, and may we all die fighting."

When Tús, Gív, and those valiant warriors,
The Íránian cavaliers, had heard the news
Of Rustam's coming to Mount Hamáwan,
And being seen by veteran Gúdarz,
They went like wind, shouts rose, and clarions blared.
The soldiers and the chiefs approached afoot,
Their loins were girded but their hearts at ease.
They raised a cry of anguish for those slaughtered
Amid the dust of fight; the heart of Rustam
Was moved; he girt himself anew for vengeance;
Then, hearing what had chanced in that campaign,
Lamented all the sufferings of the troops,
And gave much counsel, saying: "Ye chiefs! to-day
A grave strife faceth us, and war's result
Is feast to one and funeral to another."
That warrior, that Lustre of the world,
Set up his camp-enclosure while his powers
Encamped behind him on Mount Hamáwan,
And raised their leader's standard. Mighty Rustam
V. 941 Sat on the throne and all the chiefs assembled.
Here sat Gúdarz and Gív, there Tús and others,
While Rustam, with a lamp in front of him,
Discoursed at large of matters great and small,
How chiefs and troops had fought, and whether now
Bright sun and shining moon would favour them.
The chiefs spake to the gallant paladin
Of that innumerable host of foes,
Spake of Kámús, Shangul, the Khán of Chín,
Manshúr, and of the warriors of Túrán:—
"About Kámús himself we cannot speak,
For we have had no means of seeing him.[1]
He is a Tree whose Fruits are mace and sword,
And, though the clouds rained stones upon his head,
He would not flee from elephants of war:
His head is full of wreak, his heart of strife.

[1] "Car nous n'osons pas le regarder" (Mohl).

Earth is not able to contain Manshúr;
No warrior ordereth a host like him;
And from this mountain to the river Shahd
Stretch flags and litters, elephants and troops,
Whose helmets and cuirasses pass compute.
Grim are the looks of all upon the plain,
Which is a mass of tents, around are pitched
The tent-enclosures of brocade of Chín,
And had the captain and the host not come
All had been lost. Praise to the Lord of victory,
Who thus hath put a period to our stress!
Past doubt we live through thee; we all despaired
Of respite."

For a while the paladin
Grieved for the slain, wept, and grew dark of soul,
Then said: "Look from the orbit of the moon
Down to the gloomy face of sombre earth;
All is distress and anguish, care and toil.
Such is the manner of this Wayside Inn,
Such is the manner of the circling sky—
Whiles strife and poison, and whiles sweets and love!
We die by nature or by violence; V. 942
'Tis better not to mark the why and how,
For all must go as soon as time is up.
Blame not the circling of the sky. Now may
The all-victorious World-lord be our aid,
And may our foemen's fortunes be o'erthrown.
Henceforward we will take our full revenge,
And rid the world of foes."

The mighty men
Praised him and said: "Live ever famed and glad
With signet, crown, and sword, and never be
The court of Kai Khusrau bereaved of thee."

§ 27

How the Íránians and Túránians arrayed their Hosts

When o'er the hills the world-illumer shone,
When day seized on the two dark curls of night,
And, having cast aside its pitchy weeds,
Bit with its teeth the moon's lips till they bled,
The sound of drums rose from the camp-enclosures,
The warriors came forth. Húmán the chieftain
Went out to reconnoitre every side,
And thought: "What reinforcement have the Íránians
To need those tents and those pavilions?"
He saw a camp-enclosure of brocade
Of turquoise hue with many slaves about,
And in its front a general's flag and spear:
It seemed to him that fortune had changed sides.
He saw another army's camp-enclosure
With flags as bright as moons, for Faríburz,
Son of Káús, with elephants and drums
Had pitched near Tús. Húmán in deep concern
Went to Pírán and said: "To-day is wedded
To heavy toil. The Íránians' cries and clamour
Were greater yesternight than heretofore;
So went I forth alone from camp at dawn,
And viewed the foe on all sides. From Írán
A mighty host hath come to succour them.
Now one pavilion is of green brocade;
Its standard hath a dragon for device,
V. 943 And soldiers from Zábul are round about
With bucklers and with falchions of Kábul.
I think that Rustam, sent forth by the Sháh,
Hath come with reinforcements to the field."
Pírán made answer: "'Tis an evil time!
If Rustam taketh part in this campaign
He will not spare Kámús, the Khán of Chín,

Shangul or any warrior of Túrán."
With that he left the camp and going forth
Observed the forces of the foe, and thence
Came hurrying to Kámús, came to Manshúr
And to Fartús, and said: "I went this morn,
And made the circuit of the Íránian host.
Great reinforcements have arrived and chiefs
Both numerous and eager for the fray.
Methinketh too that elephantine Rustam,
Of whom I spake before the company,
Hath come to succour them, all bent on vengeance,
Straight from the Sháh."
"O wise one!" said Kámús,
"Thy heart produceth naught but ill surmise.
Know thou that Kai Khusrau hath come to war,
But do not therefore vex thy heart in vain.
Why harp so much on Rustam? Name no more
Zábulistán. If he beholdeth me
With flag in hand his heart will mourn at fight.
Go thou, array the host, lead forth the troops,
And bring the standards to the battlefield.
When I go forth to combat with the host
Ye must not loiter. Now shalt thou behold
The combating of men. The wilderness
Shall be a sea of blood."
The paladin V. 944
Rejoiced to hear and ceased to fret at Rustam.
He came with joyful heart and resolute,
And bathed his spirit in the stream of valour.
He gave out helms and mail to all the troops,
And kept in mind the language of Kámús,
Then going to the Khán he kissed the ground,
And said to him: "O monarch, live for ever!
May wisdom feed upon thy thoughts. The way
That thou hast trod was long and difficult;
Thou boughtest toil, foregoing feasts for us,

And to do reverence to Afrásiyáb
Hast crossed the sea.[1] Our soldiers' backs are straightened
By thee. Now act as native worth requireth,
Bedeck the elephants with bells and gongs,
And stun the world with blare of clarions.
To-day I make the attack; do thou remain
At the army's centre with the elephants
And kettledrums, keep guard upon my rear,
And help to raise my helmet to the clouds.
Kámús said thus to me: 'Lead thou the van,'
And brandishing his mace swore many oaths,
And said: 'I will not fight save with this mace
To-day though stones should shower from the clouds.'"
The Khán on hearing bade the clarions sound:
Thou wouldst have said: "The very dust hath feet!"
Both earth and heaven shook at the tymbal-din,
And put all love away. He gave command
To set a litter on an elephant,
And earth's face seemed like indigo. He reached
In state the army's centre, and the sky
Was like a dark cloud with the flying dust.
There was a sound of gongs and Indian bells,
And thou hadst said: "Men's hearts are in their mouths!"
V. 945 The many turquoise thrones upon the backs
Of elephants and that blue sea of flags
Took all the lustre from the eyes of men,
And none possessed his soul in quietude.
Dust filled the eyes and gullet of the sky:
Thou wouldst have said: "Its face is smeared with pitch!"
Now when the Khán had reached the army's centre
The moon went erring from its way in heaven.
The right led by Kámús was like a mountain;

[1] "la mer de la Chine" (Mohl).

They took the baggage-train toward the waste.
Pírán went toward the left wing, and with him
There went Húmán his brother and Kulbád.
When Rustam saw the movements of the Khán
He too arrayed his troops, bade Tús bind on
The drums and dress the army like the eye
Of chanticleer. He said: "We shall behold
O'er whom the heaven turneth in its love,
What are the revolutions of the sky,
And which of these great men hath lived his time.
I loitered not, Rakhsh made three stages one,
But now his hoofs are tired; he is o'erwrought
By march and toil. I dare not tax his strength
By going forth myself as challenger;
Assist me then to-day and work your will
Upon the foe."

The captain of the host
Struck up the fifes and drums; the war-cry rose,
And trumpet-blare. Gúdarz drew up the right,
And sent the baggage to Mount Hamáwan,
While Faríburz arrayed the left; the world
Seemed all a reed-bed! At the army's centre
Was Tús son of Naudar. Earth was all dust,
And air all storm, so that the world was hidden; V. 946
The warriors could not even see themselves!

The mighty Rustam climbed the heights to view
The Khán and army of Túrán; he saw
A host so mighty that the sea of Rúm
Seemed but a lump of wax compared to them!
The troops were from Kashán and Shakn and Wahr,
With divers coats of mail and divers helms,
Troops from Chaghán and Chín, Sakláb and Hind,
Gahán and Rúm, Sind and the Indus-banks.[1]
In every quarter there were alien tongues,
Strange flags and meats! What with the elephants,

[1] So Mohl.

The adornments of the thrones of ivory,
The armlets and tiaras, torques and crowns,
The world was like the garth of Paradise—
A goodly but terrific spectacle!
He stood astonied on the height and thought:—
"When will the sky show love to us again?
What will the next jest of old heaven be?"
He gat down from the mount but lost not heart,
Went not before the army and its chief,
But said: "Since first I girt me ne'er have I
Dwelt anywhere a year, and I have seen
Full many a host, but greater never saw."
He bade advance the drums, and Tús the general
Marched from the mountain to the plain to battle,
Prepared to dip his wreakful spear in blood.
They marched till noon, then ranked them two leagues long,
V. 947 The daylight vanished in the army's dust,
The sun divided not 'twixt night and day,
The air was dark with spears and javelins,
The sun became confounded, and the din
Of horsemen and of horses on the plain
Rose over Mars and Saturn. Rocks of flint
Fled at the horsemen's shouts and crash of axes,
Both sword and forearm reddened o'er with blood,
The ground groaned underneath the horses' shoes;
The body of the coward lost all heart,
While brave men turned their mail to winding-sheets.
Kámús addressed the host: "Since we must tread
The sky to-day, bring all your lassos, maces,
And swords upon this glorious battlefield.
The aspirant's head beneath the stones will lie
Unless he quit himself with valiancy."[1]

[1] More literally, "take his life in hand."

§ 28

How Rustam fought with Ashkabús

A warrior named Ashkabús, whose voice
Was like a kettledrum's, came forth to challenge
The Íránians, bent to lay some foeman's head
In dust. He cried: "Which of you famous men
Will come to fight with me, that I may make
His blood to flow in streams?"
Ruhhám on hearing V. 948
Sent up his battle-cry, stormed like the sea,
Took up his bow—the horseman's ambuscade—
And showered arrows on that famous chief,
But he was clad in panoply of steel,
And arrows were like wind upon his tunic.
Ruhhám then raised his massive mace. The hands
Of both grew weary, but Ruhhám's mace failed
Upon the other's helm, much as he sought
To deal a fatal blow, till Ashkabús,
His heavy mace in hand, while earth seemed iron
And heaven ebony, smote brave Ruhhám
Upon the helm and smashed it, who thus worsted
Wheeled round and sought the heights. Tús at the centre
Raged and spurred forth to go at Ashkabús,
But matchless Rustam said to him in wrath:—
"Ruhhám's fit comrade is a bowl of wine.
He holdeth swords as playthings in his cups,
And vaunteth of himself among the brave;
Now whither hath he gone, who was a match
For Ashkabús, with cheeks like sandarach?
Keep in the army's centre—thy fit place—
And I will fight afoot."
He slung his bow
Upon his arm, stuck arrows in his belt,

And shouted, saying: "O thou man of war!
Thine adversary cometh: go not back."
He of Kashán laughed in astonishment,
Then checked his steed and, calling to his foe,
Said, laughing still, to him: "What is thy name,
And who will mourn thee when thy head is off?"
V. 949 The peerless Rustam answered: "Hapless one!
Why askest thou my name among the folk?
My mother called me by this name—'Thy death!'
Fate made me for the hammer of thy helm."
He of Kashán replied: "Without a horse
Thou givest up thyself to slaughtering!"
Then peerless Rustam: "Senseless challenger!
Hast thou ne'er seen foot-soldiers lay proud heads
Beneath the stones? Do lions, crocodiles,
And leopards fight on horseback in thy country?
Now I, foot-soldier as I am, will teach
Thee how to fight, O mounted warrior!
Tús for this purpose sent me forth afoot
That I might get a horse from Ashkabús.
He of Kashán like me will foot it then,
And all will laugh at him. Afoot one man
Is worth three hundred cavaliers like thee
Upon this plain, this day, and in this fight."
He of Kashán inquired: "Where are thine arms?
I see not aught but mockery and jests."
Quoth Rustam: "Thou shalt see the bow and arrows
Whereby thy life shall end."
He marked the pride
Of Ashkabús in his fine steed, and shot
An arrow at its breast; the charger fell
Headforemost. Rustam laughed and cried aloud:—
"Sit by thy noble comrade! Prithee nurse
Its head and rest thee from the fight awhile."
V. 950 Then Ashkabús, his body quivering,
His face like sandarach, strung up his bow,

And showered shafts on Rustam, who exclaimed:—
"In vain thou weariest thy wicked soul,
Thine arms, and body."
Choosing from his girdle
A shaft of poplar wood he drew it forth
Bright-pointed, feathered with four eagle-plumes;
Then took his bow of Chách in hand and set
His thumbstall to the deer-hide string; he straightened
His left arm, curved his right; the bent bow sang;
The shaft's point reached his ear; the deer-hide
hummed;
The shaft's point bussed his finger and its notch
Was at his back; he loosed and struck the breast
Of Ashkabús; the sky kissed Rustam's hand;
Then destiny cried: "Take!" and fate cried: "Give!"
The heavens cried: "Excellent!" the angels: "Good!"
He of Kashán expired, thou wouldst have said:—
"His mother never bare him!"
Both the hosts
Beheld that fight. Kámús marked with the Khán
The lofty stature, strength, and fire of Rustam,
And, when he had withdrawn, the Khán dispatched
A cavalier, who drew the arrow forth
All bloody to the plumes! They passed it round
And thought it was a spear! The Khán's heart aged
When he beheld the feathers and the point.
He spake thus to Pírán: "Who is this man?
What is his name among the Íránian chiefs?
'They are a paltry remnant,' were thy words,
'Not on a par with men of high degree,'
Whereas their arrows are like spears! A mountain V. 951
Hath little heart to fight them; thou didst make
The matter small indeed, but thine account
Was false throughout!"
"None know I of this class,"
Pírán replied, "within the Íránian host,

None who can send his arrows through a tree-trunk,
Nor know I what this miscreant's aims may be.
The men possessed of stature, Grace, and prowess
Among the Íránian host are Tús and Gív,
And in the fight Húmán hath often made
The world as black as ebony to Tús.
I know not who is this Íránian,
Or who among our troops will prove his match;
But I will go and ask among the tents;
We will make out his name at all events."

§ 29

How Pírán held Converse concerning the Coming of Rustam

Pírán went full of care and pale of face
To ask the chiefs. Húmán the valiant said:—
"Wise men do not depreciate their foes.
The nobles of Írán are in good heart;
'They would break iron,' thou may'st say; and now
That reinforcements reach them from Írán
They raise their war-cry on the battlefield."
Pírán replied: "Whatever cavalier
Shall come forth from Írán to succour Tús
We need not fear if Rustam be away.
I shall not break my heart about Ruhhám
Or yet about Gurgín; for be assured
That saving Tús they have no warrior;
Gurgín and Faríburz match not Kámús.
V. 952 Each soldier of our host too, with so great
A fight in view, will seek his own renown."
Thence sped he to Kámús, went to Manshúr
And to Fartús, and said: "To-day was fought
A great fight and a Wolf showed 'mongst the Sheep!
See to the cure and who hath shown himself
So harmful in the infliction of these wounds."

Kámús replied: "Our fight to-day was such
That fame was turned to shame since Ashkabús
Was slain therein while Gív and Tús rejoiced.
My heart was riven at this man on foot
Because our troops were panic-stricken at him.
He is the tallest man on earth, we have not
One in the host to fight him. Thou didst see
His bow; the shaft is here. A savage lion
Hath not his strength; he surely is the warrior,
The man of Sigz, of whom thou spakest oft,
And he hath come upon the field afoot,
Come to give succour to the Íránian host."
Pírán replied: "He is not like this one,
But an exalted cavalier and hero."
Kámús, whose wary heart was all intent
Upon the matter, said: "Describe to me
How fareth on the field that lion-man.
What knowledge hast thou of his height and strength?
What language holdeth he with chiefs in fight?
What sort of man is he, and what his aspect?
On what wise shall I go to combat with him,
For if he be the one that hath arrived
I take the field myself?"
Pírán replied:—
"Forbid it, heaven! that Rustam should come hither,
And purpose fight! Thou wouldest see a hero,
Tall as a cypress, and with Grace and beauty,
From whom Afrásiyáb on many a field
Hath turned with tears; a warrior-liege is he, V. 953
The first to draw the scimitar, and fighteth
In wreak for Siyáwush his foster-child.
No one can wield his arms though many try.
In battle, when he girdeth up his loins,
His body hath a savage lion's strength.
No crocodile can lift his mace when dropped
In fight; his bow-string is of lion-hide;

His arrows, shaft and point, weigh ten sitír.
If any flint-rock should encounter him
'Twould turn to wax or something softer still.
He weareth, when he goeth forth to battle,
Chain-mail, and buckleth o'er it his cuirass,
And over that a garb of leopard-skin.
'Babr-i-Bayán' he calleth it; 'tis more
Than tunic and cuirass to him, not burning
With fire and wetting not with water. He
Hath wings when wearing it. The steed whereon
He rideth is, thou wouldst say, Mount Bístún
In motion, ever neighing in the fight,
And making sparks fly out of dust and stone;
But, wondrous as he is, it well may be
That thou wilt hold him not a man in battle,
And 'tis not strange that thou art worshipful
Who hast such limbs and shoulders, neck and arms."

Whenas Kámús, the man so prudent, heard
He gave his eyes and ears up to Pírán,
Whose words in sooth proved grateful. All afire
He answered: "Paladin! be shrewd of heart
And bright of mind. Propose what oaths thou wilt—
Oaths such as kings of wakeful fortune take—
And I will swear a greater oath to thee,
One that will cheer thy wounded heart, that I,
V. 954 In His strength Who is Master of the sun,
Will not take off the saddle from my steed
Till I have made thy spirit glad and bright,
And this world as a needle's eye to them."

Pírán called many blessings down on him,
And said: "Shrewd-hearted king who sayest sooth!
We are in all things subject to thy will,
Which leaveth little of the fray to us."

Pírán then went the circuit of the host,
And, visiting the enclosures and the tents,
Apprised the Khán and all of these events.

§ 30

How the Íránians and Túránians set the Battle in Array

Whenas the air glowed with the setting sun,
And dark night 'gan to stalk athwart the sky,
The warriors of the army of Túrán,
The men of wisdom and the scimitar,
Came in a body to the Khán's pavilion,
Full of revenge and fight—the lion-man
Kámús, the conqueror of elephants,
Manshúr the brave, the arbiter of battle,
With Shamírán from Shakn, Shangul from Hind,
The king of Sind and from Sakláb Kundur.
They all advised at large about the war,
And spake much of Írán, till all agreed
That they must wash their hands in blood, then parted,
Each to his tent, for rest or pleasure there;
But when the moon, then slender grown and humped,
Left the dark chevelure of gloomy night,
And, being in the presence of the sun,
Arose with watery looks and bathed its cheeks,
The soldiers of both hosts began to stir, V. 955
And, as their shouts arose, the Khán of Chín
Exclaimed: "We must not hesitate to fight
As yesterday we did and had to deem
Pírán—the man most needful—non-existent.
Far have we marched with succours to this war,
And if we slack to-day as yesterday
We shall disgrace our name for manliness.
To-morrow too Afrásiyáb will praise us,
And we may rest. Attack we then in force,
And mountain-like advance against our foes;
The nobles of ten provinces are here,
We must not sleep or feast."

The mighty men

Arose and said: "The conduct of the host
Is thine to-day. Thine are the realms of Chín
And of the Turkmans. Mark thou here to-day
How scimitars shall shower from darksome clouds!"
On his side Rustam thus harangued the troops:—
"The time hath come; if we have lost a few
There is but one in several hundred slain;
Let not your hearts be straitened; for my part
I will not live except with fame and honour.
With cheeks like ebony the Turkman troops
Withdrew from Ashkabús, so fill ye, all!
Your hearts with vengeance, frown, ye cavaliers!
For I have put the shoes on Rakhsh to-day,
And on him will incarnadine my sword.
Be instant for to-day we start afresh,
And all the earth is now the treasury
Of Kai Khusrau. Arm for the strife. Win crowns
And earrings. Purses shall ye have of me,
Gifts from Zábul and turbans from Kábul."
V. 956 The mighty blessed him: "Ne'er may crown and signet
Lack thee!"
He donned his armour and went forth
With confidence upon the battlefield.
He put his chain-mail under his cuirass,
And over it he donned Babr-i-Bayán.
He wore a helmet wrought of steel of Chín—
One to make foemen meditate on death.
He girded up his loins by God's command,
And mounted Rakhsh like some mad elephant.
The heavens were confounded at his mien,
Earth darkened where his charger's hoofs were seen.

§ 31

How Alwá was slain by Kámús

The drums and trumpets sounded from both hosts,
No room remained for guile or grammarye;
The mountains and the plains were all a-quake,
The earth was troubled by the tramp of steeds.
Kámús commanded the Túránian right,
Behind him were the mighty elephants
And baggage. On the left the lord of Hind
Stood clad in mail, a Rúman sword in hand,
And in the centre was the Khán of Chín.
The sky grew dark, the earth shook. Faríburz,
Like Sol irradiant in Aries,
Commanded on the left wing of Írán.
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, encased in steel,
Was on the right, and in the centre Tús,
Son of Naudar, in front were drums and clarions.
From all parts of the host a shout arose—
A shout which rent the ears of elephants—
And e'en from water rose the fumes of fire: V. 957
It was a fight surpassing warriors' dreams.
The first man that appeared between the lines,
His heart's blood all afoam upon his lips,
Was that famed chief Kámús accompanied
By soldiers, elephants, and kettledrums.
He, bearing in his hand an ox-head mace,
Cried like a furious elephant trumpeting:—
"Where is that man on foot who challengeth
Illustrious heroes? Let him come and see
A bow and arrow that will cost him life."
The gallant warriors—illustrious Tús,
Ruhhám, and Gív—beheld Kámús, but none
Desired to strive with him; the field remained
Void of Íránian chiefs; none had the strength

To fight with him for he was like a pard;
They were like deer. Yet was there one, Alwá,
A Zábulí, who promptly drew his sword.
He used to bear the spear and guard the back
Of Rustam, was a skilful cavalier,
And had with liver-burning toil and trouble
Acquired from him the use of arrow, mace,
And spear. What said the sage, the eloquent,
The ancient man? Now listen and perpend:—
"Let not thy prowess fill thee with conceit,
But look well to the ground beneath thy feet;
V. 958 To match a rivulet against the sea
Would be a contest of insanity."
Now when Alwá adventured on Kámús,
Who for his part was eager for the fray,
They cleared an ample space. He of Kashán
Came wolf-like, with his spear unhorsed his foe
With ease, then wheeled his steed and trampled o'er
The fallen till the dust was red with gore.

§ 32

How Kámús was slain by Rustam

The peerless Rustam grieved about Alwá,
Let loose the twisted lasso from its straps,
And took his massive mace as for a strife
Of chiefs. He roared like some mad elephant
As he advanced with lasso on his arm
And mace in hand. Kámús said: "Bluster not
So much about a thread of sixty coils."
"The lion roareth bravely," Rustam said,
"On catching sight of game. Thou wast the first
To put the girdle on in this dispute,
And thou hast slain a noble of Írán.
Thou sayest that my lasso is a thread;

Now shalt thou see how tight the knots will hold.
Thy fate doth drive thee on, man of Kashán!
Since here no place is left thee save the dust."
Kámús the valiant urged his dun steed on,
His foe a lasso-bearing Elephant,
And let out with his glittering glaive, intent
To sever Rustam's head. The point alighted
On Rakhsh's neck and clave the battle-mail,
But failed to wound. The elephantine hero
Coiled, whirled, and flung the lasso round his foe, V. 959
Then spurred away and made the leather fast
Beneath his thigh while Rakhsh flew eagle-like.
Kámús undaunted tightly gripped his steed,
Pressed firmly on the stirrups, loosed the reins,
And sought by force to break the twisted thong,
Becoming frantic, but the raw hide held.
The elephantine hero, checking Rakhsh,
Wheeled, jerked Kámús headforemost to the ground,
Came up, secured him in the lasso's coils,
And said to him: "Thou art not dangerous now.
In vain are all thy charms and spells; thy soul
Hath made a fruitless bargain with the Dív."
He bound his prisoner's hands behind the back,
Firm as a rock, then grasped the coils, returned
Afoot, his foe beneath his arm, and told
The warriors: "This lover of the fray
Essayed to match himself with me in strength,
But 'tis the wont with this deceitful world
At times to elevate, at times bring low.
It causeth both our happiness and grief,
And one is whiles on earth, whiles in the clouds.
Now this illustrious warrior, who ever
Was wont to prove the lion's match in fight,
Set forth to desolate Írán, to make
A den of lions of our fields and fells,
And leave behind no palaces or bowers

Of roses in Zábul or in Kábul.
He would not lay aside that mace of his
Till he had slaughtered Rustam son of Zál;
But now his helm and hauberk are his shroud,
His crown is dust, and his juppon the grave.
V. 960 On what wise do ye purpose slaying him,
Because Kámús the warrior's work is done?"
Then Rustam flung Kámús upon the ground
Before the chiefs; the warriors left their ranks,
They hacked his body with their scimitars,
And drenched the stones and dust beneath with blood.
Such is the course of heaven and destiny,
Now causing joy, then pain and misery!
All is toil, anguish, trouble, and distress;
Thy courage will not make it more or less.
Thy body hath a load of guilt to bear,
Thy spirit dwelleth in a world of care;
And let not bravery thy thoughts elate,
For stretched above thee is the hand of Fate.
With all thy might incline to virtue's ways,
And offer unto God—the Guide—thy praise.

The strife with brave Kámús hath reached its goal
In death when He that gave took back the soul.
Now valour and revenge will fill the scene:
I tell the battle with the Khán of Chín.

PART III

THE STORY OF RUSTAM AND THE KHÁN OF CHÍN

ARGUMENT

There are abortive negotiations, but the campaign continues. Many Túránian chiefs are slain by Rustam, who takes the Khán of Chín prisoner. He also slays Káfúr, the man-eater. Afrásiyáb summons Púládwand to his aid, but again Rustam is triumphant. He returns victorious to Írán, is welcomed and rewarded by Kai Khusrau, and then departs to Sístán.

NOTE

§ 14. It is said that when Firdausí was buried in his own garden at Tús,[1] the great Shaikh of the time—Abúl Kásim of Gurgán—refused to be present because, he said, Firdausí, though a learned and religious man, had deserted his principles and spent his time in discoursing of men of bad religion and fire-worshippers. That night the Shaikh had a dream of Paradise. He saw a magnificent palace with a jewelled throne, and asked whose it was. "It is for Firdausí," was the reply. Then the poet appeared wearing a green robe and an emerald-coloured crown upon his head. "O Firdausí!" said the Shaikh, "whence this rank and splendour?" The poet answered: "From a couplet or two confessing the Unity of God." The Shaikh, when he woke, went and prayed at Firdausí's tomb. Probably the lines referred to are those at the end of this section.[2]

§ 20. Cannibalism was not unknown in former times among the savage tribes of the North, as we learn from Herodotus. On the upper waters of the Borysthenes (the Dnieper) dwelt the Androphagoi proper, who seem to have been of Finnish race, some tribes of which appear to have retained their cannibalistic

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 45.

[2] C, Persian Preface, p. 60, and *note*.

propensity as late as the Middle Ages.[1] On the steppes east of the Caspian dwelt the Massagetæ, and to the north of them, and south-east of the Ural Mountains, the Issedones. Both these tribes were to some extent cannibals.[2] The legend in the text of a man-eating community can be accounted for without difficulty.

§ 1

How the Khán of Chín had Tidings of the Slaying of Kámús

Now, O enlightened sage! speak but to name
God the Sustainer of heaven's circling frame,
And Guide to good. Thine end of life will come,
V. 961 And thou wilt rest within the other home,
But first narrate again this tale of yore
Told by the rustic minstrel from his store.
Anon news reached the Khán: "Kámús is slain
Upon the field, and day is turned to gloom
And bitterness before the chiefs of Balkh,
Kashán, and Shakn."
All looked on one another,
And asked: "Who can this prowest warrior be?
What is his name? Who is he? Who can face him?"
Thus to Húmán the Lion spake, Pírán:—
"My soul hath had enough of strife to-day.
How shall our warriors desire to fight
When our brave Crocodile hath just been slain?
He was a peerless noble; not a horseman
Had form more elephantine, and the man
That could in battle bind him with the lasso
Might well in days of fight seize by the head
An elephant and dash it to the ground."

[1] Herodotus, iv. 18 and 106. BAG, Vol. i. p. 193.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 216 and iv. 26.

The troops in sore distress about Kámús
Came in a body weeping to the Khán,
To whom Pírán did reverence sadly, saying:—
"O thou exalted o'er yon azure dome!
Thou hast beheld and heard how we have fared
From first to last upon this battlefield.
Devise a remedy for our misfortune
Thyself without consulting any one.
Choose from our army's spies one that can bring
Hid things to light and find out who he is—
This lion-hearted one for whom our host
Hath not a match; then we will all face death,
And fight him on the field."
The Khán replied:—
"'Tis what concerneth me; I fain would know
The name of this pernicious paladin, V. 962
Who taketh Lions in his lasso's coils;
But seeing death may not be remedied,
And wishes, prayers, and vigour naught avail,
For to that end we all are mother-born,
And yield our necks thereto against our wills,
While none escapeth turning heaven's decree,
Not if he dash to earth an elephant,
Let not your hearts be sorrowful for him,
Who perished in the twisted lasso's coils,
For with my lasso I will bring to earth
The man that slew Kámús, and make Írán
Run river-like with blood to glut the heart
Of king Afrásiyáb."
He then assembled
Full many a noble from the army—swordsmen
And bravest of the brave—and said to them:—
"As for this warrior with his archery,
This lasso-flinging, hero-taking horseman,
'Tis needful that ye spy out where he is
Upon the left or right wing of their host;

Inquire withal about his name and land;
Then will we do his business out of hand."

§ 2

How Chingish fared with Rustam

A lusty cavalier—a faithful liege—
By name Chingish—a seeker of renown—
A man of valour and adventurous,
Stepped forth and volunteered. He thus addressed
The Khan: "Exalted! all the world would have
Thy love. Though this man be a lion I
Will make him lifeless when I take the field,
Will fight him single-handed and convert
The glory of Írán to infamy.
I will be foremost to avenge Kámús,
And thus restore his honour after death."
The Khán applauded him. He kissed the ground
Before his lord, who said: "Achieve this vengeance,
Bring me yon overweening head, and I
V. 963 Will give thee from my hoards so many gems
That thou shalt never need to toil again."
Chingish spurred forth swift as Ázargashasp,
Approached the Íránians, drew a poplar arrow,
And cried: "This is my field, the heads of nobles
Are in my clutch. If that bold lasso-flinger,
Who useth sometimes lasso, sometimes shaft,
And took Kámús, will come upon the field,
His station shall be void."
He roamed about,
And cried: "Where is that lion-warrior?"
Then Rustam with his mace bestirred himself,
And straightway mounted Rakhsh. "I am," he said,
"That chief-o'erthrowing, Lion-capturer,

I have mace, lasso, and artillery,
And now for thee, as for the brave Kámús
'Tis time to rub eyes in the dust."
Chingish
Rejoined: "What are thy name, thy race, and purpose
That I may know whose blood I shed amid
The dust of battle?"
Rustam answered: "Wretch!
Ne'er may the tree that taketh thee for fruit
Bloom in the garth. To thee my name and spear-point
Are death, thy mail and helm thy winding-sheet."
That insolent came wind-like, strung his bow,
Which seemed a raining cloud, and said to Rustam,
His mail-clad opposite: "Stay, valiant horseman!
Thou shalt have fight enough."
The other raised
His shield, perceiving that the shafts would pierce
His mail. Chingish marked well that elephant-form, V. 964
Tall as a straight-stemmed cypress in a garden,
Beheld that steed—a Hill beneath a Hill
And not aweary—thought: "To run away
Is better than to bring myself to harm,"
And spurred his heavy-laden charger on
In flight, intending to rejoin his troops;
But Rustam, that bold horseman, urged on Rakhsh
Like fire and followed up his noble foe.
As like a furious elephant he gained
Upon Chingish the plain was full of hubbub,
And both the armies saw amazedly
How Rustam caught the charger of Chingish
And held it by the tail until the rider
In terror threw himself upon the ground;
His helm fell off him and he begged for life,
But peerless Rustam stretched him on the dust,
Struck off his head, and thought of him no more.
The Íránian nobles praised their paladin,

Who, glittering spear in hand, rode to and fro
Between the Íránian army and the foe.

§ 3

How the Khán of Chín sent Húmán to Rustam

Much grieved the Khán and raged at that mishap;
He said thus to Húmán: "Now time and place
Are straitened to us. Go, for thou art shrewd,
And learn the name of yon great paladin."
Húmán replied: "No anvil I or ivory
In fight. Kámús the warrior had no peer
For valour and discretion, so despise not
The cavalier that lassoed him. I go
V. 965 To learn whom God will favour on this field."
As swift as wind he went inside his tent,
Took other helmet, flag, and horse, and changed
The fashion of his mail and shield, then went,
And, drawing near to Rustam, paused to scan
That hero's neck and limbs, and said: "Renowned one,
Brave lasso-flinger, warlike cavalier!
By God, I tremble for my monarch's throne
When I behold a foeman such as thou art.
In this great host I see no valiant noble
And chief like thee. One courting such a combat
Could make the dust fly from a lion's heart!
Tell me about thy country, race, and home,
Inform me of thy parentage and name.
I have not seen among the Íránian host
A man save thee who hath the heart to fight.
I love a warrior, and most of all
The man that hath the temper of a pard;
So now if thou wilt let me know thy name,
Land, stock, and home, thou wilt confer a favour,
For thou wilt ease my heart."

The paladin
Said: "Noble warrior of ardent soul!
Why tell not thy name, country, realm, and home?
Why hast thou come with this bland courtesy, V. 966
And so much talk? If thou desirest peace,
Not further loss in war, find him that shed
The blood of Siyáwush, and so involved us
In all the fire of feud. Find in thy host
Alike the guilty and the innocent;
Find too the men, the steeds caparisoned,
And goods which Siyáwush took from Írán;
Send all to us, and I will wish no longer
To fight the Turkmans; ye shall be my friends
In all, I will not speed revenge, seek strife,
Or lay the heads of nobles in the dust.
I will communicate with Kai Khusrau,
Will purge his heart and brain of grief and vengeance,
And send to him the culprits; he may pity them,
And pardon their offence. Now will I tell thee
Their names, and may their names and schemes both perish!
The head of the offence was Garsíwaz,
Who sought to trouble and afflict Írán;
Next any that thou knowest of Túr's seed
That made this Water brackish wantonly,
Such as Gurwí the son of Zira, born
Unjust and loveless; perish all his race!
They did the injury to Siyáwush,
Which was the key to all these bonds of bale;
Next those who wrecked their monarch's brain and heart,
And made blood flow like water, also those
Who had no quarrel with the Íránians,
And yet have taken part in this campaign,
The mighty men that are of Wísa's race,
Men double-faced and pied to every one,

V. 967 Such as Húmán, Lahhák, and Farshídward,
Kulbád and Nastíhan the lion-man.
If ye accomplish this that I demand,
And end our quest for vengeance, I will shut
The door of our revenge upon thy country;
Thou shalt not need to clothe thy breast in mail;
But if thou speakest in another sense
I will renew our quarrel by fresh wars,
And by the life and head of great Khusrau
Make reek the marches of Túrán. Shangul
Shall not survive nor yet the Khán of Chín,
Or warrior of the country of Túrán.
Thou hast essayed me on this battlefield;
My way and mode of fight is always this.
One of the nobles of Írán am I,
Wont to encounter Lions in the fray,
And many heads have I removed from bodies
Whose only winding-sheet was grimy dust.
I ne'er have spoken on this wise before,
My purpose first and last hath been revenge;
Now therefore hearken to me and embrace
These fair proposals."
At these words Húmán
Was sore afraid and trembled like a leaf,
For hearing Rustam talk in such a strain
He saw what vengeance would befall his kin,
And answered: "Lion-hearted warrior!
With strength and form and stature such as thine
Thy proper seat is on the Íránian throne.
At least thou art a mighty paladin
Or some redoubtable Íránian chief.
V. 968 Thou hast inquired about my race and name,
But not accorded what I asked of thee.
My name is Kúh. A warrior brave am I.
My sire is Búsipás—the lion-like.
I have accompanied this host from far,

And come a soldier to this scene of strife.
Now that thou hast my name and race aright
I too must ask for thine, which I require
That I may make thy wishes known to all.
So now if thou wilt let me know thy name[1]
I will return rejoicing to the camp.
What thou hast spoken on this battlefield
Will I detail in presence of the host,
And in the presence of Manshúr, the Khán
Of Chín, and Turkman warriors and chiefs."

But Rustam said to him: "Seek not my name:
Say what I seemed to thee. My heart is burning
With love toward Pírán, because the slaughter
Of Siyáwush hath pierced his liver too;
He is the gentlest man in all Túrán.
Speed him to me forthwith and we will see
What time may bring."

Húmán replied: "O great one!
Then thou art eager to behold Pírán!
What knowest thou of him or of Kulbád,
Púlád, or of Gurwí the son of Zira?"

"Why ask so many questions?" Rustam said.
"Try not to make a river run up-hill:
As for these mighty hosts, dost thou not see
That if they fight or not is left to thee?"

§ 4

How Pírán took Counsel with Húmán and the Khán

Húmán withdrew with all his favour changed,
And told Pírán: "O favourite of fortune! V. 969
Great ill hath come on us! This lion-heart
Is Rustam of Zábul, and we may now
Weep for our troops. He talked at large with me,

[1] Reading with C and P.

Recalling what we each had done amiss,
And I, my brother! was the first accused.
He spake much of revenge for Siyáwush,
Of past events, of waste and settlement,
Of what he purposed and of righteous dealing,
About Bahrám and those Gúdarzians,
And all that fell. His love is all for thee
Of whom he spake at large with kindliness.
He calleth now for thee of all this host;
I know not why. Go see him spear in hand,
Set like a hill upon another hill,
With mail and mace and leopard-skin cuirass,
Bestriding his great, furious Elephant.
Then wilt thou see that I have told no lies;
E'en fire receiveth brightness from his sword.
He will not budge without an interview;
It is for thy sake that he tarrieth thus.
Bespeak him fairly when thou seest him,
Draw not thy sword, and act not hastily."

Pírán replied: "Exalted one! I fear
My time hath come. If yonder warrior
Be Rustam, then this plain will be a scene
Of grief for us. Our fields already burn;
I know not what our evil star hath done."

He went with tearful eyes before the Khán,
Pierced through the liver, angry, seared at heart,
V. 970 And said to him: "O monarch! be not hasty,
Because the case is altered with us now.
Whenas Kámús the warrior's time had come
The thought occurred to me: 'This Iron Wall
Is Rustam, with his raw hide lasso-coils.'
Afrásiyáb may come in all his pomp,
But none will dream of seeing Rustam's back;
Dívs sicken fighting him. What is one man
Or one whole plain-full in opposing him?
He hath been long lord of Zábulistán,

And foster-sire erewhile to Siyáwush,
And warreth like a father in his anguish
To make the world strait to Afrásiyáb;
This elephantine one hath summoned me
Of all this countless host, I know not why;
But I will go and ascertain his will
Because my spirit is brought low with care."
The Khán said: "Go, say that which must be said
With courtesy. If he desireth peace
And wealth, why toil our armies on this plain?
Agree to give great gifts and then return;
'Tis better not to court so great a fight;
But, since he is arrayed in leopard-skin,
Good sooth! he may be bent upon a conflict;
Then we will battle likewise in full force,
And press him closely on the field of strife.
Put we our trust in God and war with Rustam
With all our strength; his body is not brass
And iron, but is blood and hair and flesh,
Nor shall we have to fight him in the sky:
Why burn thy heart with care and grief? Know this,
That, even if he feed on stone and iron,
Shafts and two-headed darts will pierce him. We
Outnumber them three hundred times. 'Tis ill V. 971
To be in dudgeon on this battlefield.
This Zábulí, this famous warrior,
Outvieth not an elephant in fight,
And I will show him with mine own such play
That he no more will meet me in the fray."

§ 5

How Pírán came to Rustam

Pírán departed full of pain and fear,
Heart-rent at Rustam's doings. He approached

The army of Írán and cried: "O chief,
And lover of the fray! I heard that thou
Hadst called for me of all this countless host
Of Turkmans, and have come forth from my lines
To thine to see what thou wouldst have of me."
When noble Rustam knew that from the Turkmans
A warrior approached he met Pírán
Before the host, an iron helm on head.
"What is thy name, O Turkman!" he demanded,
"What is thy will and purpose in this coming?"
The other said: "Pírán am I, the chief
Of yonder chieftains. Thou hast asked Húmán,
The son of Wísa, for me in kind words,
Which made my heart yearn toward thee, paladin!
Declare to me which of the chiefs thou art."
He answered: "I am Rustam of Zábul,
My sword is from Kábul, my clothing mail."
Pírán, on hearing noble Rustam's words,
Dismounted and did reverence. Rustam said:—
"I greet thee from the bright-souled Sun Khusrau,
V. 972 O paladin! and from his mother too,
The daughter of Afrásiyáb, who dreameth
Of thy love every night."
Pírán replied:—
"I greet thee also, elephantine chief!
In God's name and the host's. May He Who giveth
All good things bless thee, may thy signet be
A passport to the sky. Thanks be to God,
My Refuge, that I see thee here. Are Zál,
The son of Sám, Zawára, Farámarz,
Those men of prudent hearts and prosperous—
May this world never know the want of them—
Are they in health, good spirits, and estate?
Now will I speak unless thou take it ill
That subjects should complain of those in power.
I planted in the Garden once a Tree,

Whose leaves proved colocynth, whose fruit proved
blood,
And it hath caused me many grievous tears,
For, though 'twas once my treasure and my life,
It now hath brought me grief and yieldeth bane
Instead of antidote, for Siyáwush
Esteemed me as his sire and shield from harm,
While I gave him my daughter and a province,
That he might illustrate my race; but some
Have slain him and my daughter cruelly,
And haply thou wilt say it served me right.
Great are the care, the anguish, and the pains,
That I have suffered both from king and people,
And God shall be my witness in the world,
Although to call the Almighty as a witness
Is wrong, and though so long a time hath passed,
And I have heard much counsel from the wise,
That mourning hath not ceased within my house, V. 973
And that my soul is still aflame with grief,
That I pour out my blood instead of tears,
And constantly am in the leech's hands.
That act hath ruined me, heaven hath not turned
As I could wish; I, since I learned the fate
Of Siyáwush, have done naught, good or ill,
But been between two realms and two great kings V. 974
In anguish, misery, and impotence.
I risked my life for Farangís, whose father
Had sought to slay her, but I kept her hidden
In mine own house, providing for her there.
She in return would have my life, would have
Her foemen's heads from me! All grief am I,
O paladin! and both sides rail at me.
I have no way to flee Afrásiyáb,
I have no other resting-place or home;
I am concerned for treasure, lands, and herds,
And see not any pretext for departing;

I have my sons and many women-folk,
Such are the cares and ties of every one.
Whene'er Afrásiyáb commandeth war
He will not suffer me to close mine eyes;
Against my will I must lead forth the host,
I may not disobey. The occasion now
Is one for pity not for war with me.
Had I no other pain and grief at heart
About my kin save that Pílsam was slain. . . .[1]
But there are many other gallant youths,
Who have not had their fill of combating,
And seeing that I tremble for my life
I speak about my sons and property.
By God the Conqueror, O paladin!
Be not incensed against me, harbour not
A grudge against my kin, keep God in mind.
V. 975 Now by the illustrious soul of Siyáwush
I swear that death is better far for me
Than breastplate, sword, and helm, for if our troops
Engage thou wilt see mountains of the slain;
Yet those from Shakn, Kashán, Sakláb, and Hind—
The lands between the Indus and this march—
Are guiltless of the blood of Siyáwush,
Though brought as soldiers to this battlefield.
Peace bettereth war with me. Be not too hard.
Speak out thy mind; thou art more wise than I,
And mightier in war and prowess."

Rustam
Replied not as Pírán desired but said:—
"Since I and other warriors of the Sháh
Armed for the field I have seen naught but good
From thee—the least injurious of Turkmans.
Thou hast done righteously in all and sought
To lead Túrán aright. The leopard knoweth
That war and strife are evils, rocks and mountains

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 350.

Know that, but when the king of kings is bent
On vengeance we must pour the arrows in.
On two conditions there may be peace yet;
Consider if ye will consent to them:
One is—that thou shalt send to Kai Khusrau
In bonds all those that through the prince's death
Insensately have set this scene of strife,
Although not authors of the war, and those,
The guilty of the blood of that just head,
Although they may be not upon the field.
The other is—thou shalt prepare thyself,
And come with me to our victorious Sháh.
As to the goods which thou wilt leave behind,
And dost esteem so precious, thou shalt have
Ten for each one from him, so prate not thou
About the baggage of the Turkman host."
Pírán reflected: "To desert Túrán, V. 976
And go before that king were grave indeed!
Again by thus demanding those in fault
In wreak for Siyáwush he will bring low
Afrásiyáb's great men—his kith and kin—
The man with thrones and treasure, place and power.
How could I dare to speak of such a thing?
He asketh what is quite preposterous!
Húmán, Kulbád, and Farshídward—the men
That brought about the anguish of Gúdarz—
Are all involved, and this can never be:
No river in the world can run such water.
I must adopt mine own expedient,
Take mine own way."
He said: "O paladin!
Mayst thou be ever young and bright of mind.
I will depart and tell this to the chiefs—
Manshúr, Shangul, and to the Khán of Chín—
And send a cameleer to tell the king
Thy words, and rouse him from his slumbering."

§ 6

How the Túránians took Counsel for Battle with the Íránians

Pírán departed to the host like wind,
Assembled those that were of Wísa's race,
And told the secret, saying: "Our fall or rise
Hath come, for know ye that this Lion-heart
Is Rustam, who hath ta'en the field in grief
With chiefs and Lions from Zábulistán
And nobles from Kábulistán. With him
There are Gúdarz and Gív and Tús, and we
Must fight, though 'gainst our wills, and be disgraced.
Since Rustam is the avenger and the leader
No horsemen in the world will hold their own.
He seeketh of the Turkmans those in fault,
And troubleth not about the innocent.
Who to your knowledge is not guilty here,
And is not much affected by our king?
Behold our country will be desolate,
The warriors of Írán will work their will,
V. 977 And all be lost, the young, the old, the monarch,
The treasure, army, throne, and diadem.
I said to our unjust king: 'Be not thou
So fiery and stormful, else some day,
And with no warning, thou wilt be consumed,
Thy wit be burned and thy heart's eye sewn up.'
The imperious monarch brooked not mine advice,
Or that of the illustrious company,
But made away with noble Siyáwush
Without consulting with the brave and wise.
Thou wilt see nothing left of state or crown,
Throne, elephants of war, or diadem;
The Íránian king will be rejoiced thereat
While grief and pain will be our warriors' portion.
Woe for our gallant hearts and this great host,

Endowed with Grace, tall stature, crown, and state!
All will be spoiled henceforth before your eyes,
None will turn happy from the battlefield,
For they will tread us 'neath their horses' hoofs;
Our wakeful fortune's light will be bedimmed.
My heart is burning for Húmán, my soul
Is flaming for Rúín, for Rustam's heart
Is brimming with revenge for Siyáwush
For whom his eyebrows are fulfilled with frowns.
I will go sadly to the Khán and tell him
What this revenge hath cost me."
Swift as dust
He went with full heart and with lips all sighs,
And found the camp-enclosure full of clamour,
With bloody tulips set on saffron cheeks,
For many of the kindred of Kámús
Had come demanding vengeance. They exclaimed:—
"Afrásiyáb will dream no more of greatness!
Why did this king, who hath no man to fight
On days of battle, thus begin the feud?
We, to avenge Kámús, with tearful eyes
Will lead the army of Kashán to Chín,
And thence and from Barbar, from the Buzgúsh, V. 978
From the Sagsárs and from Mázandarán
Will we bring mace-armed troops to slaughter Rustam
That none may hear his voice. Afrásiyáb,
If fain for vengeance, must not rest or sleep."
Moreover from the kindred of Chingish
And Ashkabús a din like beating drums
Arose, while all in anguish for their kinsmen
Were raining tears of gall on saffron cheeks,
And saying midst their tears: "We will not rest
Or sleep henceforth till we have fired Sístán,
And given its people doleful nights and days,
Have set the head of Rustam of Zábul
Upon the stake in grief for our great dead,

And, having burned his body, strewn the ashes
Before his palace-gate."

Pírán was dazed,
His favour darkened at their lamentations,
And thus he said: "Afflicted, helpless men,
Possessed by pain and care and fed on grief!
Ye surely cannot know that your own time
Is almost o'er."

He sought the Khán and said:—
"This little war of ours is growing long.
A Crocodile, whose mail is leopard-skin,
Hath come up from the river to the fight,
For Rustam hath brought troops from every side,
And famous chiefs; our toils are thrown away,
And unjust deeds receive just punishment.
Afrásiyáb was so infatuate
That Siyáwush was murdered by his hand,
Urged to it by the insensate Garsíwaz.
V. 979 Now Siyáwush was great, a royal prince
Brought up by Rustam of Zábulistán,
Who fighting to avenge his fosterling
Will bring the heavens down. No leopard's claws
Or trunk of elephant, no lofty mountain
Or river Nile[1] will aught avail with him
When he shall take the field before his host.
He rideth on a horse that needeth not
A ship in seas of blood. We may not reckon
This conflict trifling; all have seen his power.
A fire hath fallen from azure heaven and caused
Our hearts to fume with fear. Convoke the sages,
The priests, the great, and find the remedy—
A champion competent to take the field:
We may perchance escape these ills and reach
Our homes albeit with diminished fortunes.

[1] "ni les flots de l'Indus" (Mohl).

Men should act fairly ever, not be first
To seek a quarrel."

Troubled at Pírán

The Khán invoked the Maker's name and said:—
"How shall we act encountered by such hosts?"
Then said Shangul: "To what end is this talk,
Exalted one? We sped o'er flood and waste
From every clime to help Afrásiyáb,
Receiving gifts and armlets; if we fight not
We came like lions and shall go like foxes.
We sprang like fearless lions, losing not
One day upon the march, why such alarm
Because one man from Sigz encountereth us?
Shame on such talk! Thou must take other order.
Grant that he is a furious Elephant, V. 980
And grappleth Lions on the battle-field,
Still, though he slew Kámús the warrior,
We must not hesitate, and since 'tis clear,
Because Pírán is sleepless with dismay,
That some one holdeth Rustam in respect,
I now extend my hand as succourer.
No Elephant is he or Lion's match,
Nor is his prowess as Pírán asserteth.
We must be firm herein, and not erase
All thoughts of vengeance on him from our hearts.
Draw we our maces at the dawn, advance
Across the plain, make air like clouds in spring,
And pour a rain of arrows on the foe;
Then through the dust of horse and crash of axes
None must know head from foot. Observe me well,
And, when I raise the war-cry, charge amain.
We are—we warriors and cavaliers—
Good sooth! above a hundred thousand strong,
And shall we, lifeless though not slain, thus vilely
Shrink from one man? When I confront the Sigzian

Send ye the dust-clouds skyward; let none 'scape;
A coward's heart is naught."
On hearing this,
Pírán, old as he was, grew young of heart,
And said: "Live happy, free from grief and care,"
While all the nobles and the Khán of Chín
Acclaimed the king of Hind.
Now when Pírán
Came to his tent the chiefs resorted thither—
V. 981 Húmán, Bármán, and Nastíhan, whose minds
Were poised 'twixt hope and fear. Húmán inquired:—
"What is thy purpose? Doth it furnish ground
For peace, or are the armies to engage?"
Pírán told what Shangul had said, and how
The troops agreed to battle on, whereat
Húmán was sore displeasured and, incensed
Against ill-starred Shangul, said to Pírán:—
"None can escape the sky and what it bringeth."
He met Kulbád and said: "Shangul is mad!
If Rustam be what I have seen, and heard
From chiefs, Shangul, Kundur, Manshúr, will not
Survive this battlefield, nor will the Khán.
Withdraw we for a while and reckon up
Our chance of gain or loss. Thou wilt behold
Of this unbounded host, whose massive maces
Might quell the world, the more part laid to earth
With blood-drenched helms and mail for winding-sheet."
Kulbád replied: "O wielder of the sword!
Keep if thou canst from evil presages,
And sadden not the hearts of thine own side;
The matter may be other than we think.
The better course for thee is not to fret
Or worry over ills not come as yet."

§ 7

How Rustam harangued his Troops

On his side Rustam called his mighty men—
Tús, Gív, Gúdarz, Ruhhám, and Faríburz, V. 982
Kharrád the warrior and Gustaham,
Gurgín the veteran, the cavalier,
And that illustrious man of war Bízhan.
"Ye men of wisdom!" said the peerless chief,
Addressing them at large in fitting words,
"Ye archimages wise and shrewd of heart!
The man whom God doth render fortunate
Is fit for crown and throne; he will possess
The world, prevail in war, and will not fear
The leopard, elephant, or crocodile.
Our strength is all from God, and to what end
Are we upon this darksome earth of ours?
To think no evil, but to choose the way
Of God and wisdom, since the world is no man's,
And 'tis not well to take much joy therein;
Our worth is based on right and hardihood
While knavery involveth harm and loss.
Pírán was heart-seared when he came to me
So hastily, he spake in many words
Of his good offices to Siyáwush,
Of his own travail and anxiety,
And how through his entreaties Farangís
Escaped the Dragon's breath; and yet withal
My heart foreboded that Pírán would be
Among the first to perish in this war,
His son and brother die before his eyes
With many of the noblest of his kin,
And that Khusrau would slay Afrásiyáb:
Such was my dream. Know that they all will perish
Beneath our feet, not one man will survive:

Howbeit I would not that this hand of mine
Should slay their general; he hath no craft
But honesty, and thinketh not of ill.
If then he shall accomplish what he said,
Be ancient wrongs forgotten; if he yield
The culprits and the goods, the strife is done,
V. 983 The war for me is over; in this world
To deal uprightly is the best of all things.
If from these chiefs with thrones and elephants—
An army like the blue sea—he dispatch
Both crowns and wealth, I shall not trouble further
About the Turkmans. They will all pay tribute
Not being able to contend with us,
And we will spare their lives because the All-giver
Hath taught us wisdom and right ways. The world
Is full of treasures, thrones, and crowns: a man
Were fortunate indeed to win them all!"
Gúdarz in hearing this stood up and said
To Rustam: "O thou chieftain good and just,
The host's support, the adornment of the throne!
The crown and throne and helm are bright through thee.
Resplendent wisdom is thy capital
And provand of thy soul. Peace is no doubt
A better thing than war, but mark this well—
The ox hath yet his hide. I will repeat
To thee a saying of the olden times:—
'The souls of evil men shun righteousness
E'en as the shoulders shun the burden's stress.'
Pírán now giveth pledges in his strait,
But some day he will struggle to evade them.
The Maker fashioned him a double-dealer,
So hearken not to him and 'scape his guile.
When first we set the battle in array
We held a parley and forwent the fight
Because an envoy came to say from him:—

'I am averse from strife and battlefield,
And, recking not of country and of tents,
Have girded up my loins to serve the Sháh.'
He heard from us much counsel and advice,
And said: 'Henceforth is war no mate of mine;
I will depart and compass this affair V. 984
Without delay, announcing to my kin
My course herein, for I have throne and treasure
And cattle, and for them I will provide.'
I said: 'Thy right course is to come at once;
Throne, wealth, and goods await thee in Írán;
But keep the matter secret that thy fault
May not be patent to Afrásiyáb.'
Pírán, when we had spoken, went his way,
And all that night companioned with the wind.
He sent Afrásiyáb a cameleer
To say: 'Array thy troops; a host hath come.'
Thou wouldst have said that we had held no parle,
Because it came to nothing, and Pírán
Upon the tenth day led his army forth
Toward the plain and filled the world with troops.
Just now he set, Oleader of the host!
Upon thy path another toy; just now,
On seeing thy lasso's coils, he feared for life.
Their whole reliance was upon Kámús,
And generals like Fartús and like Manshúr;
But since he hath beheld Kámús' fortune
Wrecked, and his slaughter in the lasso's coils,
Pírán now knocketh at the door of peace,
Not daring to remain upon the field,
And, since he knoweth that his fall is nigh,
Employeth colour, stratagem, and guile.
As for the criminals, the wealth, and goods,
'Which I,' he said, 'will gather and surrender,'
Thou wilt perceive that when the tymbals sound,
And Tús and Faríburz advance to war,

V. 985 He will in person lead the van and ever
Renew the combat. All his words are lies,
And Áhriman alone is his fit mate.
If thou art deaf to me mark what befell
My son Bahrám! Pírán thus held us back,
And set an ambush such that, when the day
Of battle came, he showed to us so great
A graveyard of Gúdarzians that I
Must weep blood all my life, and have for leech
An Indian sword."
Said Rustam: "Be thy words
And wisdom wedded. He is as thou sayest.
We and that old man differ, 'tis no secret;
But, in as much as he hath done us good,
I would not fight him to the bitter end.
Remember how he acted toward the Sháh,
And how he mourned the fate of Siyáwush.
If he should break his word and set on us
I have my lasso at my saddle-straps
To take fierce Elephants. But I will fancy
No ill at first; we may escape a conflict;
But, if he should be faithless, he shall find
The outcome pain and grief."
Gúdarz and Tús
Praised Rustam, saying: "Sol itself would fail
To cozen thee, and in thy presence sleights,
Deceptions, falsehoods, and Pírán's own words
Take on no lustre. May the earth ne'er lack
Our monarch's head and crown, and mayst thou hold
The chiefest place for ever."
Rustam said:—
"'Tis dark and now our brains are dazed with talk;
Quaff we till midnight, then safeguard our troops,
And we shall see what God hath purposed for us."
V. 986 He said moreover to the Íránians:—
"To-night as we are drinking I will take

Some happy omen and, when morrow cometh,
Will shoulder Sám the cavalier's own mace,
Wherewith I fought against Mázandarán,
Attack the Crocodile in his own lair,
And capture camp-enclosure, crown, tiara,
Mace, mighty elephant, and ivory throne:
These will I bring and give the Íránians,
If after all I gird my loins for war."
The noble lieges raised a shout and went
For rest and slumber each man to his tent.

§ 8

How the Íránians and Túránians set the Battle in Array

Whenas the sun displayed its shining crown
The moon appeared as 'twere a silver shield,
But terror-stricken at the rising din
Declined and hid her face. The tymbals sounded
Before the tent of Tús, the world grew ebon
With chargers' dust; it filled the air; the ground
Turned indigo, and Rustam donned his mail.
The army of Írán drew up in line,
The sons intent on fight, the sires on vengeance.
Gúdarz son of Kishwád was on the right
In armour, brandishing a mace of steel,
While Faríburz was stationed on the left,
And washed the vengeance from his chieftains' hearts.[1]
Tús son of Sháh Naudar was in the centre,
And all earth thronged with troops. Then peerless Rustam
Advanced to view the opposing chiefs; the Khán,
Whose elephants made earth like indigo,
Was in the centre, on the right Kundur— V. 987
A gallant horseman lion-like in battle—

[1] *I.e.* by giving them so much that they wanted no more.

And on the left the veteran Gahár:
The earth was wounded 'neath the horsemen's hoofs.
Pírán, upon his rounds before the host,
Approached Shangul, the lover of the fray,
And said to him: "O famous man of Hind!
Folk from Shírwán to Sind perform thy bidding.
Thou said'st to me: 'To-morrow with the dawn
Will I from all sides lead the host to fight;
Then will I challenge Rustam and bring down
To dust that head which reacheth to the clouds.'"
He answered: "I abide by what I said,
Thou shalt see from me neither more nor less.
Now will I go before this vanquisher
Of chiefs, and nail him through with arrow-points,
Avenge Kámús and press the Íránians."
With that he made three battles of his host,
He beat the drums and dust rose from the plain.
They marched, each battle, with huge elephants—
An army-front extending o'er two miles.
The heads of all the drivers were adorned
With gaudy colours; each man wore a crown
And earrings, with a gold torque round his neck,
And belt of gold about his loins. The beasts
Were draped with housings of brocade of Chín
Surmounted by a throne and seat of gold.
Then there arose the blast of clarions,
And all the elephants of war advanced;
Upon the right marched thirty thousand men—
Illustrious cavaliers armed with the spear—
Another thirty thousand on the left
With bows and shields of Chín. The elephants
Were in the centre with the Khán, a throng
That rolled earth's surface as they marched along.

§ 9

How Rustam reproached Pírán

Shangul went forth with Indian sword in hand V. 988
Between the opposing lines; a parasol
Of Indian make, compact of eagles' plumes,
O'ershadowed him. Around him was an escort
Which followed as he willed. On seeing this
Pírán rejoiced, feared not the fight with Rustam,
And thus addressed Húmán: "To-day will fate
Dispose the matter to our hearts' content
With this equipment and such cavaliers,
Each one so gallant, proud, and lion-like;
So go not thou thyself before the line,
Think not of fighting this day or the next;
Let thy post be behind the Khán of Chín,
Because thou need'st not fight, and if moreover
He of Zábul, he of the sable standard,
Beholdeth thee, our cause is lost. Be ours
To note the progress of events, and see
What sport our wakeful fortune will afford."
Pírán went thence toward the Íránian host
To where the elephantine hero stood;
Dismounted, did obeisance many times,
And said: "High heaven taketh Grace from thee.
Ne'er may thy days decline! Ne'er may thy face
Show grief! When I returned, O paladin!
I gave thy message both to old and young.
I talked to them of all thine excellence,
Though who on earth can praise thee worthily?
I spake moreover both of peace and war,
Employing every sort of plea. 'But how
Can we do this,' they said at last, 'and stay
Revenge as thou advisest? We can give
As much as he shall ask of gold and treasure, V. 989

But as for giving up the guilty folk
It may not be. Consider what it meaneth.
Whom save the kinsmen of Afrásiyáb
Know'st thou as guilty? Be not rash in promise,
For all the men that Rustam asketh of us
Are chiefs—great men with thrones and diadems!
How shall we or how can we give them up?
Demands like these would make a young man gray.
When such an army hath arrived from Chín,
Sakláb, Khatlán, and from our own Túrán,
How should Afrásiyáb desire a peace
When he hath brought such hosts o'er sea and land?'
I got no lack of blame in their reply,
And so I have returned to thee in haste.
Now of these troops an army like the sea
Is hurriedly preparing for the fight,
And know thee not but call thee 'him of Sigz.'[1]
The king of Hind is fain to fight with thee
With bow and arrow and with Indian sword,
But sure am I that in the end this host
Will weep because of elephantine Rustam."

When Rustam heard this he was very wroth,
And said thus to Pírán: "Thou luckless one!
Why hast thou so much guile and subterfuge?
Why wilt thou walk upon a precipice?
The king of earth hath spoken much to me
In public and in private of thy lies.
E'en now when I esteemed thee wise and prudent
Thou wast but one great lie from head to foot.
Thou wallowest recklessly in thine own blood
In evil case, but worse awaiteth thee.
Although a spot were Hell 'twere Paradise
Contrasted with the soil beneath thy feet.
'I prithee leave,' I said, 'this black, bad land,
And change it for a settled realm; such life.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 100, and *note*.

As this is wholly worthless, for thy head
Is in the Dragon's maw. Thou mayst behold V. 990
Our gracious, just, young, fair, and courteous Sháh.'
But eating snakes[1] and wearing leopard-skin
Are sweeter than both colour and brocade
In thine esteem. None will contest the point,
And thou wilt eat of that which thou hast sown."

Pírán replied: "O fortune's favourite,
Thou fruitful, flourishing, and goodly Tree!
Who knoweth of such things as well as thou?
And may the homage of the chiefs be thine.
My heart and spirit are at thy command,
My life for thine, I will advise to-night,
And will address the assembled host besides."

This being said, to join the troops he went
With guileful heart and head on vengeance bent.

§ 10

How the Battle was joined

Pírán departed and the opposing hosts
Stood like two glittering mountains on the earth,
While Rustam thus harangued the Íránians:—
"My loins are girt for battle, be it yours
To think but of revenge, and let each warrior
Frown, for no small strife fronteth us to-day,
But one that will appraise both wolf and sheep.
The reader of the stars hath said to me:—
'My heart is troubled by this coming fight;
'Twill be betwixt two mountains, troops in mass
Will bathe the world in blood, the veteran chiefs
Will gather, and the strife unman the world;
Then feud will cease to stalk, the steel mace grow
Like wax.' Have no misgivings, whosoe'er

[1] *I.e.* suffering trouble and hardship.

May come to fight with me, for I will bind
V. 991 His hands within the twisted lasso's coils
Although the starry heavens be his ally.
Let no one tremble at yon famous chiefs.
If my life endeth on the battlefield,
And doubtless I shall not die at a feast,
All that thou needest is enduring fame,
Thou canst not stay, why make so much ado?
Set not thy heart upon this Wayside Inn,
Trust not a Hostelry so perilous,
Where souls allied to wisdom reckon not
Their day as good or ill. E'en lords of crown
And treasure may not fix their hearts on this
Our Wayside Inn."
The troops replied: "Thy hests
Are higher than sky and moon, and our keen swords
Shall make our fame last till the Judgment Day."
The armies closed. "A black cloud," thou hadst said,
"Hath risen raining shafts and scimitars,
And all the world is like a sea of pitch."
The glorious visage of the sun grew dark
With eagles' plumes and arrow-heads of steel.
Thou wouldst have said: "Amid the cloud of dust
The lances' heads have smirched the stars with gore!"
What while the ox-head maces crashed around
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky is raining stones!"
And midst the flashing of the diamond swords:—
"A cloud hath risen and its rain is blood!"
The briars and dust were drenched with gore and brains,
The helms were smashed upon the wearers' heads.
V. 992 Said gray Gúdarz: "Since first I girt myself
To play the man I have seen no such strife,
Or heard of such among the haughty chiefs;
Such is the slaughter that one half alone
Of men is safe, the other is o'erthrown!"

§ 11

How Shangul fought with Rustam and fled

Shangul came forth before the host and shouted.
"I vanquish heroes and I love the fray,
And I will see," he said, "what battle-gear
Of manliness this man of Sigz possesseth."
The voice reached Rustam, who looked forth, beheld him,
And said: "Mine one petition to the Maker,
Both publicly and privily, hath been
That of this mighty host some alien
Might have the pluck to challenge me to fight.
I will not leave Shangul, the Khán of Chín,
Or any warrior of Túrán alive."
He came and shouted: "Base-born miscreant!
Zál named me Rustam; wherefore call'st thou me
'The man of Sigz?' Know that the man of Sigz
Will be thy death, thy mail and helm thy shroud."
This said, he grasped a life-destroying spear,
And urged his heavy mountain of a steed.
He charged like wind, loosed his heroic arm,
And thrusting with his spear unhorsed Shangul,
Dashed him down headlong, and rode over him, V. 993
Yet harmed him not. Then Rustam quickly drew
His scimitar, but from the hostile host
Came warriors with swords of tempered steel;
Men from Túrán, Sakláb, and Hind surrounded
The paladin as 'twere an onager,
And snatched Shangul from that fierce Elephant:
He 'scaped from Rustam, scathless 'neath his mail,
Fled with a care-worn visage to the Khán,
And said: "This is no man; he hath no equal
On earth; he is a furious Elephant
Upon a Mountain; we may fight in mass,

But let not any one attack the Dragon
In single combat, for he cannot 'scape."
"This morn thy views and words were other," said
The Khán, and bade the troops charge mountain-like
In full force to hem Rustam in and end
His life. That Lion drew his scimitar,
And brake the left wing of the host of Chín;
Each stroke strewed trunkless heads upon the plain.
No mountain could withstand him in the fight,
Or elephant his fury. Warriors
Beset him till they dimmed the sun above him,
While from the many spears, swords, shafts, and maces,
Employed against the lion-taking chief,
One would have thought that he was in a reed-bed,
And all the realm a winefat running blood.
V. 994 At every blow he sliced a hundred spears,
And as an angry lion roared and raged.
Behind him came the warriors of Írán
With vengeful hearts and eager for the fray.
As for the maces, mallets, spears, and swords,
Thou wouldst have said: "Hail falleth." Corpses, hands,
Heads, coronets, and helmets of the slain
Filled all the field, high heaven seemed earth with dust,
And many a neck and breast were cloven piecemeal.
The troops all cried: "The plain is like a mountain
With slain!" The hosts of men from Chín and Shakn,
From Hind, Sakláb, Harát, and from Pahlav[1]
Stretched o'er plain, height, and river, and they all
Were smitten by one man!
Then to Kulbád
Pírán turned, saying: "This battlefield hath lost
Its charms, for he is irresistible;

[1] *Cf.* p. 109.

There is no leader like him in the world.
No sage would credit that one cavalier
O'erthrew three hundred thousand warriors.
This feud hath brought ill on Afrásiyáb;
Where will he find repose and rest from Rustam?
Good sooth! we shall be blamed when he inquireth
Concerning this campaign, and then if he
Is wroth our heads will be in jeopardy."

§ 12

How Rustam fought with Sáwa

Said Rustam to the Íránians: "This fight V 995
Hath harmed us not. Now will I take from Chín
These elephants, this wealth, these splendid crowns,
And thrones, bestow them on Írán and make
The day a happy and a glorious one.
I want no helper from the Íránians,
God and the feet of Rakhsh are help enough.
I will not leave a man from Chín, Sakláb,
And Shakn to set his foot upon the ground,
For 'tis our day of victory; high heaven
Illumineth our star, but ill betideth
The men of evil words and evil deeds.
If God affordeth strength my glossy Rakhsh
Shall show his mettle, I will make this plain
A graveyard, and the fertile land a salt-marsh.
Resume ye now your posts, be diligent,
And swift as wind. Attend. When I advance
Sound gong and bell, and make the whole earth ebon
With dust of cavaliers and tymbal-din.
Ply ye your axes and your massive maces,
Like blacksmiths' hammers on a mass of steel,
And fear ye not the numbers of the foe,
But make the very water reek to heaven.

Cleave ye the ranks of Chín and of Sakláb;
Earth must not see the sky. Watch well my helm,
And, when I raise the war-cry, charge amain."
Thence like a raging elephant, and bearing
His ox-head mace and shouting as he went,
He sought the foemen's right, and first encountered
V. 996 Kundur. He routed that wing utterly,
And many a head and helmet disappeared.
A kinsman of Kámús, one Sáwa hight,
Proud and o'erweening, came to counter Rustam,
With Indian sword in hand. He wheeled about
In quest of vengeance for Kámús and cried:—
"O mighty Elephant! now shalt thou mark
A wave of Nile![1] I will avenge Kámús,
The hapless: nevermore shalt thou see battle."
When Sáwa's words reached Rustam he drew forth
His massive mace, raised it aloft, and smote
His foeman's head and helm. Thou wouldst have said:—
"That head hath never even seen its body!"
He flung down Sáwa, and rode over him
Till every trace was lost. The enemy
Were panic-struck, the banner of Kashán
Was overthrown; none durst withstand him more
Because the hoofs of Rakhsh their fruitage bore.

§ 13

How Rustam slew Gahár of Gahán

Thence Rustam sought the other wing, while all
The foe were in dismay, where stood Gahár
The warrior of Gahán, a lion-man
Who had a dusky banner. He was wroth

[1] "O éléphant furieux, tu vas voir le tumulte des flots de l'Indus" (Mohl).

On seeing Rustam's helm, roared lion-like,
And said to him: "I will avenge Túrán
And Chín upon this Sigzian on this field;
To fight him is my part among the chiefs:
A lion's heart and massive mace are mine."
He spurred forth to encounter mighty Rustam, V. 997
But turned like flower of fenugreek on seeing
The helm of Rustam close, and thought: "As well
Plunge in the river Nile as fight against
This furious Elephant! Thou saidst: 'The fight
Will profit thee,' but others said: 'Not so.'
Both courses are not well. To flee and save
One's head is better than to have it trampled
By showing prowess."
Then he fled toward
The centre in the sight of all the troops,
While like a tree upon a mountain-top
Rose Rustam's standard mid the host. He followed
Gahár like dust, earth reddened, air grew dark;
He speared and pierced the girdle of his foe,
Rent both the corslet and its clasps, then flung him
Down as the leafage falleth from a bough
Struck by a mighty blast. He overthrew
That dusky flag, and thou hadst said: "Gahár—
He of Gahán—ne'er lived." The Íránians marked
That deed, to right and left the dust of battle
Rose, they advanced the drums and glorious standard,
Illustrious Gúdarz and Tús came on,
The trumpets' blare hailed Rustam's victory.
"Send me a thousand noble cavaliers,"
He bade, "and I will take yon elephants,
That ivory throne, the gold, torques, pearls, and crown
From him of Chín and give them to Írán,
To the victorious monarch of the brave."
A thousand warriors of Írán advanced
In mail with ox-head maces. Rustam cried,

That they might gird them for revenge: "I swear
V.998 By our Sháh's life and head, the sun and moon,
Írán's host, and the dust of Siyáwush,
That if one flee before the prince of Chín
He shall experience bonds, or pit and gibbet,
And have a paper cap set on his head."
The troops knew Rustam's lion-appetite,
Which longed to claw the haunches of the stag,
And made toward the Khán, men seared in heart,
Whose leader aimed at crowns. He led the charge,
Let fleet Rakhsh have the reins, and spurted blood
Up to the moon. The stars looked down upon
That battlefield whence such a dust-cloud rose
That none could see the ground. What with the shouts
Of cavaliers and thud of lances none
Discerned 'twixt rein and stirrup; thou hadst said:—
"The sun is veiled, earth tortured 'neath the horse-hoofs!"
The air grew black, black as an Ethiop's face;
They saw no way for slain; mails, helms, and saddles
Filled all the field, and heads farewelled their bodies.
The horsemen's dust went down the wind, the earth
Rang with the clash of steel, and many a chief
Exposed his head for glory. Rustam shouted,
And thou hadst said: "It is the raging sea!"
"These elephants, the bracelets, ivory throne,
Crowns, diadems, and torques will in Írán
Be worthy Kai Khusrau, the world's young king.
What business can ye have with crown and pomp,
Who, spite of all your might and toil and prowess,
Will only set the shackles on your hands,
And bring a twisted lasso round your loins?
Then will I send you to the king of earth:
I will not spare Manshúr or yet the Khán
Of Chín. I give you life and that is all;

Your crowns and signet-rings are for another ;
Else with our horse-hoofs I, unless ye yield, V. 999
Will send dust moonward from this battlefield."

§ 14

How the Khán was taken Prisoner

The Khán let loose his tongue, reviling Rustam.
" Thou miscreant," he said, " in soul and body !
For quarter for Írán, its Sháh and people,
Thou must appeal to me. Thou Sigzian,
And vilest of mankind ! wouldst seek to make
A common soldier of the king of Chín ? "
They sent a very grievous rain of arrows
As when the winds of autumn blast a tree ;
The air was clothed with eagles' plumes : no warrior
E'en dreameth of such strife ! Gúdarz, beholding
That shower of steel, alarmed for Rustam's safety,
Said to Ruhhám : " O laggard ! tarry not,
But with two hundred horsemen ply the reins,
And with your bows of Chách and poplar shafts
Guard in the battle peerless Rustam's back."
And then to Gív : " Lead on the host and yield not
Before our foes. To-day is not a time
For peace and pageant, leisure or repose.
Advance toward the right wing with the troops,
And find out where Pírán is with Húmán.
Mark how before the Khán the peerless Rustam
Is dashing heaven to earth ! Ne'er may the eyes
Be blest that curse him on the day of battle."
Ruhhám raged like a leopard and rushed forth
To fight at Rustam's back, who said to him,
That Lion : " My Rakhsh, I fear, hath had enough ;
When he is weary I will go afoot,
All blood and sweat. This is a host like ants

And locusts! Fight against the elephants
V. 1000 And drivers. We will take them to Khusrau—
A novel present from Shingán and Chín."
Then from his post he cried: "May Áhriman
Wed Turkistán and Chín! Ho! luckless ones,
Resourceless, wretched, fed on grief, and lost!
Have ye ne'er heard of Rustam? Or hath wisdom
Fled from your brains? He holdeth dragon-men
Of no account, and chooseth elephants
As opposites. Would ye still fight with me
Whose only gifts are mace and scimitar?"
He loosed his twisted lasso from its straps,
Flung the raw coil upon his saddle-bow,
And urged his charger on. A shout arose
To split a dragon's ear. Where'er he cast
The noose he cleared the ground of mighty men,
Yet wished he only to contend with Chín
With lasso on his arm and frowning brow.
Now every time that Rustam in the fight
Unhorsed a chieftain with the coiling noose,
The leader Tús sent cloudward from the field
The sound of trump and drum, while an Íránian
Made fast the prisoner's hands, and took him off
V. 1001 Toward the heights. Now when from elephant-back
The Khán saw earth rise like the Nile, and there,
Astride a lofty Hill, an Elephant
That grasped a lasso made of lion's hide,
And brought down vultures from the murky clouds,
While stars and moon looked on, he chose a chief,
Learned in the Íránian tongue, and said: "Approach
Yon lion-man and say: 'Fight not so fiercely.
These troops of Chín, of Shakn, Chaghán, and Wahr
Have in their hearts no interest in the feud,
Nor have the kings of Chín and of Khatlán:
Thou hast no quarrel with these aliens,
But with Afrásiyáb, who knoweth not

The fire from water, but hath raised the world,
And by this war brought evil on himself.
We all of us have greed and long for fame,
Yet peace still bettereth war."
With fluent tongue
And guileful heart the man drew near to Rustam,
And said: "O chieftain, lover of the fray! V. 1002
Since fight is over for thee now seek feast.
Thou surely harbourest not revenge at heart
For what hath passed against the Khán of Chín!
Withdraw as he withdraweth, for the strife
Is ended now. When by thy hand Kámús
Was slain, the heads of all our chiefs were turned."
But Rustam answered thus: "The elephants,
The crown, and ivory throne must all be mine.
Ye set your faces to lay waste Írán:
What need is there for talk and blandishments?
He knoweth that his host is in my hands,
And that I check the ardour of mine own.
I spare his own head, but his elephants,
Torque, crown, and throne of ivory are mine."
The messenger replied: "O lord of Rakhsh!
'Spare' not upon the waste the uncaught gazelle!
The plain is all men, elephants, and troops.
Who hath crown, wealth, and grandeur like the Khán?
Who knoweth too the outcome of the day,
And who will quit the field with victory?"
When Rustam heard he spurred on Rakhsh and cried:—
"I vanquish lions and apportion crowns,
Am strong, and have a lasso on mine arm.
Is this the day for jest, the time for counsel?
Whenas the Khán of Chín shall see my lasso,
When that fierce Lion shall behold mine armlet,
He will be taken and distaste e'en life."
He flung the lasso coiled and took the heads V. 1003

Of cavaliers, neared that white elephant,
And then the Khán of Chín, grown desperate,
Smote with the goad the creature's head and, roaring
Like thunder in the month of Farwardín,
Took and hurled forth at Rustam deft of hand
A double-headed battle-dart in hope
To worst him and to take his noble head;
But Rustam, scathless, flung his lasso high,
Dragged from his elephant the Khán of Chín
Noosed by the neck, and dashed him to the ground,
Where others bound his hands and drove him on
Toward the Shahd afoot without his crown,
His litter, throne, or elephant, and there
They made him over to the guards of Túś;
That chieftain sent the drum-roll to the sky.
This tricky Hostelry is ever so:
Whiles it exalteth, whiles it layeth low,
And thus it will be while the sky doth move—
Whiles strife and poison, and whiles sweets and love.
Thou raisest one to heaven on high, and one
Thou makest vile, afflicted, and fordone;
From pit to moon, so dost Thou one elate;
From moon to pit, such is another's fate!
One hath a throne, one is to fishes hurled
In wisdom not caprice, Lord of the world!
Thou art the height and depth thereof, I trow
Not what Thou art Thyself. Thyself art Thou.

§ 15

How the Host of the Túránians was defeated

V. 1004 Then peerless Rustam seized his massive mace,
The great and small were all alike to him;
The battlefield was such that ant and gnat
Had scarcely room to stir on plain and dale;

Blood ran in streams from wounded and from slain
Flung headlong down or headless. When the foe's
Bright fortune loured 'twas nearly night, there came
A blast with murk, light quitted sun and moon,
And then the foe, not knowing head from foot,
Took to the desert and the longsome road.
Pírán beheld that fight and fortune grown
So gloomy to Manshúr, Fartús, the Khán,
And Turkman chiefs; saw standards down, the wounded
Laid vilely in the dust, and thus he said
To Nastíhan the warrior and Kulbád :—
"We must lay by two-headed dart and sword."
Gív overthrew the sable flag, the foe
Dispersing by the roads and pathless tracts.
He routed all the right wing, made the dales
And plains like feathers of a francolin,
And sought upon the army's left and right
To find Pírán, but when they found him not
The warriors returned to vengeful Rustam.
The war-steeds were disabled with the work ;
They all were wounded and fordone with fight.
The troops went to the mountain well content
With Rustam and his escort at their head,
Their bodies injured but their hearts rejoicing V. 1005
About the battle, as is this world's use.
The helms and mail were smirched with blood and dust,
The horses' bards were riven. Heads, feet, swords,
And stirrups were begored, the hills and dales
Were hidden by the slain, the troops so masked
That none could know another till they bathed.
They washed their bodies and forgot their pains
Because their foes were bound in heavy chains.

§ 16

How Rustam divided the Spoil

"Disarm," said Rustam to the Íránians.
"Before the All-conquering we need not mace,
Or belt or treasure. Stoop ye all your heads
To darksome dust, then crown them, for the chiefs
Are minished not by one for whom our hearts
Would now be mourning. When the tidings reached
The world's king he repeated them to me
Forthwith: 'The chieftain Tús hath gained the mountains,
Defeated by Pírán and by Húmán!'
The Sháh's words robbed me of my wits, my brain
Seethed for the fray, while for Gúdarz, Bahrám,
And for Rívníz my heart turned ebon-black.
I sped forth from Írán without delay
Intent upon the fight, but when I saw
The Khán, the men of name and warriors,
Especially Kámús, his Grace and stature,
Such shoulders and such limbs, such hands and mace,
Why then methought: 'My time is o'er!' For since
I girt me as a man I have not looked
In my long life on better men or arms
Assembled anywhere. I have invaded
V. 1006 Mázandarán, a land of dívs, where nights
Are dark and maces massive, yet my heart
Forwent its courage never and I said:—
'I tender neither heart nor life.' Howbeit
In this campaign my days were plunged in gloom,
My heart—the lustre of the world—was darkened!
If now we fall in sorrow in the dust
Before all-holy God it will be well,
For He hath given strength, success, and aid
From Saturn and the sun. Long be it so.

God grant that fear may never fall on us!
Let men too bear the Sháh the news forthwith,
Let him adorn his throne, set on his head
The royal cap, give great gifts to the poor,
And may their blessings be upon his soul.
Now put we off our mail and rest in peace.
No doubt both grief and longing pass away,
And fate is counting up our every breath,
But still 'tis good to add up cups of wine,
And not to stare at yon unloving sky:
Quaff we till midnight then, and let our talk
Be of the mighty men, with thanks to God,
The Conqueror, from whom are manhood, fortune,
And prowess; we should not possess our hearts
Too much in sorrow and laboriousness
In this our Wayside Inn."
The nobles blessed him,
And said: "May crown and signet lack thee never!
All honour to the stock, the native worth,
And mother that brought forth a son like thee.
A man of elephantine Rustam's strain
Is more exalted than the turning sky.
Thou knowest what thou hast achieved through love
For us. Let heaven rejoice because thou livest.
We were as good as slain, our days were done,
But now we live and light the world through thee."
Then having bade to fetch the elephants, V. 1007
Crown, ivory throne, and golden torques, he brought
Forth royal wine and goblets, and first gave:—
"The monarch of the world," and when he grew
Blythe in his cups they parted glad and gay.
When Luna rent the robe of night and set
Its turquoise throne in heaven the scouts dispersed
About the plains and hills, and when the rust
Of night's rest passed, when day's bright Falchion showed,

And earth grew jewel-like, the drum-roll rose
Before his tent, the chiefs arrived, and Rustam
Said: "We have found no traces of Pírán!
Return we to the field and send our troops
In quest of him."

Bízhan the lion-man
Advancing came upon a world of corpses,
Of goods, and treasure; all the plain was strewn
With wounded men flung down and bound; of others
Still living they saw none. Tents and enclosures
Filled all the earth, and tidings came to Rustam:—
"The foe hath fled the field."

Like lion wroth
He raged about the Íránians' sloth and slackness,
And said reviling them: "Hath no one wisdom
Paired with his brain? How when two mountains thus
Shut in our foes could they escape in mass
From us? Did not I say: 'Send forward scouts,
And make each gorge and dale like plain and waste?'[1]
V. 1008 Ye thought of ease and rest, the foe of toil
And march. Slack bodies bring forth care and travail,
But he who chooseth labour fruiteth treasure.
How can I say: 'I am at ease to-day'?
I tremble for Írán."

Then leopard-like
He raged at Tús and said: "Is this a bedroom?
Or battlefield? See to Húmán, Kulbád,
Pírán, Rúín, and to Púlád thyself
Henceforth with thine own host upon this plain:
We are not of one province, thou and I.
If ye have strength fight on your own account,
For how should ye have me, when I have gained
The victory and its results are spoiled?
See from what company the scouts were drawn,

[1] "Et de convertir en plains les vallées et les ravins *en les comblan avec des morts*" (Mohl).

And who is head man of the family,
And when thou findest any of those scouts
Let him be beaten on the feet and hands
With sticks, take what he hath, make fast his feet,
Set him upon an elephant and thus
Dispatch him to the Sháh for execution.
The ivory thrones, the jewels, and dínárs,
Brocade, crowns, treasure, coronets, and all
That they took from us, seach for and bring hither,
For there were many kings upon this plain;
The most illustrious of the world were here
From Chín and from Sakláb, from Hind and Wahr,
And all possessed of realms and treasuries.
First let us choose a present for the Sháh,
And then my portion of the spoils and thine."
Tús and his warriors went and gathered all
The golden girdles and the amber crowns,
The ivory thrones and the brocade of Rúm,
The arrows, the horse-armour, and the bows,
The iron maces and the Indian swords,
And raised a mountain 'twixt the other two: V. 1009
The troops stood round and gazed. Then had an archer,
A cavalier, broad-chested, strong, and valiant,
Shot a four-feathered arrow o'er the heap,
The carry had not reached from end to end!
When Rustam saw the spoil he stood amazed,
And oft invoking the Creator said:—
"Our changeful lifetime giveth feast and fight
By turns, transferring wealth from host to host.
It giveth now with curses, then with blessings;
One gathereth wealth for others to enjoy.
Kámús was minded, and the Khán as well,
To burn Írán. With these huge elephants,
These havings, troops, and stores, their joy was all
In them and in their multitudes of men,

And for a while God was not in their thoughts,
God who created heaven and earth and time,
Much manifest and much mysterious.
Their host is not, their goodly wealth is not,
Their aims and unjust doings are no more!
Now will I send the Sháh these chosen chiefs
From every realm on their huge elephants,
Together with these golden thrones and crowns,
And goods on lusty camels. I will send
Such goods as are most worthy to be sent,
V. 1010 And journey hence myself with all dispatch
To Gang, for heroes cannot brook delay.
To spare the guilty and the murderers
Is weakness; let us wash our hands in blood.
I will allow the bad no rest but bring
The heads of these idolaters to dust,
And show to all the way of Holy God."
Gúdarz replied: "O thou of goodly rede!
Mayst thou remain till place shall be no more."
Then matchless Rustam sought a messenger
To bear the first news to the imperious Sháh,
And chose out Faríburz son of Káús,
Commended by his kinship, and thus said:—
"Famed chief, of royal race, thyself a king,
Accomplished, understanding, nobly born,
Both glad thyself and making others glad!
Take up a task. Go, bear to our young Sháh
My letter, and convey with thee the captives,
The camels, and this wealth—all that there is—
Torques, treasure, bracelets, crowns, and diadems,
The mighty elephants and ivory thrones."
"O raging Lion," Faríburz replied,
"My loins are girded even now to ride."

§ 17

How Rustam wrote a Letter to Kai Khusrau

Then Rustam summoned an experienced scribe,
And wrote a kingly letter in fit terms
With ambergris for ink on painted silk;
The letter opened with the praise of God, V. 1011
Who is and who will be for evermore,
The Maker of the sun and moon and Saturn;
Of Grace and crown and might the Artist He;
Heaven, earth, and time are His; the soul and wisdom
Obey Him. May He bless the Sháh, and may
The age not have him in remembrance only.
I came between two mountains as thou badest:
The troops of three realms were assembled there.
More than a hundred thousand in good sooth
Opposed us, men who drew the scimitar—
Troops from Kashán and Shakn, from Chín and Hind—
A host which stretched from the Indus unto Chín—
While from Kashmír to the outskirts of Mount Shahd
We saw but litters, tents, and elephants.
I feared not for the empire of the Sháh,
But slew our foes; we fought for forty days;
Thou wouldst have said: 'The world is strait to them.'
They all were kings with treasures, crowns, and thrones.
Now 'twixt the mountains over dale and waste
One cannot pass along for blood and slain,
And in good sooth for forty leagues the soil
Is turned to clay with blood. To tell the whole
Were tedious. All the kings that I have bound,
Plucked with my lasso from their elephants,
Lo! I have sent the Sháh, with gifts and jewels
King-worthy, but war on myself; perchance
Gurwí may meet my sword. His head shall crown V. 1012
My spear in wreak for our Head—Siyáwush.

May every tongue be filled with praise of thee,
And turning heaven's summit be thine earth."
He gave the letter, when it had been sealed,
In charge to Faríburz, that royal prince,
With captive kings and elephants, and set
The spoils upon three thousand camels' backs.
So Faríburz son of Káús went forth
Rejoicing, and made speed to reach Khusrau.
The elephantine hero, with the chiefs
And warriors of the army, saw him off
With fond embraces when they said farewell,
While tears rained from the eyelids of the prince.
Then Rustam, when the dark night's tresses showed,
Departed on his way toward the host.
They sat with harp and wine and minstrelsy,
This reveller with harp and that with pipe,
Until they went their ways in full content,
Each to his rest.

Hued like a gold dínár
Sol burst the Veil of Lapis-lazuli,
Whereat the clarion's blast rose from the court
Before the chief's pavilion. Matchless Rustam,
All ready-girded, mounted his swift steed,
And bade the soldiers take supplies with them.
Their way was hard—the longsome desert route.
They marched to war, and matchless Rustam said
To Tús and Gív: "Ye gallant chiefs! this time
Will I fight strenuously and press the foe.
Who knoweth if this crafty man of Sind
Will bring a host from Hind, Sakláb, and Chín?
But I will so bemuse and daze his wits,
And make his body dust upon the tomb
Of Siyáwush, that Hind, Shingán, Sakláb,
And Chín shall bless him nevermore."

V. 1013 He beat
The drums, the dust ascending filled the air,

And earth was full of men,[1] while shouts rose cloudward
From those illustrious chieftains keen for fight.
They marched two stages from the battlefield
Because the ground was blackened with the slain.
The chieftain saw a wood and called a halt,
And, while his soldiers darkened plain and stream,
Indulged in song and wine till some were filled
With mirth and pleasure, and some lay bemused,
While envoys came from all the districts round,
From all the chiefs and men of name, to bring
Him presents, arms, and many an offering.

§ 18

How Kai Khusrau made Answer to Rustam's Letter

Heaven turned, some days elapsed, and then one went
And told the Íránian monarch: "Faríburz,
Son of Káús, approacheth."
Sháh and chiefs
Went out to welcome him with trumpets, tymbals,
And many troops. When Faríburz drew near,
And caught sight of the Sháh, he kissed the ground,
And offered many praises, saying thus:—
"O Sháh of goodly fortune! may high heaven
Be glad of heart through thee and may the world
Thrive through thy justice," then gave Rustam's letter. V. 1014
The king of kings perused it, marvelling
At what the chief reported of that fight,
Inspected prisoners, camels, elephants,
And wounded men, and, having ridden apart,
Put off his royal cap, got off his steed,
And, wallowing in the dust before his God,
Exclaimed: "O holy Ruler of the world!
The oppressor wrought on me oppressively,
And made me fatherless—all grief and anguish;

[1] "la terre était couverte de morts" (Mohl).

But Thou didst free me from my pains and woes,
And give me crown and realm. Both earth and time
Became my slaves, the world my treasury;
I offer thanks to Thee, not to the host,
But grant me one thing—spare me Rustam's life."
This done, he passed before the elephants,
And captives whom he sent to join the wretched
In ward, then bade to bear with all dispatch
The booty to the treasurer and make ready
A pleasant dwelling for the Khán of Chín.
He spent a day in writing his response,
And set a new Tree in the garth of greatness.
He first praised God, the Author of his triumph,
"The Master of the sun and turning sky,
From Whom are war, alliances, and love,
Who hath set up the heaven and graced the earth
With night and day, Who giveth unto this
So dark a fortune, and to that the throne
That he deserveth. Grief and gladness come
From Holy God—the Source of courage, awe,
V. 1015 And reverence," then said: "O paladin!
Be ever pure in body, bright in soul.
All that thou spakest of have reached the court—
The prisoners, the elephants, the crowns,
Brocade of Chín, the thrones of ivory,
Arabian steeds, and torques, and diadems,
With camels in great plenty, tapestries,
And wearing-stuffs, and showers of offerings,
To grace our hocktides, feasts, and festivals.
What man could wish to meet thee in the fight
Unless he was already sick of life?
Now of thy toils among Túránian foes,
By night and day upon the field, I had
Continual news, yet opened not my lips,
But night and day before all-holy God
Presented broken-hearted my petitions.

He that hath Rustam for his paladin
May well continue young; heaven hath no servant V. 1016
Like thee, and may it tender still thy fortune."
The gracious letter being done, and sealed
By Kai Khusrau, he bade to be prepared
A robe of honour, belts, horse-furniture,
A hundred crisp-locked slaves with golden girdles,
A hundred noble horses with gold trappings,
A hundred camels laden with brocade
Of Chín, a hundred more with tapestries,
Two rings of shining rubies and a crown
Of state compact of gold and lustrous pearls,
A suit of royal raiment worked in gold,
With armlet, torque, and golden belt, and presents—
A treasure in themselves—for every chief.
He sent to Faríburz a blue steel sword,
A mace, a golden crown, and golden boots,
And bade him go to Rustam and say thus:—
"We must not pause to rest or eat or sleep
In fighting with Afrásiyáb. Perchance
Thy lasso yet may take that great king's head."
So far Faríburz resumed his journeying,
Such was the pleasure of the Íránian king.

§ 19

How Afrásiyáb had Tidings of the Case of his Army

Thereafter tidings reached Afrásiyáb:—
"A Flame hath issued from the river Shahd,[1]
And in the persons of Kámús, Manshúr,
And of the Khán, Túrán hath been o'erthrown.
An army came forth from Írán to war
Such as left heaven scarce room to turn. The conflict
Continued forty days—days dark as night

[1] So Mohl.

Because the horsemen's dust concealed the sun.
Our fortune slept, no cavalier of all
Our countless host remained still serviceable;
V. 1017 Our mighty men and famous paladins
Have all been bound in heavy bonds and flung
Disgraced upon the backs of elephants
Encircled by a host that reached for miles.
The Khán of Chín too and the mighty men
By thousands have been carried to Írán;
There was no room upon the battlefield
To pass along, so many were the slain!
Pírán, who hath with him a noble army,
Hath marched toward Khutan, but none of Chín,
Kashán, or Hind is left who hath not read
The inscription on the scimitar of Rustam.
Now all the marches for two miles and more
Are full of blood, the earth is void of chiefs
And elephants, while an Íránian host,
Led on by matchless Rustam bent on war,
Approacheth. If they meet us in the fight
Account the hills as plains, the plains as hills."
Heart-stricken and astound, Afrásiyáb
Called all his priests and nobles. "From Írán,"
He said, "a host hath met our chiefs in battle,
Our mighty army with its countless troops
And implements of war hath been o'erthrown,
While I am prostrate, thou mightst say, with grief
Both for Kámús and for the Khán of Chín.
Now that so many troops are slain or maimed,
The more part of the nobles bound in bonds,
What shall we do? What cure shall we apply?
We may not treat the matter with light hearts.
If Rustam is the chief he will not leave
A thorn or weed upon these fields and fells.
V. 1018 He was a reed-like stripling when I marched
On Rai, yet took me from my saddle so

That warriors wondered. Belt and button broke;
I tumbled from his grasp beneath his feet.[1]
Such was the prowess that I saw in him!
And I have heard reports of his exploits,
When single-handed with his massive mace,
Against the mighty of Mázandarán,
As well as of the havoc wrought by him
On our own chiefs in this last battlefield."
The nobles rose and said: "Although the famous
Of Chín and of Sakláb have fought Írán
Our realm is scathless and our host intact.
Why stimulate the foe by fearing Rustam?
We all must die, our loins are girt not loosed,
And Rustam, if he trample on our land,
Shall pay the penalty, for when we arm
For vengeance no Íránian will survive."
He heard, preferred those valiant with their tongues,
And called to him his chiefs, refrained from sleep,
Repose, and feast, unlocked his treasury
And gave out pay; his griefs inspired his soul.
Earth was so full of troops that one might say:—
"The starry sky hath come down to the fray."

§ 20

How Rustam fought with Káfúr the Man-eater

This coil of ill grew clear as Faríburz, V. 1019
Glad-hearted, with the monarch's robe of honour,
And with the crown with earrings,[2] came to Rustam,
Whereat that elephantine hero joyed.
The great men of the army met and praised
The paladin: "May earth be prosperous
Through Rustam, be the Sháh's life glad, and may
Írán still flourish, field and fell, through him."

[1] See Vol. i. p. 374, and Vol. ii. p. 14.
[2] The crown of state. See p. 241.

Thence Rustam led the army on its march,
Reached Sughd and spent two sennights there, engaged
In hunting onager and quaffing wine,
And in such pleasures fleeted time a while.
On marching one stage thence he saw a city
By name Bídád [1]—a hold inhabited
By folk whose only food was human flesh.
The lovely there were ever perishing,
While at the table of a king so loathly
The flesh of growing youths alone was served.
Those slaves that were the goodliest, and were
Unblemished in their faces and their forms,
V. 1020 Supplied the provand for the monarch's board;
Such was his food. The peerless Rustam called
Three thousand cavaliers all clad in mail
On barded steeds and sent them to that hold
With Gustaham and two more valiant chiefs;
Bízhan the son of Gív was one, Hajír [2]
The other—both redoutable in fight.
The king's name was Káfúr; he held the city
By patent. When he heard that from Írán
A host, led by a famed and warlike chief,
Approached, he armed as did his pard-like people,
Who were skilled lasso-flingers, cavaliers,
And Stones and Anvils in the fray. Káfúr
Encountered Gustaham; the armies closed;
'Twas such a fight as when a lion chargeth
Upon a deer; full many Íránians
Were slaughtered and keen fighters turned their heads.
When Gustaham saw this, and that the world
Was in that curst div's hand, he bade his troops
To shower shafts—the horseman's ambuscade.
Káfúr said to his chiefs: "No arrow-head
Will dent an anvil. Ply sword, mace, and lasso,
And take yon leaders' heads within the noose."

[1] *I.e.* "Unjust." [2] Reading with P.

Awhile they fought so that the stream flashed fire,
And many of the Íránians were slain; V. 1021
A sky of bale turned o'er them. Gustaham
Said to Bízhan in haste: "Ride hence. Tell Rustam:—
'Pause not, but come with ten score cavaliers.'"

Bízhan the son of Gív went off like wind,
And told the matter to the matchless one,
Whose stirrups felt his weight as with his men
He rode, who heeded neither hill nor dale.
He reached the field of battle, as it were
A torrent rushing from the gloomy hills,
And shouted to Káfúr: "Unskilful knave!
Now will I bring thy fighting to an end."

Káfúr came rushing with a furious charge
Against the royal and fruit-bearing Tree,
And hurled his sword, as though it were an arrow,
To strike the lion-taking chief, but Rustam
Received it on his shield and took no harm.
Káfúr next flung his lasso o'er the son
Of Zal, who ducked his head. Then Rustam raised
His war-cry like an angry elephant,
Whereat Káfúr stood still in blank amaze,
And Rustam smote his head-piece with the mace,
Which smashed together helmet, head, and neck:
His brains ran down his nostrils, and Káfúr
The warrior fell. Then Rustam, slaughtering still
Without distinction as to great or small,
Charged at the castle-gate, but those within
Made fast the portal, poured down showers of arrows,
And called to him: "O man of strength and sense,
Thou Elephant arrayed in leopard's hide!
What did thy father name thee at thy birth?
'The lasso-flinger,' or 'The sky of fight'?
Alas for all thy toil against this city!
Its name is 'Warstead' with the knowing ones.
When Túr the son of Farídún had left V. 1022

Írán he called men skilled in every way,
And by their aid began to build these walls
Of stones and timber, brick and reeds, thus built them
By toil and sorcery, expending toil
And draining treasury, and gallant men
Have striven much to send up dust therefrom,
But none hath mastered them or profited.
Here are munitions and abundant food,
With subterranean ways to bring in more.
Though thou mayst toil for years thou wilt get naught
But strife, for catapults reach not these walls,
Fenced by Túr's magic and the breath of priests."

Now Rustam when he heard grew full of thought,
His battle-loving heart was like a thicket,
Such fighting liked him not, he brought up troops
From every side, here was Gúdarz, there Tús
With trumpets, drums, and elephants behind;
The army from Zábul was on the third side,
Mail-clad and armed with falchions of Kábul.
The veteran Rustam took his bow in hand,
And all the fortress stood astound at him
As he picked off the head of every one
Who showed himself above the battlements:
The shaft-points whispered secrets to those brains—
An intercourse that made no harmony.
In order to dislodge the garrison
He undermined the walls, propped them with posts
V. 1023 Smeared with black naphtha and, when half way round,
Set them on fire. He brought Túr's ramparts down;
The troops advanced on all sides. Rustam bade:—
"On to the assault; ply bow and poplar shaft."

The brave defenders threw away their lives
With one accord to save their treasured wealth,
Their children and their country and their kin:
Far better for them had they ne'er been born!
The Íránian warriors advanced on foot,

And took their bows and arrows, and their shields,
Advanced supported by the javelin-men,
And led on by Bízhan and Gustaham.
The raging of the fire and shower of shafts
Left no resource but flight, and those that passed
The castle-walls fled weeping o'er the plain.
Then the besiegers barred the castle-gate
And set themselves to pillaging and slaughter.
What multitudes they slew! How many old
And young they carried captive from the city!
Much silver, gold, and other precious things,
With beasts and slaves—both boys and girls—the Íránians
Bore off with them, and marched back to the camp.
The matchless Rustam, having bathed and prayed,
Said to the Íránians: "God must have in store
Still better things than these; give praise to Him
For victory and benefits vouchsafed."

With one consent the great men laid their faces
Upon the ground and offered thanks to God,
Then lauded Rustam: "Thine inferior," V. 1024
They said, "might sit contented with his fame;
Thou with thine elephantine form, thy pluck,
And lion's claws hast never fight enough!"

The peerless Rustam said: "This strength and Grace
Are gifts from God; ye also have your shares,
And none can blame the Maker of the world."

He bade Gív, with ten thousand buckler-men,
On barded steeds to haste and stay the Turkmans
From massing on the marches of Khutan.
When night revealed its dusky curls, and when
The moon's back bent with trouble, Gív departed
With those brave cavaliers and spent three days
In raiding, then, what time the sun displayed
Its crown and mounted on its ivory throne,
Returned with many noble warriors captive,

With many fair-cheeked Idols of Taráz,
With noble horses, and all kinds of arms.
Then Rustam sent a portion to the Sháh,
And gave the rest as booty to the host.
Gúdarz, Tús, Gív and Gustaham, Ruhhám,
Shídúsh the valiant and Gív's son Bízhan
Thereafter rose and lauded him anew.
Thus spake Gúdarz: "Exalted one! thy love
Is needful to the world. We may not open
Our lips by night or day henceforward save
To praise thee. Live glad and bright-souled for ever,
Still old in wisdom and still young in fortune.
God gave thee purity of race; like thee
No one hath e'er been born of stainless mother.
May sire succeed to sire and son to son,
This native worth ne'er fail. Thou needest naught,
Art favoured by the stars, and chief of nobles.
V. 1025 Thy refuge be the Master of the world,
Be earth and time thy partisans. Whoever
Hath travelled o'er earth's surface and beheld
The world and peace and battle and revenge,
Hath nowhere seen a better host than this,
Nor ever heard from time-worn archimages
Of such kings, elephants, and ivory thrones,
Such men and steeds, such treasure and such crowns,
And yet the stars saw it discomfited!
We pondered but saw none to work our cure
Till, as we cried out in the Dragon's breath,
Thy bow delivered us. Crown of Írán,
The Stay of chieftains, and pre-eminent,
Art thou. We are thy lieges. God reward thee,
And ever keep the smiles upon thy face.
Repay we cannot, we can only praise."
Then peerless Rustam lauded them: "May earth,"
Said he, "be peopled always with the brave.
The nobles of Írán are my support—

My bright heart witnesseth to what I say—
My cheek is freshened by your goodly faces,
My spirit is made radiant by your love."
He added: "We will tarry here three days,
Rejoicing and illumining the world,
But march to battle with Afrásiyáb
Upon the fourth and set the streams afire."
In full assent arose the company, V. 1026
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.

§ 21

How Afrásiyáb had Tidings of the Coming of Rustam

Afrásiyáb had tidings: "Rustam cometh
To battle swiftly"—news that wrung his heart
While all his silken raiment turned to thorns.
He said: "Who can assay to combat Rustam?
Troops are enough, but where is a commander?
What man can go and challenge him to battle,
For havoc clingeth to his glittering sword?"
The host said: "Shun not fight with him so much,
For thou art one that in the dust of strife
Canst send the wave of carnage to the moon.
There is no stint of treasure, arms, and men;
Why let the quest of battle grieve thy heart?
Be not concerned because thou hast to fight
This cavalier; look at our gallant troops!
Grant him all iron and brave; he is but one.
Enough of him. Prepare the remedy
With thine own army, and bring down his head
From cloud to dust; that done, we need not fear
Sháh or Írán. Then Kai Khusrau, his throne,
The country of Irán and bough on tree
Will cease to flourish. Mark this noble host,
These youths war-worthy. We for land and child,

V. 1027 For wife and kindred, will give up our lives
Before we yield our country to the foe."
Now when Afrásiyáb had heard those words
He put that ancient battle from his thoughts,[1]
Both for his fatherland and his own sake
He took a fresh resolve and made reply:—
"I will bring forth the implements of war
Since matters press, permit not Kai Khusrau
To rest upon his throne, glad and rejoicing
In fortune, but by long contention bring
The head of Rustam of Zábul to dust.
I will not spare my grandson or his troops,
But lay this quarrel with the scimitar."
He gave commandment to array the host,
And march forth to new wars. The nobles blessed him,
And called the chiefs to vengeance. There was one,
A man of lion-heart by name Farghár,
Quick to discern the cage and shun the springe.
The king, who had observed and everywhere
Approved his feat of arms, put strangers forth,
And said to him: "O noble man! now seek
The Íránian host and spy on warlike Rustam.
Observe his horsemen's numbers and equipment,
And who of ours is acting as their guide.
Mark their war-elephants, their warriors,
And all about their host both good and bad."
Farghár departed to his work as spy
Upon the Íránians, while the ambitious king,
Absorbed in care, denied himself to strangers,
V. 1028 And summoned his son Shída for consult.
"O thou," he said, "who art endowed with wisdom!
When will thy troops be here to share thy cares?
Know that yon countless army, which hath come
With all those cavaliers to fight with us,

[1] The battle in which he had encountered Rustam. See p. 243. Mohl translates "oublia les anciennes guerres."

Is led by Rustam of the lion-heart,
Whose scimitar converteth dust to clay.
Kámús, Manshúr, the Khán of Chín, Gahár,
The glorious Fartús, Kundur, Shangul—
The king of Hind—an armament that stretched
Down to the river Indus from Kashmír—
Are slain or captive through the victory
Of lion-taking Rustam. Forty days,
With lulls at whiles, they fought but Rustam triumphed,
Dragged with his lasso from their elephants
Our warriors and bound them. Cavaliers
And nobles from all climes, the mighty leaders,
The arms and ivory throne, steeds, crowns, and camels
Dispatched he to Irán, and by that token
Is now invading us with his proud chiefs
And famous men. I shall not leave my throne,
Or much wealth here with fortune so inconstant,
But send my treasures, crowns, belts, golden torques,
And bucklers to the banks of the Almás :
This is no time for joyance, harp, and song.
I dread deft-handed Rustam, who is safe
E'en in the gullet of a crocodile ;
He is not human on the day of battle,
He writheth not when hit nor crieth out
For pain, he feareth not spear, sword, and arrow,
Or maces raining from this ancient sky !
'He is of brass and iron,' thou wouldst say,
'And not of man's race but an Áhriman !'
So mighty are his arms on days of fight
That earth's back wearieth with the weight thereof !
He weareth chain-mail, breast-plate, tiger-skin, V. 1029
And helm ; he roareth like a thunder-cloud !
Huge elephants sustain not his attack,
Or ships upon the azure sea[1] his weapons !
The Mountain under him is swift as wind,

[1] "Sur les flots de l'Indus" (Mohl).

And, thou wouldst say, 'begotten by the sky.'
Swift as gazelle and terrible as lion
It goeth gallantly at height and river,
And would, I dare affirm, fare like a ship
If put upon its mettle. Oft have I
Contended with its rider, but his breast-plate
Is made of leopard-skin, which foiled my weapon
Though I tried ax and arrow many a time;
But now by way of proof I will to war
Once more to see if fortune favoureth us,
And so if God affordeth us His aid,
And if high heaven revolveth as we would,
We will not leave Írán or Sháh: perchance
It may be mine to terminate this feud,
While should the might of Rustam's hand prevail
I will betake me o'er the sea of Chín
Betimes and leave these marches of Túrán
To him."

Then Shída answered: "Prudent king!
Live happily while crown and throne endure.
Thou hast Grace, wisdom, lofty mien, high birth,
And fortune, heart, and manhood, thou dost need
No monitor, yet heed this turn of fate:
Men like Pírán, Húmán, and Farshídward,
Kulbád and Nastíhan have had their armour
Destroyed, and their hearts shattered, in the fight:
Thou wouldst have said: 'Their grief hath broken them.'
Launch not thy vessel while these war-winds blow,
Since thou art ware that this great host hath come.
V. 1030 Thou art the warrior-king experienced
And tried in war; now by thy life and head,
By sun and moon, by throne and cap, I swear
This matter of Kámús and of the Khán
Hath filled my heart with pain, my head with vengeance.

Our business is to lead the host to Gang,
Not contemplating battle but to call
An army up from Chín and from Máchín,
And after that o'erthrow the enemy."
When he had spoken he withdrew to rest,
Haste in his head and vengeance in his heart.
The dark night oped its melancholy eyes,
The moon had grown round-shouldered with distress,
And all the world resembled sable musk
What time Farghár came from the Íránian host.
He reached the presence of Afrásiyáb
By night—the time for quiet and repose—
And thus reported: 'From this lofty court
I went to Rustam, binder of the Dív.
I saw a camp-enclosure green and vast
With cavaliers resembling ravening wolves.
A standard stood erect charged with a dragon;
Thou wouldst have said: 'It is alive!' There stood
Within the tent a huge, fierce Elephant,
Whose girded waist was like a tiger's loins.
Before him was a steed, a piebald bay;
Thou wouldest say: 'It never taketh rest.'
The bridle hung down from the saddle-bow,
A coiled hide-lasso from the saddle-straps.
The chiefs were such as Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív,
And Faríburz, Gurgín, and brave Shídúsh.
Guráza is the scout with Gustaham
Accompanied by Gív and by Bízhan."
The king grieved at the tidings of Farghár.
Then came one to Afrásiyáb to say:—
"Pírán the chieftain hath arrived like dust V. 1031
With great men and with warriors of the fight."
The king told what Farghár had said and asked:—
"Who is a match for Rustam in the fray?"
Pírán said: "What resource have we in war
Except the quest of glory on the field?

So let us struggle for our fatherland,
Our children, and our kin."

Afrásiyáb

Thereat grew instant to engage and bade
Pírán march forth 'gainst battle-loving Rustam.
They left the presence and went forth to war
Upon the plain, shouts rose, the tymbals sounded,
The troops' dust turned the world to ebony.
So mighty was the host that thou hadst said :—
" The whole world will be hidden by the dust!"
The tymbal-players sent their din on high
As elephant on elephant filed by.

§ 22

Afrásiyáb's Letter to Púládwand

Afrásiyáb set forward from his palace,
And hasted bent on vengeance to the waste.
He gave all needful orders to Pírán,
And then withdrawing cleared his tent of strangers.
They set a scribe before him. " Write," said he,
" A letter unto Púládwand and make
The matter known. First praise All-holy God,
Who stablisheth and overthroweth us—
The Lord of Saturn and the turning sky,
The Lord of Venus and the shining sun.
V. 1032 Give praise next to that binder of the strong—
The fortunate chieftain Púládwand, declare
What we have suffered from this famous fighter,
And these renowned and all-accomplished chiefs,
From Tús, Gúdarz, and other warriors.
Then tell him all about my grandson's case—
The master of Írán, the mighty Sháh—
Whom erst I cherished like dear life itself
That no ill blast might reach him. Then proceed :—
' Now, if high heaven taketh side with us,

Let Púládwand come hither. Many troops
Brought from the marches of Sakláb and Chín
Have been o'erthrown and writhe, much field and fell
Been harried by the warriors of Írán.
Their host is like a moving hill, their chiefs
Are such as Rustam who is in command,
Gúdarz the warrior and Gív and Tús:
They raise the din of tymbals to the clouds.
When Rustam, who alone hath vexed our land,
Shall have been slain by thee no host will come
Against it. Be thou our deliverer.
If by thy hand his term shall reach its end
The face of earth will surely be at rest.
Then from my populous kingdom will I take
But one half of my treasures as my share;
The other half, and half my crown, are thine,
Since both the fight and toil are thine to-day.'"
They sealed the letter with the royal seal,
And Shída, as the moon arose in Cancer,
Girt up himself in presence of his father
To go grief-laden on the embassage.
He came to Púládwand as swift as fire V. 1033
Through apprehension of calamity,
Saluted him, delivering the letter
And telling Rustam's deeds. Now Púládwand,
A king whose aspirations reached high heaven,
Lived in the mountain-parts of Chín and had
No peer in all the land. He lacked not troops
And men of war; he was a Crocodile;
His troops were pards. He called his governors
And priests, and held discourse with them at large,
Told what the letter said and, being a prince
Both youthful and imperious, commanded
To bear the drums and camp-enclosure forth
Upon the plain. He gathered troops and dívs.
The battle-cry went up. He led the way,

Equipped with shield, with quiver, and with lasso,
And followed by his standard. He descended
The mountains, crossed the water, and drew near
Afrásiyáb, at whose gate tymbals sounded,
And all went forth to welcome Púládwand.
The veteran monarch first embraced the chief,
Then spake much of the past, told whence arose
The Turkmans' trouble and the remedy.
While going to the palace they considered
V. 1034 New stratagems. Afrásiyáb discussed
The waiting and the forward policies,
Told of the strife and outcry that had come
Upon him through the death of Siyáwush,
Told of the Khán, Manshúr, and brave Kámús,
Recalling what had passed, and said: "My pain
Is all through one who weareth leopard-skin.
Mine arms are impotent on him and on
That hide, that helmet, and that shield of Chín.
Plains hast thou trodden and a longsome road:
Now fashion us a remedy for this."
The mind of Púládwand grew full of thought
How this knot should be loosed. He made reply:—
"We must not hurry in so great a war.
This is the self-same Rustam that laid waste
And took Mázandarán with his huge mace,
Who rent the White Dív's side, the liverstead
Of Bíd, and of Púlád son of Ghundí.
I have not prowess to contend with him,
Or power enough to frustrate his attack;
Still let my body and my soul await
Thy will, may wisdom ever be thy guide.
Do thou incite the host against his host,
Our numbers may bewilder him, and I
Will plan a stratagem, for otherwise
We have not strength to break his breast and neck."
Afrásiyáb grew blythe of mind and brought

Bright wine and harp and lyre, When Púládwand
Was in his cups he roared out to the king:—
"Dark to Jamshíd, Zahhák, and Farídún
Made I their provand, slumber, and repose!
The Brahman hath been frighted at my voice,
And this my noble host, and I will hew
To pieces with my trenchant sword amain
This Zábulí upon the battle-plain!"

§ 23

How Púládwand fought with Gív and Tús

As soon as Sol displayed its shining flag, V. 1035
And night's deep violet silk grew safflower-hued,
Drums sounded from the portal of the king,
The troops' shouts reached the clouds, and Púládwand
Of lusty form with lasso on his arm
Led on the troops.
When both the hosts were ranked
The air turned violet-dim, the earth was darkened.
Then matchless Rustam donned his tiger-skin,
And, mounted on his huge, fierce Elephant,[1]
Raged and assailed the right wing of the foe,
O'erthrowing many a Turkman warrior.
This Púládwand descried and, having loosed
His twisted lasso from the saddle-straps,
Encountered Tús like some mad elephant,
With lasso on his arm and mace in hand;
He seized Tús by the girdle, easily
Dismounted him, and dashed him to the ground.
Gív, when he looked upon the fight and saw
The head of Tús son of Naudar o'erthrown,
Urged on Shabdíz, devoting soul and body
To fight, and mailed, armed with an ox-head mace,
Strove like a savage lion with the dív,

[1] Rakhsh.

Who flung his lasso round his foeman's head.
Ruhhám was with Bízhan; they both observed
The mace, the prowess, and dexterity
Of Púládwand, and went to bind his hands
With lassos, but that wary warrior
Urged on his steed and raised his battle-cry.
Those two brave warriors of noble birth,
Those haughty Lions casting such long shadows,
He flung to earth, and trampled on in scorn,
In sight of all the horsemen on the plain,
V. 1036 And reaching Káwa's standard clave the staff
Asunder with his sword. The Íránians wailed,
No warrior stood his ground upon the field.
When Faríburz, Gúdarz, and the other chiefs
Beheld the traces of that warrior-dív
They said to Rustam, that avenging one:—
"There is not left upon this battlefield
A single man of name still in the saddle,
Or horseman of the warriors of this host,
Whom Púládwand hath brought not to the ground
With arrow or with lasso, mace or sword!
The field of battle is a field of woe,
And 'tis for Rustam to deliver us."
Anon arose a cry of pain and grief
From both the wings and centre; then Gúdarz,
The man of eld, supposing that Bízhan,
The lion-taking chieftain, and Ruhhám,
His offspring both, had perished in the fight,
Cried in his anguish to the righteous Judge:—
"I had so many sons and grandsons once
That I extolled my head above the sun,
But they are slain before me in the wars,
So greatly have my day and fortune changed!
Slain in their youth while I live on hoar-headed!"
He doffed his casque, he laid his girdle by,
And then began to wail right bitterly.

§ 24

How Rustam fought with Púládwand

Now Rustam when he heard was sorely grieved,
He shook as 'twere a bough upon a tree,
And drawing near to Púládwand, and seeing
His mountain-height grieved for those gallant four V. 1037
Like onagers contending with a lion,
Saw one host sorely stricken and the other
Unbroken, and he thought: "Our day hath darkened,
Our nobles' heads are dazed! Good sooth! the strife
Hath turned against us and our fortune sleepeth!"
Then gripping with his legs he urged on Rakhsh,
And raging challenged Púládwand to fight,
Exclaiming: "O thou ill-conditioned dív!
Thou shalt behold a change of fortune now."
The voice of Rustam reached those warriors,
And he, perceiving them dismounted, said:—
"O Thou Almighty Ruler of the world!
Thou art above the unseen and the seen.
Far rather would I lose mine eyes in battle
Than look upon this miserable day,
Whereon such cries have risen from Írán,
Such from Húmán, Pírán, and yon fierce dív!
Gív and Ruhhám and Tús are all unhorsed,
And e'en Bízhan who used to mock at lions!
The chargers of the great are pierced with arrows,
The riders fight afoot as best they may."
Then closing with the dív he threw his lasso,
But Púládwand, brave horseman though he was,
Ducked in alarm, he had had fight enough;
But when the cast had failed and he was safe
He said to Rustam: "O thou gallant one,
Thou veteran Lion and illustrious,
Who scarest mighty elephants! ere long

Thou shalt behold the billows of the deep.
V. 1038 Consider now the fire of mine attack,
My lasso, courage, might, and enterprise.
Thou shalt behold no traces of thy Sháh,
His nobles, or his mighty men henceforth,
Or of thy land, unless in dream, for I
Will give thine army to Afrásiyáb."
"How much more shirking, blustering, and guile?"
Said Rustam. "Let no warrior play the shrew
Or he will give his head up to the winds
Assuredly. Though thou be brave and proud
Thou art not Sám nor yet stiff-necked Garshásp."
Then Púládwand recalled a saw of old:—
"They who unjustly seek to cause a fight
Return with livers pierced and faces white;
If friend or foe harm thee 'tis well thou still
Do thy devoir alike to good and ill."
He thought: "This is that Rustam who o'ercame
By night with his huge mace Mázandarán,"
And then he said: "O man approved in war!
Why stand we here so long to no result?"
Two mighty Elephants, two warlike Lions,
Were they; they wheeled, the dust rose from the waste,
And elephantine Rustam with his mace
Struck his foe's head: all present heard the crash.
Such darkness filled the eyes of Púládwand
That he relaxed his hold upon his bridle,
And, swerving to the right hand in his pain,
Exclaimed: "An ill day this!"
Now matchless Rustam—
Looked for the brains of Púládwand to pour
From both his ears but, since he kept his seat,
Invoked the Maker of the world and said:—
"O Thou exalted over fortune's wheel,
The Lord, the All-seeing, and the Nourisher!
If I am fighting in an unjust cause

My spirit doteth not upon this world;
But if the wrong is with Afrásiyáb V. 1039
Deprive me not of strength and skill in arms.
It is not meet that thou shouldst loose my soul
From bondage by the hand of Púládwand,
For if I am to perish by his prowess
No warrior will remain throughout Írán,
No husbandman and no artificer,
No dust, no country, and no field or fell."
He said to Púládwand: "What harm hast thou
Got from the whirling mace? Thy hands relax
Thy sable reins. Down, dív! and beg thy life."
He said: "Thy mace hath harmed me not."
They closed,
And Púládwand employed his sword of steel
With many a feint and many an artifice,
But failed to pierce through Rustam's tiger-skin,
Which filled the liver of the dív with blood.
That fierce one raged at fate because his sword
Availed not on his foeman; he was troubled
At Rustam's neck and shoulders, and again
Spake to him: "Doff this tiger's legacy,
This armour, with that sable helm of thine,
And put on others. I will do the like,
And come with speed."
But Rustam said: "Not so.
That is no channel for a warrior's stream.
I will not change my gear, do thou keep thine."
Then both the warriors wheeled till Púládwand,
Whose massive mace fell but without effect V. 1040
On Rustam's tiger-skin and coat of steel,
Said: "Wrestling is the test 'twixt man and man.
Take we each other by the leathern belt,
That we may know which one the will of fate
Dismisseth worsted from the battlefield."
Then Rustam said: "O ill-conditioned dív!

Thou canst not stand a warrior's blow, but like
A fox employest craft. What profit is it
To have thy head ensnared? Hast wile or spell
In wrestling that will free that neck of thine
From mine encircling arms?"
They made a pact
That none should interfere from either side,
Then, lighting from their chargers, both the foes
Took time wherein to breathe them and repose.

§ 25

The Wrestling of Rustam and Púládwand

These two exalted warriors bent on fight
Prepared themselves to wrestle, and agreed:—
"No one on either side shall intervene."
The space between the hosts was half a league.
The stars surveyed that fight as Púládwand
And matchless Rustam—those grim Lions—closed,
Who felt each other, then each warrior
Seized his opponent by the leathern belt.
V. 1041 When Shída looked on Rustam's chest and neck
He drew a deep, cold sigh and thus bespake
His sire Afrásiyáb: "This mighty man,
Whom thou call'st Rustam, binder of the Dív,
Will by his strength and prowess lay the head
Of our brave warrior-dív upon the dust,
And thou wilt see our soldiers take to flight,
So strive not vainly with the turning sky."
The sire replied: "My brain is fraught with care
On that account, go and observe the prowess
Of Púládwand in wrestling. Speak to him
In Turkman and advise him. He may get
The elephantine Rustam off his feet.
Tell Púládwand: 'When thou hast got him down
Let thine appeal be to the scimitar.'"

But Shída said: "This is not what the king
Agreed to in the presence of the host.
If thou art rash and breakest covenant
Thy warfare will not issue in success.
Befoul not this clear stream, else he that loveth
Fault-finding will discover cause for blame."
Afrásiyáb began to chide, becoming
In his fierce wrath distrustful of his son,
And said to him: "If Púládwand the dív
Shall be o'erthrown by this antagonist
None will remain alive upon the field;
Thou hast a valiant tongue, no prowess else."
He plied his reins and came forth lion-like
Upon the ground, observed the strife and shouts
Like thunder, then he said to Púládwand:—
"If thou, exalted Lion! gett'st him down
In wrestling rip him open with thy dagger;
We need not boasting but accomplishment."
Gív marked the king's wild words and eagerness,
Then urging on his charger came in haste, V. 1042
Because the enemy had broken troth,
And said to Rustam: "O thou warrior!
What orders givest thou thy servants? Speak!
Observe Afrásiyáb, his eagerness,
And wild words! He hath come forth to inflame
The heart of thine antagonist and prompt him
To use his dagger in a wrestling-bout!"
But Rustam said: "A man of war am I,
And, when engaged in wrestling, bide my time.
What do ye fear? Why are your hearts thus rent?
E'en now will I bring down from heaven above
The head and neck of Púládwand to dust;
But if I have not strength of hand therefor
What need thus wantonly to break my heart?
Although this witless warlock doth transgress

The covenant of God, why should ye fear
The breach? He poureth dust on his own head."
Then, like a lion, reaching out he clutched
The chest and neck of that fierce Crocodile,
And, straining hard, uprooted Púládwand,
As though he were a plane-tree, from his place,
Raised him aloft, dashed him upon the ground,
And uttered praises to Almighty God.
A shout rose from the army of Írán;
The drummers marched out with the kettle-drums;
The blast of clarion, the clang of gong
And Indian bell ascended to the clouds.
Now Rustam thus imagined: "Púládwand
Hath not a sound joint in his body left,
His bones are broken and his cheeks become
The colour of the bloom of fenugreek,"
V. 1043 So flung his leg across the gallant Rakhsh,
And left the Dragon's body as it lay;
But, when the lion-clutching hero reached
His army, Púládwand glanced arrow-like,
And fled with all speed to Afrásiyáb
With full heart and with tears upon his face.
When Rustam saw that Púládwand still lived,
And troops were everywhere upon the plain,
His heart grew straitened, he led on the host,
Called unto him the veteran Gúdarz,
And ordered: "Let them send a shower of arrows,
And make the air as 'twere a cloud in spring."
Bízhan was on one wing, Gív on the other
With veteran Ruhhám and brave Gurgín.
Thou wouldst have said: "They have enkindled fire,
And with their falchions set the world ablaze!"
Then Púládwand said to his troops: "With throne,
Renown, and treasure lost, why throw away
Our lives or think at all of further strife?"

And, with his very life-cord snapped in twain
By Rustam, marched his army from the plain.

§ 26

How Afrásiyáb fled from Rustam

Pírán spake thus unto Afrásiyáb :—
"The surface of the world is like a sea!
Did not I say: 'We cannot tarry here
Secure from Rustam of the deadly hand?'
By murdering the youth beloved by him
Thou hast transfixed our hearts with arrow-points.
How wilt thou fare? None of thine own remaineth, V. 1044
And Púládwand the dív hath marched away.
The horsemen of Írán on barded chargers
Exceed in sooth a hundred thousand men;
The lion-catching Rustam is their leader,
And air is full of arrows, earth of blood.
From sea and plain, from mountain and from waste,
Our warriors assembled; when men failed
We tried the dívs. Great were the strife and shouts,
But now, since Rustam came, no place is left
For thee; the only prudent course is flight.
Since thou art here the treasure of the earth
Thou shouldst withdraw to further Chín. Leave here
Thy troops thus ranged for battle and betake thee,
Thou and thy kindred, seaward."
The king saw
That fight was hopeless, took the advice, and fled.
They left his flag but he himself departed,
And went in haste toward Máchín and Chín.
The armies came together face to face,
The earth grew like a darksome cloud, anon
The peerless Rustam shouted to his host :—
"Take not your bows and arrows or your spears,

But battle with the mace and scimitar,
And show a prowess worthy of your standing.
Is it the time for pards to shun the fray
When they perceive the quarry in the lair?"
The soldiers left their spears upon the mount,
And, shouting, made the dales and plains of fight
Impassable with corpses. Half the living
Asked quarter, and the others fled pell-mell;
There was no shepherd and the flock was scattered;
The plain was filled with handless, neckless trunks.
Then Rustam spake and said: "Enough are slain.
These changes are the lot of all, at whiles
Producing bane, at whiles the antidote.
Put off your arms and do more good henceforth.
V. 1045 Why set your hearts upon this Wayside Inn,
Which now is joyful and then sorrowful,
Which now assaileth us like Áhriman,
And then is like a bride all scent and colour?
Choose calm, untroubled lives, for who can say
That cursing is a better thing than blessing?"
He chose gold, silver, raiment yet unworn,
Youths, horses, swords, and casques to send the Sháh,
Took for himself crowns, musk, and ambergris,
And lavished on the troops the residue.
He fain had found the monarch of Túrán,
Path and no path they sought him everywhere.
Folk gave no trace of him by land or sea;
No tidings reached them of Afrásiyáb.
The Íránians set themselves to desolate
His banquet-houses and his palaces,
And Rustam fired his settlements beside;
That conflagration blazed up far and wide.

§ 27

How Rustam returned to the Court of the Sháh

Before they left Túrán they loaded up
Crowns, thrones, and precious armour; they had captured
So many camels and such herds of horses
That none could murmur at the lack of beasts.
There rose a shouting and a blare of trumpets,
They brought the camel-bells and brazen gongs,
And entered on their march toward Írán,
A host thus decked with colour and perfume.
As soon as news of Rustam reached the Sháh V. 1046
A shout came from the city and the court,
And cloudward from Írán rose tymbal-din
Proclaiming that the lord of mace and mail
Had come. One common joy was in the world
Among all classes and degrees of men.
The Sháh's heart grew like Paradise above,
He offered praises to Almighty God,
Bade bring the elephants, and journeyed forth.
The world was decked according to the custom,
Wine, harp, and minstrelsy were in request,
The necks of all the elephants that went
Were drenched with saffron, musk, and wine. The drivers
Wore coronets upon their heads, and earrings
Depended from their ears. Men poured down saffron
And drachms, and sifted ambergris on musk.
When matchless Rustam saw the exalted crown,
While all around was echoing applause,
He lighted from his steed and did obeisance.
Khusrau inquired about the tedious march,
Embracing Rustam long and heartily,
And, calling many a blessing down on him,
Bade him remount and, as they fared together

Hand within hand, said thus: "Why hast thou stayed
So long and burnt us through our love of thee?"
"Apart from thee," thus Rustam made reply,
"Our hearts have not enjoyed a moment's pleasure."
V. 1047 They reached at length the palace of the Sháh,
The far-famed court; there on the golden throne
Sat Kai Khusrau with noble Rustam, Tús,
Gív, Faríburz, Gúdarz, Farhád, Gurgín,
And brave Ruhhám. The Sháh spake of the war,
The field, and fighting of the Turkman host.
Gúdarz replied: "O sire! the tale is long!
Our first needs are the flagon, wine, and rest,
And afterward thou mayest question us."
They spread the tables and the Sháh said smiling:—
"Good sooth! thou hast been famished by the march."[1]
He set wine on the board, called minstrelsy,
And then inquired of all that had occurred,
About Afrásiyáb and Púládwand,
The twisted lasso and the wrestling-bout,
About the Khán, Kámús, and Ashkabús,
And that vast army with its elephants
And drums. Gúdarz addressed him thus: "O Sháh!
No mother will bring forth a cavalier
Like Rustam. Though a dív or lion cometh
Or dragon, none escapeth his long clutch.
A thousand blessings be upon the king,
Above all on this famous paladin."
The words so pleased Khusrau that thou hadst said:—
"He raised his head to Saturn." He rejoined:—
"World-conquering paladin, alert and shrewd!
The man with wisdom for his monitor
Is circumspect in time's vicissitudes.
Be evil's eye far from this paladin,
And may his life be one long festival."

[1] "Il paraît que la route t'a altéré" (Mohl).

They spent a week with wine in hand. The crown, V. 1048
The throne, and company rejoiced in Rustam,
While some to melody of pipe and strings
Sang in heroic strains his combatings.

§ 28

How Rustam went back to Sistán

The peerless Rustam tarried with the Sháh
One month in revelry. At length he said:—
"O full of virtues, wearer of the crown!
The monarch of the world is wise and good,
But yet I long to see the face of Zál."
The great Sháh then unlocked his treasury-door,
And of the precious things there stored away
Such gifts as jewels, crowns, and finger-rings,
Brocade and raiment from Barbar, and slaves,
With earrings and with crowns, a hundred steeds
And camels, saddled or for porterage,
With golden trays of aloes and of musk,
Two golden slippers, and a mace to match
Inlaid with jewels that a king might wear,
Gifts that became a man of such renown,
The Sháh sent matchless Rustam, and went out
Two stages with him on the journey home;
And Rustam when the king was wearying
Of that long road gat down and homaged him,
Bade him farewell, then left Írán behind,
And hastened onward to Zábulistán.
The world became obedient to the Sháh,
And settled in accordance to his will.
This tale too have I ended and 'tis long—
This battle with Kámús—and from my song
No jot hath fallen. Had but one word been
Left out it would have caused my soul chagrin.

I joyed o'er Púládwand who added not
His steel chains to the chains that we have got.[1]
Now hear the battle with Akwán and know
How famous Rustam fared against that foe.

[1] "Púládwand," with the change of one letter, would mean "a steel chain."

PART IV

THE STORY OF THE FIGHT OF RUSTAM WITH THE DÍV AKWÁN

ARGUMENT

The poet half apologises for introducing this story into the Sháhnáma, but pleads that we live in a world of wonders. The tale runs thus: Complaints are brought to Kai Khusrau of the ravages made among the herds by a certain onager which the Sháh perceives to be the dív Akwán. Accordingly he sends Rustam to the rescue, who is, however, taken at a disadvantage by the dív, and only saves his life by his ready wit. He then falls in with Afrásiyáb and his meiny, and defeats them single-handed. Afterward he again encounters Akwán, slays him, and returns home in triumph.

NOTE

This story is a variation on the theme "the devil is an ass." Firdausí probably introduced it into the Sháhnáma to explain the references in Part V. Afrásiyáb uses, "the boulder of the dív Akwán," to cover the entrance of the pit in which Bízhan is imprisoned. Rustam, when he comes to deliver Bízhan, is represented as lifting the stone single-handed and flinging it far away.[1]

In Zoroastrian theology Urmuzd was supposed to be surrounded by impersonations of his own divine qualities, who were known as the Ameshaspentas, "the immortal well-doers." They were six in number, and among them was one named Vohu Manau, *i.e.* Good Thought. Corresponding to these on Áhriman's side were six impersonations of his evil qualities, one of which was Akem Manau, *i.e.* Bad Thought. These good and evil impersonations were opposed to one another in pairs. Vohu Manau, for instance, was antagonised by Akem Manau. It has been suggested by

[1] See pp. 309, 345.

Professor Nöldeke that Akwán is a mistake of Firdausí or of his authorities for Akúmán, and that the dív Akwán is really none other than Akem Manau in disguise.[1] Similarly Aaishma daéva (dív), the demon of wrath, appears to be the Asmodeus of the Book of Tobit.

§ 1

The Prelude

V. 1049 Be adoration as thy duty, sage!
To God the Lord of soul and wisdom raised,
Yet let this question thy bright mind engage:—
Can any praise Him as He should be praised?
All knowledge that we have is feebleness;
For such poor weaklings who can tears repress?
Philosopher! in vain thou biddest me
In many words to make thy path mine own,
The best word witnesseth God's unity,
Albeit, said or not said, God is One.
What things soever pass before thine eyes
Accord to this conviction of thy mind,
Walk then the beaten track if thou art wise
Or else discussion will no limit find.
Born, soul and body, in a single breath
Of mighty moment is thyself to thee,
Yet here thou hast but brief reprieve from death,
And in another home thy rest will be.
Think first of the Creator then and base
Thy worship on the thought well understood
That He who keepeth turning heaven in place
Is Hé that is thy Guide to every good.
The world is full of wonders to thy view,
And none hath means to judge them here below:
Thy soul is wonderful, thy body too,
So let thy first task be thyself to know,
And next the sky which turneth over thee

[1] NIN, p. 10, *note*.

In all its daily mutability.
The rustic minstrel's tale of days of old
Thou mayest not be willing to receive,
For men of wisdom who shall hear it told,
And weigh it learnedly, will disbelieve;
Yet, if thou wilt the inner meaning scan,
Thou wilt accept it and from carping cease,
So hear the story of the ancient man V. 1050
Though it may be his words will fail to please.

§ 2

How Khusrau summoned Rustam to fight the Dív Akwán

Thus saith the storying minstrel: Kai Khusrau
One morn adorned his Rose-bed like the spring.
Such chieftains as Gúdarz, Tús, Gustaham,
Barzín son of Garshásp, sprung from Jamshíd,
With Gív and with Ruhhám the veteran,
Gurgín and sage Kharrád sat with the Sháh,
And drained the goblet to the king of kings
Right merrily. One hour of day had passed
When there arrived a herdsman from the plain,
Who came before Khusrau, first kissed the ground,
And then addressed that Sháh of glorious race:—
"An onager hath come amongst the herds,
And seemeth like a dív escaped from bond!
Thou wouldest say: 'It is a savage lion!'
He breaketh our steeds' necks; he is in colour
As 'twere the sun itself; thou wouldest say:—
'The sky hath washed him in a bath of gold.'
Drawn from his neck and reaching to his tail
There is a line as black as musk. If thou
Wouldst judge by his round haunches and his feet
Thou wouldest say: 'He is a noble steed.'"
Khusrau, aware that 'twas no onager,

For onagers surpass not steeds in strength,
And having heard that people near the stream,
Where this man used to turn the herds to graze,
Made much complaint about Akwán the dív,
Said to the hind: "This is no onager,
And I have knowledge of it. Go thy way."
He then addressed the chiefs: "Ye paladins,
V. 1051 With Grace and state! we need one lion-fierce
Among yourselves to go on this emprise."
He scanned the warriors but found none to please him,
For only Rustam son of Zál could help
In such a cause, and so Khusrau prepared
A letter couched in just and loving terms,
And gave it to Gurgín son of Mílád,
To whom he said: "Bear to the son of Zál
My letter, go like smoke both night and day,
And slumber not within Zábulistán.
Greet Rustam much and lovingly from me,
Say to him: 'Live while heaven itself shall last,'
And add when he hath read the letter through:—
'My Grace is all from thee, aspiring chief!
Show us thy face, arise, and come. When thou
Hast read the letter stay not in Zábul.'"
Gurgín departed like a rushing wind,
Or onager in terror for its life,
And gave the letter when he reached the chieftain,
Who heard, obeyed, and went to court in state,
There kissed the ground before the throne and blessed
The imperial fortunes, saying thus: "O Sháh!
Thou calledst me, and here am I girt up
To do thy will. Be might and goodness thine."
Khusrau, on seeing Rustam, welcomed him,
Gave him a seat upon the royal throne,
And afterward spake thus: "O paladin!
Mayst thou live ever glad and bright of soul.

This day is blessèd since I look on thee:
My fortunes all depend on thy shrewd mind.
A work is toward, O elephantine one! V. 1052
For which I summoned thee of all the mighty,
So that, if thou distaste not my command,
Thou mayest gird thee to win crown and treasure.
A hind hath said: 'An onager hath come
Among the herds.'"
The Sháh told o'er the tale,
And added: "Now, O matchless one, make ready!
And undertake this further enterprise.
Go, and in dealing with it have a care,
For it may be malicious Áhriman."
"Through thy good fortune," Rustam made reply,
"Now whether it be lion, dív, or dragon,
The servant of thy throne is not afraid;
It shall not 'scape my scimitar's sharp blade."

§ 3

How Rustam went in Quest of the Dív

He went forth like a lion to the chase,
A lasso on his arm and under him
A Dragon, went to where that hind was tending
His cattle and that dív was roaming loose.[1]
Three days he searched the champaign mid the steeds,
And on the fourth perceived a Thing careering,
And rushing by him like the north wind's blast.
It was a glossy beast of golden hue,
But with fell mischief 'neath its hide. Then Rustam
Spurred fleet-foot Rakhsh but thought as he drew near:—
"I need not cast but noose it with my lasso;
There is no call to spoil it with the sword;
I will convey it living to the Sháh."

[1] Reading with P.

So Rustam flung his royal lasso forth,
Intent to take the creature by the head.
The lusty onager perceived the noose,
V. 1053 And vanished instantly. Then Rustam knew:—
"This is no onager; I must proceed
By craft not force. It is Akwán himself,
And I must smite him with a whiff of steel.
The sages told me that this is his haunt,
But his appearance as an onager
Is strange! The scimitar must now avail
To make blood overflow that yellow gold."
Just then the onager appeared again;
Again the chieftain urged his swift career,
Strung up his bow and from his wind-like steed
Let fly an arrow like Ázargashasp,
But even as he drew his royal bow
The onager was gone the second time.
Then Rustam rode about the open plain
A day and night in want of sustenance,
And nodding in the saddle, till he found
A fountain like rose-water. Lighting there
He watered Rakhsh and sank to sleep fordone,
But first ungirthed his steed, took off the saddle
To use its poplar pummel as his pillow,
And spread beside the spring his saddle-cloth
For sleep while Rakhsh to pasturage sped forth.

§ 4

How the Dív Akwán flung Rustam into the Sea

When from afar Akwán saw Rustam sleeping
He came as swift as wind, delved round about
The place where Rustam lay, and raised it skyward.
When Rustam woke from sleep he woke to sorrow,
And his wise head was filled with consternation.

He thought: "So this foul dív hath laid for me V. 1054
A snare like this! Woe for my strength and courage,
My neck, and blows with mace and scimitar!
This matter will make desolate the world,
Achieving all Afrásiyáb's desire,
While Tús, Gúdarz, Khusrau, the throne and crown,
The elephants and drums, will be no more.
Through me the world will suffer, since Akwán
Hath spoiled my marketing. Who will take vengeance
On this curst dív? No one will match him now."

Then said Akwán to Rustam in his plight:—
"Now, elephantine chieftain! take thy choice
To fall upon the mountains or the waves;
So whither shall I fling thee far from men?"

The elephantine hero communed thus:—
"In every case naught bettereth artifice.
He will do contrary to what I say;
He will not recognise an oath or keep
A pact. If I say, 'Throw me in the sea,'
Then will this evil-natured Áhriman
Fling me upon the mountains, dash me there
To pieces, and destroy me. I must use
Some scheme to make him fling me into water,"
Then said: "A sage of Chín hath spoken well:—
'Whoe'er is drowned his soul will never see V. 1055
Surúsh in Paradise, his lot will be
To tarry in his place in misery,
And not to find a welcome to the sky.'
Let me not therefore fall upon the ocean
To make the fishes' maws my winding-sheet,
But drop me on the mountains that the lions
And tigers may behold a brave man's hands.'

Akwán at this roared like the sea, and answered:—
"Now will I fling thee to the place wherein
Thou wilt be lost for ever to both worlds."
And, acting contrary to Rustam's words,

Dropped him upon the sea. As Rustam fell
He drew his sword, and when the crocodiles
Approached they turned aside from fighting him.
He struck out with his feet and his left hand
While with his right he fought his way along,
Not resting for a moment from his toils,
But acting as a warrior in all.
If valour could avert the fatal day
Time had not taken Rustam's stance away,
But know that circling time is ever thus—
At whiles all sweet, at whiles all venomous.
He struggled bravely, reached the shore, beheld
The desert, and gave praises to the Maker,
Who had delivered thus His slave from ill.
He rested, took his armour off, and laid
His tiger-skin cuirass beside the stream.
Whenas his lasso and his armour dried
That savage Lion donned his coat of mail,
And went back to the stream where he had slept
When that malignant dív had raged at him;
V. 1056 But glossy Rakhsh was nowhere in the mead,
And Rustam, wroth and raging at his luck,
Went plodding doggedly with reins and saddle
In Rakhsh's track till in his quest he came
Upon a meadow-land of streams and shaws
Well stocked with francolins and cooing doves.
The herdsman of Afrásiyáb who kept
The steeds lay fast asleep within a coppice,
While Rakhsh was prancing madly like a dív
Among the herd and neighing. Rustam cast
His royal lasso, caught Rakhsh by the head,
Then rubbed the dust away and saddled him,
With thanks to God, the Giver of all good,
Put on the bridle, mounted, took in hand
His trenchant scimitar, and drove the herd
Therewith, still calling on the name of God.

The herdsman, at the tumult, raised his head,
Still half asleep, and called the horsemen with him
To mount upon their lofty-crested steeds.
They took each man his lasso and his bow
To learn what foe dared come upon the pasture,
And to approach so many cavaliers.
These went together hotly in pursuit
To strip the warlike Lion of his hide,
But Rustam, when he saw them rushing on,
Drew quickly from his waist his vengeful sword,
Roared like a lion, and proclaimed: "My name
Is Rustam son of Zál the son of Sám."
He slew the more part with his scimitar,
Which when the herdsman saw he showed his back,
And fled away with Rustam following,
His bow upon his arm slung by its string.

§ 5

How Afrásiyáb came to inspect his Steeds, and how Rustam slew the Dív Akwán.

It happened strangely that Afrásiyáb V. 1057
Had sped forth like a blast to view his steeds,
And brought with him wine, harps, and warriors
To merrymake upon the watered plain
Where every year the herdsman loosed the herds.
The monarch on arriving saw them not.
Then suddenly rose clamour, horse on horse
Passed, and Afrásiyáb saw far away
The dust of Rakhsh, and other noble chargers.
The ancient herdsman rushed up frantically
In evil plight and wounded by an arrow,
Then in amazement told Afrásiyáb:—
"Though single-handed, Rustam hath borne off
Our horse-herds, killed no few of us, and gone!"

The Turkmans clamoured: "He is all alone,
And we must arm, for this is past a jest.
Have we become so wretched, weak, and frail
That one can shed our blood? The very herds
Will shame thereat! We cannot let it pass."
The monarch with four elephants and troops
Went in pursuit of Rustam who, when they
Had overtaken him, took from his arm
His bow and charged against them furiously.
He rained upon them, as the clouds rain hail,
Shafts from his bow and strokes from his steel sword.
He dropped his arrows and his scimitar,
When sixty gallant chiefs had been o'erthrown,
V. 1058 And taking up his mace slew forty more.
Afrásiyáb in dudgeon showed his back
While Rustam took the four white elephants.
The warriors of Túrán were in despair,
For Rustam came behind them with his mace,
And, like a cloud in spring, for two leagues onward
Rained blows like hail and beat in helms and casques.
He turned back, driving off the elephants
And herds, and took the baggage-train withal,
Yet when he went back to the spring at leisure
His valiant heart was ready still for fight!
The dív Akwán again encountered him,
And said: "Art thou not surfeited with strife?
Thou hast escaped the ocean and the claws
Of crocodiles, and come back to the waste
To battle. Now shalt thou behold thy fate,
For never shalt thou seek to fight henceforth."
The peerless Rustam, hearing what the dív
Said, roared out like a lion of the fray,
Released his twisted lasso from its straps,
Flung it, and caught the dív about the waist;
Then Rustam, turning in his saddle, raised
His mace as 'twere the hammer of a smith,

And smote the dív like some mad elephant
Upon his head and smashed it, brains and neck;
The hero lighted, drew his blue steel sword
And cut the dív's head off, then offered up
Thanksgivings to Almighty God through Whom
He had achieved the victory that day.
Know thou that every one that is the thrall
Of ill, and offereth not to God his praise,
And whosoever doth transgress the ways
Of manhood, is a dív, not man at all.
The wisdom that rejecteth what I tell
May miss the goodly inner sense as well:
If then a paladin be full of might—
A man of lusty limbs and lofty height—
Let him, and not Akwán, thy hero be,
And let thy tongue tell tales of chivalry.
What sayest thou, O man exceeding old, V. 1059
Experienced much in this world's heat and cold?
Who knoweth what vicissitudes will here
Betide us often in time's long career,
Time which by virtue of its length alone
Will bear away all that we call our own?
Who knoweth what yon turning vault's decree
Assigneth him of war or revelry?

§ 6

How Rustam went back to the Land of Írán

When Rustam had cut off the vile dív's head
He mounted on his elephantine steed,
Collected all the herds in front of him,
With all the baggage that the Turkmans left,
And went off with the elephants and goods,
Illustrating the world. When to the Sháh
Came tidings: "Rustam hath returned in triumph!
He girt himself to noose that onager,

But he hath taken dív and elephant,
The elephant by land, the crocodile
By sea: the lions, dívs, and warriors
That counter him escape not from his sword!"
Khusrau prepared to go and welcome Rustam;
The warriors put their casques upon their heads,
And took the standard of the king of kings
With clarions, bells, and mighty elephants.
When Rustam saw the exalted monarch's flag
Advancing on the way to welcome him
He lighted from his steed and kissed the ground
Midst shouting troops and din of trump and drum.
V. 1060 The chieftains of the army went afoot
To him; the king of kings urged on his steed.
That chief of chiefs, the crown-bestowing prince,
Bade Rustam mount, and thus they reached the palace
With open hearts and mutual good-will.
Then Rustam portioned to the Íránians
The horse-herds, keeping Rakhsh as his own mount,
And sent the elephants to join the Sháh's,
Since Lions do not fare with elephants.
For one week there was feasting in the hall,
Wine, harp, and minstrelsy were in request,
While Rustam o'er the wine discoursed at large,
And told the Sháh the story of Akwán:—
"I never saw so fine an onager,
Such neck and limbs, and such magnificence!
But when my scimitar had cleft his hide
No friend or foe had pitied him. His head
Was like an elephant's, his hair was long,
His mouth was full of tusks like some wild boar's,
His eyes were white, his lips were black, his form
Was ill to see. No camel is so large
And strong. The waste became a sea with blood,
Which spurted, when I had beheaded him,
Up to the welkin and came down like rain!"

Then Kai Khusrau amazed put by his cup,
And gave God thanks for such a paladin,
Since none had seen such wonders—that a man
Such as was Rustam should exist at all
In all his manliness and mien and stature.
He said: "Unless the Lord had given me
A share both in His justice and His love
I never should have had a liege like this V. 1061
With whom to hunt down dívs and elephants."
Thus spent they two weeks joyfully; their talk
Was all of wine and banquet. On the third
The matchless Rustam purposed to go home
Victorious and glad. "I yearn for Zál,
The son of Sám," he said, "and such desire
May not be blinked, but I will go apace,
And come back to the court. We must prepare
Fresh vengeance, for revenge for Siyáwush
Is not thus easily to be forgone
By taking steeds and herds."
The world's great king
Unlocked the portal of his treasury,
Brought forth the precious jewels hoarded there,
And filled a cup with treasure. Of king's raiment
Five changes made throughout of cloth of gold,
With golden-girdled slave-boys brought from Rúm,
And likewise handmaids decked with golden torques,
With tapestries and thrones of ivory,
Embroideries, dínárs, and turquoise crowns,
All these the Sháh sent Rustam, saying: "Take
This gift with thee, but stay with us to-day,
And afterward make ready to depart."
They spent the day together quaffing wine,
But Rustam was resolved to go at dawn.
The Sháh went two days with him and embraced him
At parting. Rustam cottoned to the road,
Khusrau returned. Well ordered 'neath his signet

The world became as he would have it be.
The ancient sky revolveth ever so,
At whiles like arrow and at whiles like bow.

The matter of Akwán with what befell
'Twixt him and Rustam endeth. Now I tell
V. 1062 The conflicts of Bízhan, and thou shalt hear
Of strivings that will ask of thee a tear.

PART V

THE STORY OF BÍZHAN AND MANÍZHA

ARGUMENT

The poet describes how the tale was first told to him to while away the depression caused by a sleepless night, and then narrates as follows: Kai Khusrau at a feast receives a petition for succour from the people of Irmán, whose country is being ravaged by wild boars, and sends Bízhan and Gurgín to clear the country of them. Bízhan, through the machinations of Gurgín, who envies him, falls in love with Afrásiyáb's daughter Manízha, who carries off Bízhan to Túrán and hides him in her palace. He is discovered and imprisoned in a pit with Manízha as his attendant. In the meantime Gurgín has returned to Írán, where his lame story rouses suspicion. Kai Khusrau, by means of the divining-cup, ascertains the situation of Bízhan and despatches Rustam to deliver him. This Rustam achieves, Gurgín is pardoned by Bízhan, Afrásiyáb is defeated, and all ends happily.

NOTE

For the historical basis of this story, see p. 11.

The tale of Bízhan and Manízha is the second of the great love-stories of the Sháhnáma, that of Zál and Rúdába in Vol. I. being the first,[1] and that of Gushtásp in Rúm, which will be given in Vol. IV., being the third. Mohl probably is right in considering the present story to be one of Firdausí's early works. "Le caractère de fraicheur qui se remarque dans ce récit s'accorde bien avec la supposition que cet épisode est une œuvre de la jeunesse de Firdousi; et la versification porte quelques traces de manque d'experience, telles que l'emploi fréquent de l'*élif* final ajouté à cause de la rime ou du mètre. Cet expédient est reçu dans la poésie persane; mais Firdousi n'en fait nulle part autant d'usage qu'au commencement de l'histoire de Bijen et de Menijeh."[2]

[1] p. 256, *seq.*

[2] P. Vol. iii., Préface.

The point as to the terminal alif perhaps may be exemplified sufficiently for the English reader by the following stanza:—

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."[1]

As in the English so in the Persian an "a" is added arbitrarily to help out the metre, but the analogy is not exact.

In addition to Mohl's reasons given above we may adduce the bold Zoroastrian allusions—the outcome perhaps of a youthful enthusiasm.[2] The loss of Bízhan too is regarded as the first serious trouble of the Gúdarzian family,[3] though it would not be prudent to lay much stress upon that in the absence of other indications.

§ 1. In Mohl's opinion the friend referred to both here and in the Prelude to the Sháhnáma (§ 10) was Muhammad Lashkarí.[4] Firdausí, however, has left the sex indeterminate.

Hárút was an angel who, with his mate Márút, was suspended by the feet in a well at Babylon for practising magic arts.

§ 2. Such an appeal would be characteristic of the Armenians (Irmánians) who, broken by adversity, ceased long ago to be a self-reliant people.

§§ 10 and 23. For the dív Akwán see Part IV.

§ 12. According to Zoroastrian belief divine beings, men, the lower animals, plants, waters, sun and moon, &c., all had their immortal principle, known as their fravashí. These fravashís were worshipped especially at the beginning of the Zoroastrian year, and the month Farwardín obtained its name from the practice. At this season the spirits of deceased ancestors were supposed to revisit the houses of their descendants, and such fravashís, like the manes of the Romans, were objects of peculiar veneration.

§ 17. The divine beings whose blessings are invoked by Rustam on Kai Khusrau are members of a class formerly known as Yazatas (gods) and now as Izads. Some of them, among other functions, presided over the Zoroastrian Calendar, and gave their names to the days of the month and to the months of the year.[5] They may be regarded as celestial satraps among whom the divine qualities and the good creation of Urmuzd have been parcelled out. Bahman presides over Good Thought, Ardí-bihisht over Perfect Rectitude, Shahrír over Perfect Rule,

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 3.
[2] See pp. 317, 327.
[3] *Id.* pp. 320, 323, 330.
[4] P. Vol. iii., Préface.
[5] See Vol. i. p. 88.

Sapandármad over Bountiful Devotion, Murdád over Immortality, and Khurdád over Health. The above are all Ameshapentas.[1] Bahrám presides over Victory, Tír over Mercury, Dai over Business, Ázar over Fire, Ábán over Waters, while Farwardín represents the Fravashís.[2]

§ 1

The Prelude

The night was like jet dipped in pitch, there lent V. 1063
No planet lustre to the firmament,
The moon, appearing in her new array
In readiness to take her throneward way,
Much brightness lost by sojourning below;
Her waist was shrunk, her heart was full of woe,
Her crown was well-nigh lapis-lazuli;
Through rust and dust she journeyed through the sky.
Night's retinue had spread out everywhere
A carpet black as raven's plumes, the air
Was like rust-eaten steel; thou wouldst have cried:—
"Its face is smirched with pitch!" On every side,
Like some black serpent with its jaws stretched wide,
Was very Áhriman, each sigh of whom
Was like a negro making charcoal fume.
The garden and the stream's lip seemed to be
Like billows surging on a pitchy sea
O'er which the circling heaven paused wonderingly.
The sun had lost its power; thou wouldst have said:—
"Earth sleepeth with a pitch-like robe o'erspread."
The world's heart trembled at itself; no sounds
Were heard but watchmen ringing on their rounds;
The birds refrained from song, the beasts were still,
The world's lips closed alike for good or ill,
And height and depth were lost. Amid the woes V. 1064
Of that long vigil strait at heart I rose.
I had one in the house, a loving wight,

[1] See p. 271. [2] See above.

To whom I called and bade to bring a light.
Descending to the garden presently
My darling Idol came and said to me :—
" What need for light ? Will sleep not visit thee ? "
I said : " Mine Idol ! I am not at one
With slumber. Bring a candle like the sun,
Set it in front of me, then spread the board,
Take up the harp, and let the wine be poured."
My darling Idol fetched me lamps a-shine,
Fetched quinces, oranges, pomegranates, wine,
And one bright goblet fit for king of kings,
Then plied at whiles the wine, at whiles the strings.
" Hárút performed enchantment," thou hadst said,
My heart grew victor over drearihead,
And it seemed day with me in dark night's stead.
Hear what my loving comrade said to me
What time the goblet had joined company.
Thus said to me that sun-faced Moon of mine :—
" May heaven have joyance of that life of thine.
Quaff thou thy wine while from this volume's store
I will read out to thee a tale of yore.
Or ever part thereof shall reach thine ear
Thou wilt admire the process of the Sphere.
The theme is love, spell, war, and stratagem,
All worthy that a sage should list to them."
" O Moon-face ! " said I to that Cypress-stem,
" Recite, recite," who answered : " That will I,
And thou shalt weave it into poetry."
I said : " Begin, my fair-faced Moon ! to read,
And make me love thee more. I may be freed
From my distemperature, and sleep betide
V. 1065 In musings, darling mate ! by thee supplied.
Then will I turn the story, every whit,
To verse exactly as thou tellest it,
And, telling, offer praise to God above,
O my discreet companion and my love ! "

That darling Idol read the tale to me
Out of the book of ancient legendry,
So now give ear the while that I rehearse,
And exercise thy judgment on my verse.

§ 2

How the Irmánians appealed to Khusrau

When Kai Khusrau went forth to take revenge,
And sought to change the order of the world,
The throne and state departed from Túrán,
But his throne topped the sun because he leagued
Heaven and Írán together, and lavished love
Upon the noble race, the age renewed
Its youth and bathed his face in loyalty;
And though the prudent maketh not his couch
A torrent-bed though dry, yet for a while
The more part of the world acknowledged him
That sought to be avenged for Siyáwush.
One day he sat carousing in his joy,
And drinking to the warriors of the host.
His throne was ornate with brocade, a crown
Of gems was on his head, and in his hand
A jewelled cup of wine. Thus, all enraptured,
He listened to the harp. The nobles present
Were Faríburz the son of Kai Káús,
And Gustaham, Gúdarz son of Kishwád, V. 1066
Gurgín son of Mílád, Farhád, and Gív,
Shápúr the brave, Tús, shatterer of hosts—
Head of the scions of Naudar—Kharrád,
And bold Bízhan. These loyal paladins
Had royal wine in hand. Inside the goblets
The wine was like carnelian of Yaman,
And in the midst were handfuls of dog-roses.
Before Khusrau stood slaves with fairy-faces,

Whose musk-black ringlets fell on skins of jasmine.
The banquet-hall was decked, and in the presence
Girt for attendance stood the chamberlain.

Approaching him discreetly from the curtain
An usher said: "Irmánians wait without—
Chiefs of the march between this and Túrán:
They fain would have an audience of the Sháh,
For they have travelled far to seek redress."

The prudent chamberlain approached the throne,
Announced his tidings, sought the royal pleasure,
And introduced the envoys in due form.
They came before the presence of the Sháh
With tears and cries for aid; their arms were folded,
Their faces swept the ground; as they drew nigh
They said: "O Sháh triumphant! live for ever,
For thou art worthy of unending life.
We come for succour from a distant land,
Khán-i-Irmán, between this and Túrán,
And bring this message: 'Ever live, O Sháh!
In every clime the succourer from the evil,
O'er all seven climes the king, and in each state
The help against the bad. Túrán and we
Confine, which is a source of bale to us,
While toward Írán there was a forest-tract—
Our present cause of trouble. What a wealth
V. 1067 Of cultivated lands was ours therein,
And fruit trees, our chief means of sustenance!
Now do us right, O monarch of Írán!
Because wild boars in numbers numberless,
With tusks like elephants', and big as hills,
Have seized on all those woods and meads, and put
The country of Irmán in consternation.
What mighty ruin have they brought on us
Both in our cattle and our growing crops!
The boars delight in rending with their tusks
The cultivated trees whereof we speak.

Hard stones will not withstand such tusks, and fortune
May be hath utterly abandoned us!"
Now when the Sháh had heard the suppliants' words
He was much grieved and, pitying them, addressed
The exalted warriors: "Who among my chiefs
And mighty men is eager for renown?
Let such depart to yon boar-wasted forest,
And, all intent on fame and combating,
Behead them with his sword. I will not grudge him
My gems and other treasures."
At his bidding
The treasurer laid upon the daïs a salver
Of gold whereon they showered mingled gems;
They brought ten steeds, whose brand-mark was "Káús,"
With golden bridles, trapped them with brocade
Of Rúm, and called the nobles from the throng.
"O men of name and worship!" said earth's king,
"What man will make my toil his own and then
My treasure his?"
None answered him a word
Except the son of Gív of glorious race—
Bízhan—who stood forth midst the warriors,
And called God's blessing down upon the Sháh:—
"Ne'er may thy palace see another master, V. 1068
And be thy bidding done throughout the world.
I will adventure on this enterprise
At thy command: I only live for thee."
Gív, who was standing by, marked with displeasure
His son's words, called down blessings on the Sháh.
Then took Bízhan to task: "What boyishness
Is this, and this conceit of thine own might?
A youth may have both wit and native worth,
But he must train to win accomplishment;
He must exhaust all kinds of good and ill,
Must taste of every salt and bitter. Go not

By paths that thou hast never trodden or brag
Before the Sháh so recklessly."

Bízhan,
Shrewd, though impulsive, and of sleepless fortune,
Replied in anger: "My victorious sire!
Impute not weakness to me in thy thoughts,
But bear with what I tell thee: I am young
In enterprise but I am old in counsel,
And I, Bízhan, who am the son of Gív,
The army-shatterer, will behead the boars."

The Sháh rejoiced thereat, invoked God's blessing,
Bade him depart, and said: "Thou man of worship!
Thou art a buckler ever 'gainst all ill.
The lord that hath such lieges as thou art
Would be a fool to fear a foe."

He then
Said to Gurgín son of Mílád: "Bízhan
Is ignorant of the road toward Irmán,
So bear him company with mule and steed
To show the way and be his help in need."

§ 3

How Bízhan went to fight the wild Boars

Bízhan made ready for his setting forth,
Girt him, and set a casque upon his head.
V. 1069 He took with him Gurgín son of Mílád
To help in battle and in time of need,
And left the court with cheetahs and with hawks
To hunt withal upon his longsome journey.
Like foaming lion he fared and took the heads
From onager and antelope; the plain
Was thick with wild sheep torn; their hearts and breasts
Felt the warm impress of the cheetah's claws.

His lasso ringed the necks of onagers,
He seemed like Tahmúras who bound the Dív,
While overhead the pheasants clutched by falcons
Dyed jasmine-leaves with blood. Thus sped the twain,
And thought the road a garden, till they reached
The forest that had caused the Sháh's concern.
Now when Bízhan cast eyes thereon the blood
Boiled in him with excitement, while the boars
Roamed freely, knowing not: "Bízhan hath mounted."
On drawing near the forest to attack
He spake thus to Gurgín son of Mílád:—
"Go thou inside or stand aside, and when
I go to shoot the boars seek yonder pool.
Then, when a tumult riseth from the wood, V. 1070
Take up thy mace, be ware, and with one blow
Behead each boar escaping."
But Gurgín,
The warrior, answered: "Such was not the compact
With our young Sháh. Thou hadst the jewels, silver,
And gold, and didst adventure for this field;
Ask but mine aidance then to show the way."
Bízhan heard with amaze, his outlook darkened,
But lion-like he went inside the forest,
Undaunted strung his bow, roared mightily
As 'twere a cloud in spring, and brought the leaves
Down like a shower of rain, then sword in hand
Like some mad elephant he chased the boars
While they rushed at him, tusking up the earth.
Then came one boar, a very Áhriman,
Whose tushes cut through trees like files through stone,
And rent his hauberk while the reek of fight
Rose o'er the mead. Bízhan's sword smote the boar
And clave its elephantine form. The beasts
So fierce before grew fox-like; all were stained
With blood from sword-cuts; they had had enough

Of combating. Bízhan cut off their heads,
And tied them to his charger's saddle-straps,
That he might lay the tusks before the Sháh;
And furthermore, in order to display
His courage to the Íránian chiefs, he flung
Some headless trunks, like mountains, on a wain,
And buffalos were wearied with the strain.

§ 4

How Gurgín beguiled Bízhan

V. 1071 Malevolent Gurgín, the insensate one,
Apart drew near the forest sullenly,
And all the wood gloomed in his eyes albeit
He praised Bízhan and made a show of joy.
That matter grieved his heart, he feared disgrace,
And Áhriman seduced him. He was fain
To do Bízhan a mischief; 'twas his wish,
And so ordained. He thought not of the Maker,
But he that diggeth pitfalls in the way
Hath reason to walk warily himself.
Gurgín for his own profit and renown
Spread out his nets upon the young man's path,
And said: "O paladin, thou Heart of combat,
And Soul of wisdom! many an enterprise
Like this thou wilt achieve through thy high fortune
And God's support. Now I must tell thee somewhat,
For I have been here often in past time
With Rustam and with Gív and Gustaham,
With Gazhdaham and Tús son of Naudar.
How many a feat of prowess done by us
Hath heaven witnessed on this spacious plain—
V. 1072 Feats that have raised our reputations high,
And rendered us the dearer to Khusrau!
There is a pleasure-ground not far away,

And only two days' journey from Túrán,
Where thou wilt see a plain all red and yellow—
One to rejoice a hero's heart, all woods
And pleasances and rivulets, a spot
Fit for a paladin, with painted silk
For soil, and airs musk-laden: thou wouldst say:—
'Perchance it is rose-water in the streams.'
The jasmine-branches bend beneath their burden;
The roses, which the pheasants love to haunt,
Are there the idols, and their worshippers
The bulbuls singing in the cypress-boughs.
Now from this present for a little while
Yon river's marge will be like Paradise,
And on the plain and uplands thou wilt see
In merry parties fay-faced damsels sitting.
Manízha, daughter of Afrásiyáb,
Will make that garden radiant as the sun,
And with a hundred handmaids—perfect pictures,
All daughters of the Turkmans, modest maids,
As tall as cypress-trees, with musky hair,
And cheeks like roses, dreamy eyes, and wine
That savoureth rose-water on their lips—
Will set up her pavilion on yon meadows.
Thou wilt behold the plain bedecked throughout
With riches like an idol-house in Chín.
Now if we go toward that pleasure-ground,
And hurry o'er the journey in one day,
We may bear off some of those fay-faced damsels,
And win the approbation of Khusrau."

In this wise spake Gurgín. Bízhan was young,
And all the paladin was stirred in him.
He was a youth and followed youthful fashion,
Some whiles pursuing fame and some whiles passion.

§ 5

How Bízhan went to see Manízha, Daughter of Afrásiyáb

V. 1073 They set off on the tedious journey, one
Led by desire, the other by revenge.
Bízhan, the refuge of the host, alighted
Between two forests after one day's march.
He and Gurgín enjoyed two days with hawk
And cheetah in those meadows of Irmán.
On hearing that that marriageable maid
Had come, and decked the whole waste like the eye
Of chanticleer, Gurgín informed Bízhan,
And told him of the minstrelsy and feasting,
Whereat "Now will I," thus Bízhan responded,
"Go forward and examine from a distance
The scene and manner of the Turkmans' revels;
Then with my polished spear-head lifted skyward
Will I turn rein. We shall advise the better,
As feeling more assured, when we have seen."
He bade the treasurer: "Bring the crown that used,
Worn by my sire, to light the banquet-hall,
Because our way is banquet-ward. Bring likewise
The earrings and the torque that Kai Khusrau
Bestowed on me, and Gív's bejewelled armlet."
He donned a glittering tunic made in Rúm,
And stuck an eagle's feather in his crown.
They put the saddle on his steed Shabrang
While he bade bring the girdle and the signet
V. 1074 That marked the paladin, and having mounted
Went to the spot in haste.
He reached the forest,
His heart preoccupied with its desires,
He drew anigh that Fair's pavilion,
Desire contending in his heart the while,
And went beneath a lofty cypress-tree

For shelter from the sun. The plain, with all
Its sounds of harp and song gave, thou hadst said,
His soul a welcome. When the fair one saw
The visage of the chieftain from her tent—
The cheeks as 'twere Canopus of Yaman,
Or jasmine blossoming mid violets—
While on his head he wore the crown that marked
A chief of paladins, and all his breast
Blazed with brocade of Rúm, the maiden yearned
For love of him, who came in quest of love,
And sent her nurse as envoy, saying thus:—
"Go 'neath the boughs of yonder lofty cypress,
And find out who he is—yon moonlike one.
Can it be Siyáwush returned to life,
Or else a fairy? Question him and say:—
'How hast thou come and who hath brought thee hither?
Art thou of fairy-birth or Siyáwush
That thou dost fill our hearts with love for thee,
For thou hast lit a raging fire of love,
Unless the Resurrection be upon us,
Because for years have I been holding revel
Upon these meads each spring, and we have seen
None in this pleasance; but I now see thee,
O noble Cypress! and it is enough.'
Say to him: 'Whether thou art man or fairy
Come to our festival. I have not looked
On aught resembling thee, O moon-faced one! V. 1075
Inform us of thy name and whence thou comest.'"
The nurse, when she had come and done obeisance,
Gave him Manízha's message, and his cheeks
Bloomed like the rose. He saw his wish achieved,
And answered thus: "I am not Siyáwush,
Or fairy-born, sweet-spoken messenger!
But from Írán—the country of the free.
Bízhan am I, the son of Gív, and came

All keenly thence to battle with wild boars.
I took their heads and threw them by the way
To bear their tushes to the Sháh; but hearing
About this pleasance did not hurry back
To Gív, son of Gúdarz, if so good fortune
Might show me though but in a dream the face
Of her—the daughter of Afrásiyáb;
And now I see that all the plain is decked
With treasures like an idol-house in Chín.
If thou wilt show me kindness I will give thee
A crown of gold with earrings and a girdle,
And thou shalt lead me to yon lady fair,
And bring her heart to love me."
She returned,
And bore the secret to Manízha's ear:—
"His countenance and mien are such and such,
In such and such wise hath the Maker made him."
Manízha sent an answer back forthwith:—
"What seemed a fancy is within thy grasp,
V. 1076 For now come to me with thy noble gait,
And shed a light on this dark soul of mine.
Mine eyes will brighten at the sight of thee,
Vale, plain, and tents will turn to rosaries."
With neither heart nor ear for aught beside
Her words he followed and she acted guide.[1]

§ 6

How Bízhan went to the Tent of Manízha

No room was left for further parleying.
Forth from beneath the shadow of the cypress
Bízhan proceeded hastily afoot
Toward Manízha's tent and entered it,

[1] "La réponse de Menijeh fit du cœur et de l'oreille de Bijen un palais" (Mohl).

In favour like a stately cypress-tree,
Girt with a golden girdle round his loins.
Manízha came and clasped him to her breast,
Unloosed the royal girdle from his waist,
Asked of his journey, equipage, and business,
And said: "Who came with thee to fight the boars?
Why trouble with a mace, O comely one,
Who hast a shape like this, such mien and bearing?"
They bathed his feet in musk and pure rose-water,
Then hasted to set meat, they spread the board
With various viands in profuse abundance,
And held high revelry with wine and harp,
Excluding every stranger from the tent.
The handmaids standing in attendance there
Played on the lyre and lute. The ground resembled
The colours of a peacock with brocade
All dappled with dínárs like leopards' backs,
While all the tent-enclosure was adorned
With musk and jewels, ambergris and gold.
Old wine in crystal cups gave to Bízhan
New strength, but, when three days and nights had passed
In pleasure, sleep and drink prevailed at last.

§ 7

How Manízha carried off Bízhan to her Palace

Manízha, when her time for going home V. 1077
Arrived, still longed to gaze upon Bízhan,
And, since his face was gloomy, called her handmaids,
And bade them mingle with a grateful draught
A drug that maketh senseless. This they gave him,
And he, bemused already, swallowed it;
His head sank down and he was lost to sense.
She made a litter to transport the sleeper,

A couch for him on one side, on the other
An easy seat for her. She sprinkled camphor
Upon his couch, and with rose-water drenched
The sandal-wood.
On coming near the city
She veiled the sleeper in a woman's wrapper,
And, entering the palace privily
By night, preserved her secret. She prepared
A chamber and, impatient for Bízhan
To wake, poured in his ear a rousing potion
To bring his senses back. He woke and found
That jasmine-bosomed beauty in his arms,
His head and hers both resting on a pillow,
And in the palace of Afrásiyáb!
Distracted with himself he turned for refuge
To God from Áhriman and thus exclaimed:—
"As for myself there will be no escaping,
O God Almighty! hence. But oh! that Thou
Wouldst execute my vengeance on Gurgín,
And hear the pains and malisons that I
Invoke on him! He led me into this,
Reciting over me a thousand spells."
Manízha said to him: "Be of good cheer,
And treat all save the present as mere wind.
V. 1078 Adventures of all kinds occur to men,
And feast and fight by turn."
They banqueted;
Before them was the gibbet or espousal:
They called the rose-cheeked damsels from their bowers,
And decked them in brocade of Chín; forthwith
These girls with fairy faces took the harp,
And fleeted day and night in merriment.
Anon the chamberlain got wind thereof,
And, since one acting on an idle rumour
Will shake the fruit down from the tree of bale,
He took upon him to investigate,

Inquiring who the man was, from what country,
And what he sought in coming to Túrán,
So learned the truth and, fearing for his life,
Went, as the only way to save himself,
Before Afrásiyáb and said to him:—
"Thy daughter hath a lover from Írán!"
The monarch called on God, and thou hadst said:—
"He trembled like the willow in a blast."
Then from the lashes of his eyes he wiped
The tears of blood and raged, and spake this saw:—
"One with a daughter in his house to guard
May have a crown indeed but is ill-starred."
He was confounded at Manízha's deed,
Called to him princely Kurákhán and said:—
"Advise me in the matter of this wanton."
Then Kurákhán: "Examine with more care:
"If so it be there is no more to say,
But hearing is not seeing."
Instantly
The monarch looked at Garsíwaz and said:—
"What we have borne and still bear from Írán!
And why doth fortune link in one ill chain V. 1079
Íránian troubles and an evil child?
Go take with thee some prudent cavaliers,
Keep watch upon the palace—roof and gates—
Look well, and any man whom thou shalt see
Therein secure with bonds and drag to me."

§ 8

How Garsíwaz brought Bízhan before Afrásiyáb

As Garsíwaz approached the gate the sound
Of feast and revelry was heard within,
The music of the rebeck and the harp
Rose from the palace of Afrásiyáb.

The cavaliers seized on the roof and gates,
And occupied the outlets everywhere.
When Garsíwaz found that the palace-portal
Was fastened, and heard revels going on,
He broke down all obstructions, rushed within,
And sought the chamber where the stranger was.
Now when he reached the door and saw Bízhan
His blood boiled up with rage, for in that chamber
There were three hundred handmaids busied all
With harp and wine and singing, and among them,
With red wine at his lips and making merry,
Bízhan! Then Garsíwaz cried out in anguish:—
"O reckless and abandoned profligate!
Now art thou in the savage Lion's clutch.
How wilt thou 'scape with life?"
Bízhan writhed, thinking:—
"How can I fight unarmed, without Shabrang,
Or aught to ride? Luck, sure, hath gone to-day!
Where now is Gív son of Gúdarz, that I
Must throw away my life? I see no helper,
But God."
He always carried in his boot
V. 1080 A blue-steel dagger; this he drew and holding
The door exclaimed: "Bízhan am I and sprung
From that high chief of paladins and nobles,
Kishwád. None e'er shall break my skin unless
His body is aweary of its head,
And though 'twere Doomsday none should see my back."
He cried to Garsíwaz: "Ill fortune thus
Hath dealt with me. Thou knowest my forefathers,
My monarch, and my rank among the chiefs;
If ye will fight I am prepared to bathe
My hands in blood in battle, and behead
Full many a Turkman chief; if thou wilt bear me
Before the king I will explain. Do thou

Ask him to spare my life, and make all end
In happiness."
Then Garsíwaz, perceiving
The resolution, the dexterity,
And readiness to fight shown by Bízhan,
Confirmed a covenant with him by oaths,
And courteously advised him, thus obtaining
The dagger from him by that covenant,
And making him a prisoner by smooth words;
Then bound him cheetah-like from head to foot.
With fortune gone will prowess aught avail?
Thus is it with yon hump-backed sky above,
Thou'lt feel its harshness when it looketh love.
They carried him with sallow cheeks and eyes
Fulfilled with tears before Afrásiyáb.
The hero, when he came with pinioned arms
And bare of head before the sovereign,
Did reverence and said: "Vouchsafe, O king!
To seek the truth. I came not to this court V. 1081
By any wish of mine; none is to blame.
I left Írán to fight against wild boars,
And chanced on this Túránian festival.
I sent my kindred and my retinue
To seek a falcon that had gone astray,
And went to sleep beneath a cypress-tree,
So that its shade might shield me from the sun.
A fairy came. She spread her wings and took me,
Still sleeping, in her arms. She left my charger,
And bore me where the escort of thy daughter
With troops of cavaliers and many litters
Passed by upon the plain. Then there appeared
Hemmed in by horse a Turkman parasol,
And brand-new litter canopied with silk;
Within a lovely Idol slept; her crown
Was lying on her pillow. Suddenly
The fairy called on Áhriman, and, rushing

Like wind among the horsemen, set me down
Inside the litter, and recited charms
Above the charmer there, that I might sleep
Until I reached the palace of the king;
So I was not to blame, nor hath Manízha
Been smirched by what hath passed. Assuredly
That fay had marred my fortune by her spells."
Afrásiyáb replied: "Thine evil day
Hath come apace. Departing from Írán
Thou soughtest fight and fame with mace and lasso;
Now with hands bound thou tellest women's dreams;
Like one bemused, and triest lies upon me
To save thy life."
V. 1082 Bízhan replied: "O king!
Hear what I say to thee and be advised.
Boars with their tusks and lions with their claws
Are alway fit for fighting; so are heroes
That have their scimitars and bows and arrows;
But how when one is naked with bound hands,
The other in a panoply of steel?
How can a lion pounce without sharp claws
However fierce? If now the king would see
My prowess shown to all, let him provide
A horse and massive mace for me, and make
Choice of a thousand chieftains from the Turkmans;
Then hold me not a man if I leave one
Alive of all the thousand on the field."
The king regarded him with angry looks
At this, then turned to Garsíwaz, and said:—
"Dost thou not see that this fell Áhriman
Is meditating further ills for me,
And not contented with the evil done
Would fight as well? Take him bound hand and foot,
Just as he is, and rid the world of him.
Command to set a gibbet in the road
Before the gate, there hang the wretch alive,

And never speak of him to me again,
So that no native of Írán may dare
Henceforth to cast an eye upon Túrán."
They dragged him, stricken to the heart with anguish,
His eyes a-stream, forth from Afrásiyáb,
And, when Bízhan the wretched reached the door,
His feet stuck in the mire made by his tears.
He said: "If God Almighty hath decreed
That I must die in miserable plight
I do not fear the dying or the gibbet;
My smart is for the warriors of Írán,
And royal fathers' blame when I am dead. V. 1083
Alas! mine adversaries will exult,
Their lust will all be satisfied upon me.
Alas! the king of kings! the looks of Gív!
Alas! thus to be parted from the brave!
Go, breezes! to the country of Írán,
And bear my message to the well-loved Sháh.
Tell him: 'Bízhan is in an evil case;
His body is beneath the Lion's claws.'
Say from me to Gúdarz son of Kishwád:—
'My glory hath departed through Gurgín:
He cast me into evil so that now
I see not any one to succour me.'
And to Gurgín: 'What greeting shall I have
From thee, false warrior! beyond the grave?'"

§ 9

How Pírán begged Bízhan's Life from Afrásiyáb

Howbeit God had mercy on his youth,
And foiled the king's intent, for as they dug
A hole wherein to plant the gallows-tree,
Pírán, for so it chanced, was seen approaching.
Now when he reached the place and saw the road

All occupied by Turkmans under arms,
And that a lofty gibbet had been reared,
Wherefrom a twisted lasso dangled down,
He asked the people: "Wherefore is this gibbet?
Who hath incurred the anger of the king?"
Then Garsíwaz made answer: "For Bízhan
The Íránian, the monarch's enemy."
Pírán urged on his charger and, when near
Bízhan, beheld him stricken to the heart
And naked, with his two hands bound behind him
Firm as a rock, his mouth parched, his cheeks wan.
Pírán inquired of him: "How camest thou hither?
Thou camest from Irán no doubt for blood."
Bízhan related all that he had suffered
From his false friend. Pírán had pity on him,
And weeping bade them leave Bízhan awhile
V. 1084 Unhung; he said: "Detain him here that I
May have an audience with the sovereign,
And show him what will be the happiest course."
He galloped palace-ward, approached the king
In humble attitude with folded arms,
And walking quickly to the throne called down
With fervour blessings on Afrásiyáb.
When, like an honest guide and minister,
He stood before the throne, the king knew well
That he was standing there to ask a boon,
And smiling said to him: "What wouldst thou? Speak.
None is more honoured with me than thyself.
If thy petition is for gold or jewels,
For realm or army, I will not withhold
My treasures. Why hast thou bestowed these pains!"
Pírán, the loyal, heard and kissed the ground,
Leaped up and said: "Sit on the throne for ever,
And may good fortune haunt no other place.
The monarchs of the earth proclaim thy praises,

The bright sun blesseth thee. Through thy good
fortune
I need not horses, followers, or power.
I ask not for myself, none of thy subjects
Hath need to ask; my fortune is thy rule,
My stay thy glorious chiefs. Concerned am I
Lest any suffer through my reticence,
And my good name be lost. Have I not often V. 1085
Advised the king erewhile? But since my words
Availed not I have held my peace of late.
'Slay not the son of Kai Káús,' I said,
''Twill make thee enemies of Tús and Rustam,
And Siyáwush who is of Kaian race
Hath girt his loins to serve thee loyally;
Peace will be broken and the Íránians
Will trample on us with their elephants.'
Yet didst thou out of simple wantonness
Slay Siyáwush, and mingle bane with sweets.
It may be that thou hast forgotten Gív,
And Rustam the brave chief of paladins.
Hast thou not seen what ills the Íránians
Have wrought upon the country of Túrán
By trampling with their beasts the greater part,
And turning fortune's stream to bitterness?
As yet Zál's sword-point is not worn away
Inside its sheath, for Rustam scattereth heads
Therewith, and spurteth blood upon the sun.
Wilt thou seek war in peace, and wantonly
Sniff at the bloom of bane? If thou shalt shed
Bízhan's blood in this matter from Túrán
There will go up a dust-cloud of revenge.
Thou art a wise king; we are only lieges;
Ope thy heart's eye, consider how the Sháh
Requited thee for former injuries.
In sooth thou art provoking fresh demands,
And bringing into fruit the tree of bale.

We cannot bear, O mighty sovereign,
And master of the world! another war.
V. 1086 Thou knowest Gív, none better! and brave Rustam,
That savage Crocodile, and him who will
Come forth to fight us for his grandson's sake,
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, whose hand is steel!"
As he threw water on the raging fire
Afrásiyáb replied: "Dost thou not know
What he hath done, and brought disgrace upon us
Both here and in Írán? Dost thou not see
How mine abandoned daughter hath heaped shame
Upon my hoary head, and made the names
Of all my women-folk the common talk?
For this disgrace all lands and mine own troops
Will ever make my court their laughing-stock;
If he shall live all men will wag their tongues
At me, I shall be wretched and despised,
And ever from mine eyes shed tears of gall."
Pírán did reverence ofttimes and replied:—
"O monarch of good fortune and just speech!
'Tis as the king hath said. His only object
Is his good name. But let my lord consider
The prudent counsel that I offer him.
Let us confine Bízhan with heavy chains,
Such that he would prefer death on the gibbet;
'Twill be a warning to the Íránians,
Who will not strive to injure us hereafter,
For no one readeth on the muster-roll
The names of captives in thy prison-house."
The monarch acted as Pírán advised,
Perceiving that his heart and tongue agreed.
Good ministers with their good counsellings
Illume the Grace divine and throne of kings.

§ 10

How Afrásiyáb put Bízhan in Ward

Afrásiyáb commanded Garsíwaz:—
"Prepare a gloomy pit and weighty bonds,
Secure with chains Bízhan's hands to a yoke
Bridge-like, as Rúmans do, from head to foot
Chain him and make all sure with heavy rivets; V. 1087
Then throw him in the pit head first—no more
Of sun and moon for him! Take elephants,
And fetch the boulder of the dív Akwán,
Which God raised from the ocean-depth and cast
Upon a wood in Chín. Thus will I be
Avenged upon Bízhan. Convey this stone,
Which covereth the dungeon of Arzhang,
Upon high-crested elephants, and cover
Bízhan's, then leave him to go mad with anguish.
Take horsemen, sack the palace of that wanton—
Manízha, who hath shamed her quality—
Deprive her of her fortune, crown, and state,
And say to her: 'Thou wretched and accursed,
Who art unworthy of the throne and crown!
Thou hast abased my head among the kings,
And cast my diadem upon the dust.'
Then drag her naked to the pit and say:—
'Behold him whom thou sawest on the throne
Here in this pit! Thou art his Spring, console him,
And wait upon him in his gloomy cell.'"
So Garsíwaz departed from the presence.
They carried out the monarch's evil purpose;
They haled the son of Gív back from the gallows,
And bore him to the pit's mouth in his bonds,
There fettered him from head to foot in iron,
His waist with Rúman chains, his hands with gyves,
While smiths with steel and hammers made secure

The massive rivetings, and then they flung him
Head-foremost down the pit and set the stone
Upon it. Garsíwaz thence led his troop
To where the daughter of Afrásiyáb
V. 1088 Dwelt, gave up all her treasury to spoil,
And made a fresh disposal of the wealth.
Manízha was reduced to naked feet,
Bare head, and single wrap. He hustled her
Forth to the pit. Her eyes wept tears of blood;
Her cheeks were like the spring.
"Behold," he said,
"Thy house and home! Henceforth thou art to be
This prisoner's drudge!"
He turned back, and Manízha,
The spouse of woe, roamed wailing o'er the plain.
Now when a day and night had passed she came
With lamentations to the pit, and made
A passage large enough to pass one hand.
Thereafter when the sun rose o'er the hills
She used to gather food at every door
By day-long wanderings and pass it through
The crevice to Bízhan, and weep. Thus she
Lived for a while in abject misery.

§ 11

How Gurgín returned to Írán and lied about Bízhan

When one week passed, and still Bízhan returned not,
Gurgín began to search on every side
In haste and bathed his face in tears of blood.
Repenting of his ill intents he sought
The place wherein Bízhan had gone astray,
V. 1089 Went all about the forest but saw no one,
And heard not e'en a twitter from the birds.
He sought too in the mead, and all at once

Spied in the distance on the river-bank,
With bridle broken and with saddle dragging,
With hanging lip and in an angry mood,
His comrade's steed, and knew: "Bízhan is sped!
He will not live to come back to Írán.
By gibbet or by prison or by bonds
Ill hath befallen him from Afrásiyáb."
Repentant and perplexed he flung his lasso,[1]
And turning led Bízhan's steed from the meadow
Back to his tent where he abode one day,
Then, sleepless and unresting, sought Írán.
The Sháh, on hearing that Gurgín had come
Without Bízhan, would fain have been the first
To question him, so told not Gív, yet Gív
Heard of his brave son's loss, rushed to the street,
Pierced to the heart with anguish and with cheeks
All tears, and cried: "Bízhan returneth not!
I wis not why he stayeth in Irmán."
Then, vengeful as a crocodile at heart,
He gave command to put the poplar saddle
Upon Kishwád's own bay, which he was wont
To hold reserved against the day of need,
And, having mounted, parted like a blast
To meet Gurgín and ask him where Bízhan V. 1090
Was, and about the case. "Good sooth!" he thought,
"Gurgín hath done him mischief secretly.
I will behead Gurgín or see my son."
Gurgín on catching sight of Gív dismounted,
Ran up to him and, wallowing in the dust
With head uncovered and torn cheeks, exclaimed:—
"O thou that art the chosen of the host,
Chief of Írán and captain of the Sháh!
Why hast thou come to meet me on my way?
Why hast thou come thus weeping tears of blood?
I shall not wish to live if aught more wretched

[1] "Il laissa tomber son lacet" (Mohl)

Shall now betide me. All ashamed am I
To look thee in the face; I too am pouring
The hot blood from mine eyes, but be not troubled
About his life. No harm hath come to him
As I will prove to thee."

Gív, when he saw
His son's horse and Gurgín, all dust and dazed
Like one bemused, thus leading it, and when
He heard those words, fell from his steed and swooned.
His head was hidden by the dust. He rent
The raiment that he wore as paladin,
Plucked out his hair, and with a cry of anguish
Poured dust upon his head.

"O Thou," he said,
"Who art the Almighty Master of the sky,
And hast endowed my heart with sense and love!
I hold it good, now that my son is lost,
That thou shouldst snap my cord of life and take
My spirit to the mansions of the blest:
Thou knowest best the anguish of my heart.
I had no son but him to soothe my griefs
Or aid me; now ill hap hath severed us,
And I am left thus in the Dragon's maw!"

He asked Gurgín again: "How went it all?
V. 1091 Hath fate filled up his place or did he will
To quit thy sight? What ill befell him? Speak!
Who flung at him the meshes of the sky?
What dív encountered him upon the mead?
Who murdered him and ruined everything?
How didst thou find this charger riderless?
Where didst thou quit Bízhan?"

Gurgín replied:—
"Compose thyself and listen. In respect
To fighting with the wild boars in the wood,
Know, O thou paladin! and understand,
And be for aye the lustre of the throne,

We went to fight the boars and reached Irmán.
We saw a wood converted to a waste,
With trees cut down and trampled pasturage.
It was a haunt of boars, the people melted
Because of them! We raised our spears in fight,
And made a mighty shouting in the wood;
Wild boars came charging like so many mountains,
Not one by one but everywhere in herds.
We battled like two lions, and day failed
Before our hearts were satiate of strife.
We threw their elephantine carcases
In heaps and prized their teeth out. Thence we set
Our faces toward Írán and merrily
Went after game. An onager was started,
And none will see a goodlier sight. Its coat
Was like Gulgún's, the charger of Gúdarz;
Its face was like Farhád's grey Shabáhang,
With limbs like the Símurgh's, and hoofs like steel.
'Twas like Bízhan's Shabrang in head and ear
And tail, its neck was lion-like, its speed
Like wind. Thou wouldst have said: 'Its sire is Rakhsh.'
Like some tall elephant it charged Bízhan, V. 1092
Who flung his lasso o'er its head. To fling
Was one with to be borne away! Off rushed
The onager! Bízhan sped after it,
And through the beast's pace and the horseman's dust
A reek arose, the earth heaved like the sea,
The lassoer and onager both vanished.
My steed was weary, so I ran o'er hill
And plain, but found no traces of Bízhan,
Except this steed whose saddle dragged behind.
My heart burned at his plight: 'How will he fare
In his contention with the onager?'
I tarried long upon the pasture, searching

On all sides for him, and have come back hopeless,
For that fierce onager was the White Dív!"
Shrewd Gív, on hearing, deemed: "Bízhan is sped!"
He marked Gurgín's confused account, those eyes
That could not look him in the face, those cheeks
Grown wan with terror of the Sháh, that body
A-tremble, and that conscience-stricken heart,
And ascertaining that his son was lost,
And that the whole account was fraudulent,
Was moved by Áhriman to lay Gurgín
Dead on the road in vengeance for Bízhan,
The well-beloved, although disgrace might follow.
Albeit on reflection he perceived
That this would leave the matter dark, and said:—
"What shall I gain by slaying him save pleasing
Malignant Áhriman? How will it aid
Bízhan to slay Gurgín? We must employ
Another means; revenge is no great task;
He is no wall to stop my lance's point;
V. 1093 So let us tarry till his guilt is clear
Before the Sháh."
He cried out at Gurgín:—
"Thou wicked and injurious Áhriman!
Thou hast deprived me of my Sun and Moon—
The choicest of the horsemen and my Sháh—
And set me searching all the world for aid.
Where through thy practice, guile, and lies shall I
Henceforward find contentment, rest, and sleep?
I will not suffer thee to go at large
Until I have an audience with the Sháh;
Then with my poniard will I wreak on thee
Revenge for him who was mine Eye to me."

§ 12

How Gív brought Gurgín before Khusrau

With bloodshot eyes and vengeance in his heart
Gív went before the Sháh, blessed him, and said :—
" For ever fleet the world in joy, O king !
Thou blesséd, well-starred monarch ! seest thou not
What hath befallen me ? I had one son—
A youth who was my care both night and day.
I wept for fear of danger to him, burned
For fear of losing him ; and now, O Sháh !
Gurgín hath come back with an idle tongue,
With guilty soul, and evil news of him—
My stainless and illustrious minister.
Gurgín hath brought a steed in disarray,
But not another token of Bízhan !
If now my lord will carefully consider
My case, and see me righted in the matter,
He will do justice for me on Gurgín—
The man that put this dust upon my head."
The Sháh was troubled at Gív's grief, assumed
The crown in anger, sat upon the throne
With pallid cheeks in sorrow for Bízhan,
And said to Gív : " What is Gurgín's account ? V. 1094
Where saith he that he left his upright comrade ?"
Gív told the tale about his gallant son
As given by Gurgín. Then said Khusrau :—
" Brood not nor fret ; Bízhan is safe ; be easy
And hopeful touching that lost son of thine,
For I but now heard from the archimages—
The men of wisdom shrewd of heart and famous—
That I shall lead the Íránian cavaliers
Against Túrán anon to seek revenge
For Siyáwush, and with mine elephants

Destroy that land. Bízhan will take the field
And fight like Áhriman. Depart in peace;
Good sooth, I greatly long for him myself."
So Gív withdrew in tears, pale and distraught.
Gurgín, on coming to the palace-gate,
Found it deserted; all the paladins
Had gone with Gív lamenting for Bízhan.
Gurgín, his wicked soul fulfilled with shame,
Went in to audience. Having reached Khusrau
He kissed the ground and offered reverence,
Then laid the boars' tusks hard as diamonds
Before the throne and did obeisance, saying:—
"May Kai Khusrau be all victorious,
His life like New Year's Day, and may the heads
Of all thy foes be severed by the shears,
E'en as the heads of these wild boars."
The Sháh
Gazed on the tusks and asked: "How went the journey?
Where did Bízhan part company? What evil
Hath Áhriman wrought on him?"
V. 1095 When Khusrau
Spake thus Gurgín stood all confused with tongue
That idly blabbed and guilty soul. His cheeks
Were pale, he shook in terror of the Sháh,
And babbled much and incoherently
Of forest, onager, and pasturage.
Now, when his words accorded not, Khusrau,
Perceiving him malicious and confused,
Was wroth and drave him out, upbraiding him,
And saying: "Hast thou heard not Zál's old saw:—
'To meet the offspring of Gúdarz in strife
Would put a period to a lion's life?'
But for the shame, and that thou wouldest make
An evil ending in the sight of God,
I would bid Áhriman pluck off thy head,

As 'twere a bird's."

Then said he to a smith:—
"Forge heavy shackles with the rivets strong."
He had Gurgín's feet fettered presently,
Because the knave is schooled by bonds, and said
To Gív: "Compose thyself. Do thou be instant
In seeking for him everywhere, and I
Will send out many cavaliers well armed
In all directions to obtain some news
About him, and be prompt and vigilant;
But, if I hear not soon, still keep thy wits
And wait for Farwardín, until the sun—
The object of our worship—groweth bright.
When roses glad the garden, breezes strew
The petals o'er thy head, when earth is donning
Its robe of green, and zephyrs sigh o'er roses,
Then shall my pious prayers rise to Urmuzd—
Prayers that our God commandeth. Then will I
Call for the cup that mirroreth the world,
And stand before God's presence. In that cup
I shall behold the seven climes of earth, V. 1096
Both field and fell and all the provinces,
Will offer reverence to mine ancestors,
My chosen, gracious lords, and thou shalt know
Where thy son is. The cup will show me all."
Gív was rejoiced, ceased from solicitude,
And smiling did obeisance, saying thus:—
"May time and earth ne'er be deprived of thee!
May heaven above attend thy will, and may
No ill befall thee from the evil eye."
When Gív had gone the Sháh sent cavaliers
To search in every quarter for Bízhan;
In all Írán and all Túrán they sought
For traces of him, but discovered naught.

§ 13

How Kai Khusrau saw Bízhan in the Cup that showed the World

When jocund New Year's Day arrived Gív yearned
For consultation with that glorious cup,
And came, bent double on his son's account
But hopeful, to Khusrau who, seeing him
With shrunken cheeks and sorely stricken heart,
Went and arrayed himself in Rúman garb
To seek God's presence. Then before the Maker
He cried and ofttimes blessed the Shining One,[1]
Imploring of the Succourer succour, strength,
And justice on pernicious Áhriman,
V. 1097 And, thence returning to his throne, assumed
The Kaian crown, took up the cup, and gazed.
He saw the seven climes reflected there,
And every act and presage of high heaven,
Their fashion, cast, and scope, made manifest.
From Aries to Pisces he beheld
All mirrored in it—Saturn, Jupiter,
Mars, Leo, Sol and Luna, Mercury,
And Venus. In that cup the wizard-king
Was wont to see futurity. He scanned
The seven climes for traces of Bízhan,
And, when he reached the Kargasárs, beheld him
By God's decree fast fettered in the pit,
And praying in his misery for death,
With one, the daughter of a royal race,
Attending him. The Sháh, with smiles that lighted
The daïs, turned his face to Gív and said:—
"Bízhan is yet alive; be of good cheer;
Thou wilt not mind, I wot, his being chained
And prisoned since his life is whole in him,

[1] "Il invoqua longtemps ses grâces sur *la coupe* brillante" (Mohl).

For he is now a prisoner in Túrán,
Attended by a maid of noble birth.
Yet filled am I with sorrow for his plight,
He hath such travail, hardship, and affliction;
And both of them are weeping like a cloud
When it is springtide, such a life is theirs!
He hath no hope of seeing kith or kin,
But pineth trembling like a willow-bough,
Blood in his eyes and anguish in his heart.
He calleth on his kinsmen and he weepeth
As 'twere a cloud in spring; his life is such
That he desireth death! Who will come forward
To rescue him, who rise with girded loins?
Who is there that will brave the Dragon's breath, V. 1098
Who from this durance liberate Bízhan?
None save deft Rustam—he who from the deep
Will drag the crocodile. Gird up thy girdle,
Haste to Nímrúz, and rest not night or day.
Bear him my letter and breathe naught hereof.
Him will I summon to me, let him know
The case, and soon, O Gív! abate thy woe."

§ 14

How Khusrau wrote a Letter to Rustam

A scribe was called, the Sháh instructed him
To write to Rustam as from lord to liege:—
"O paladin by birth and worshipful,
Exalted o'er the warriors of the world!
Thou dost remind me of thine ancestors,
And art for ever girdled for the fray.
Thou Heart of monarchs and thou Prop of kings,
With loins girt up to succour every one!
Pards yield them to thy manhood, crocodiles
Howl in the deep for fear of thee. Thou cleansedst

The world of the Mázandaránian dívs,
And torest off the heads of evil men.
How many a crownéd head hast thou dethroned,
And severed from the daïs! Many a foe
Is dead through thee, and many a land laid waste.
Chief paladin and refuge of the host!
Thine influence is mighty with the Sháhs;
Thou hast o'erthrown all sorcerers with thy mace,
And by thy bearing lit the crown of kings.
As for Afrásiyáb and for the Khán,
Thy name is writ in full upon their signets.
'Twould break the heart of any to undo
Knots tied by thee while thou undoest all,
And art a blessed heaven to the Kaians.
V. 1099 God, who hath given thee elephantine might,
Breast, arm, and hand, and glorious birth, bestowed them
For succouring those that cry, and lifting them
From their dark pit. An instance for thine aid,
And to a worthy kinsman, hath occurred,
Such as no scion of Gúdarz before
Experienced from dív-faced Túránians.
Gúdarz and Gív both place their trust in thee,
Who art a hero now in every land;
Thou know'st what place they have in mine esteem,
Thou know'st their courage, speech, and prudent counsel;
Regard not then this thing as burdensome,
And ask whatever men and means thou wilt,
Because this family ne'er grieved till now:
The world hath heard of few more glorious.
Gív had not any son excepting this,
Who was at once a son and succourer.
Gív's influence with me is very great;
He hath been both my grandsire's friend and mine;
I always find him where I look for him,

And he hath stood by me in weal and woe.
When thou hast read my letter tarry not, V. 1100
But rise and come to me with Gív forthwith,
That we may take advice that shall result
In all points gloriously. I will provide
Men, treasure, and all requisites. I swear
By thine exalted name and glorious footsteps
That thou shalt work thy will upon Túrán.
Take order for the road: Bízhan will be
Delivered haply from captivity."

§ 15

How Gív bore the Letter of Kai Khusrau to Rustam

Gív took the letter when the Sháh had sealed it,
Did reverence and, departing to his house,
Prepared to take his journey to Sístán.
He mounted all the horsemen of his kin,
And, having first commended him to God,
Departed through the desert to the Hírmund,
As one that rideth post, or like the game
That he put up, performing two days' journey
In one. With wounded hearts and eager steps
The party faced the deserts and the heights.

Now when the watchman saw Gív from the look-out
He passed the word on to Zábulistán:—
"A cavalier with mounted troops hath reached
The Hírmund; a standard fluttereth behind him;
A falchion of Kábul is in his hand."

Zál heard the watchman's shout and bade his steed
Be bridled, then pricked forth to meet the comers,
Who haply might prove foes, but when he saw
Gív's withered face he was astound and hasted,
Supposing: "Something hath befallen the Sháh
Since Gív hath been sent hither from Írán!"

When near at hand the paladin and escort
Drew up across the road and greeted Zál,
V. 1101 Who asked about the Íránians and the Sháh,
The chieftains and Túránians. Gív then gave
To Zál the greetings of the great—the Sháh's
And high-born warriors'—and told his anguish
For his lost son: "Thou seest me wan, mine insteps
All dappled leopard-like with tears of blood!"
Then asked where Rustam was, and Zál replied:—
"He will return from hunting onager
At sunset."
"I will go," Gív said, "and see him;
I have a letter for him from Khusrau."
"Go not," Zál answered, "he will come anon,
So till he cometh tarry in the house,
And pass one day with us in happiness."
Reflecting on the case they reached Zál's palace,
And even as Gív entered Rustam came.
Gív went to meet him and, on drawing nigh,
Dismounted from his horse and did obeisance.
His heart was yearning and he wept. When Rustam
Saw Gív heart-stricken and in tears he thought:—
"Írán then and the Sháh—our age's Moon—
Have perished!"
Lighting and embracing Gív
He asked about the wearer of the crown—
Khusrau—about Gúdarz, Tús, Gustaham,
And all the warriors both great and small—
Shápúr, Ruhhám, Bízhan, Farhád, Gurgín,
And every one. At mention of Bízhan
Gív uttered an involuntary cry,
V. 1102 And said to Rustam: "O thou worshipful,
The choicest of the princes of the earth!
Joy hath returned to me at sight of thee,
And through thy kindly greetings and thy words.
All those whom thou hast named are well and send

Thee salutation, peace, and messages,
Except Bízhan, O champion of the mighty!
Who is reported fettered in a dungeon.
Now seest thou not what stroke of evil fortune
Hath fallen full upon my hoary head?
I had but one son in the world, and he
Was both a son and upright minister,
And I have lost him! None e'er saw our race
In such affliction! Ever since have I
Been in the saddle, as thou seest me,
And speeding like the bright sun, night and day,
Just like the mad, to find some trace of him!
The Sháh hath in his world-reflecting cup. . . .
He stood before the Maker, much imploring
And praising on the royal feast—the Urmuzd
Of Farwardín—then left the Fane of Fire,
Went to his throne, girt up his loins, assumed
The crown, and set the shining cup before him.
He searched therein past measure for Bízhan,
And indicated him as in Túrán,
In heavy fetters and disastrous plight,
And, having thus revealed him by the cup,
Sent me to thee in haste. I come in hope,
Although my cheeks are pale and dim mine eyes,
Because I look to thee alone for aid,
Who girdest up thy loins to succour all."

Gív spake, the lashes of his eyes were charged V. 1103
With tears of gall, and from his heart he heaved
A chilling sigh. When he had given the letter
To Rustam he narrated what Gurgín
Had done, then bitterly bewailed Bízhan,
And poured down tears of blood upon his breast;
For he and Rustam had been long akin,
That chieftain's daughter was the wife of Gív,
While Rustam had Gív's sister for his spouse,
And gallant Farámarz by that brave dame.

Bízhan withal, that hero eminent
In every company, had for his mother
The daughter of the elephantine Rustam,
Who said to Gív: "Be not concerned hereat,
Because I will not take from Rakhsh the saddle
Till I have clasped Bízhan's hand in mine own,
And have demolished all his bonds and prison.
By God's strength, since the Sháh requireth it,
Will I release him from that darksome pit."

§ 16

How Rustam made a Feast for Gív

Thence they departed to the hall of Rustam,
Discussing as they went what course to take.
When Rustam had perused the monarch's letter
He was o'erwhelmed at what Khusrau had said,
And all the praises that the worldlord Sháh
Gave to his famous captain of the host.
Then Rustam said to Gív: "I will dispatch,
And ready me to go as he commandeth.
I know how thou hast laboured, thine achievements,
And thy concernment in all enterprise.
How mighty is thine influence with me,
Who hast wooed war on every battlefield,
Alike in the revenge for Siyáwush,
And in the war against Mázandarán!
Thou hast borne travail too in coming hither,
And faring by a route so arduous.
I joy exceedingly to look upon thee
Although I am concerned about Bízhan.
V. 1104 I cannot bear to see thee in such grief,
And fortune-stricken. As the Sháh commandeth
In this his letter I will take the road,
And also out of my concern for thee

Will undertake the matter of Bízhan,
Will do my best and, if All-holy God
Shall leave my body and my soul together,
I will not grudge Bízhan life, troops, and treasure.
I gird me in God's strength and by the fortune
Of our victorious worldlord. I will rescue
Bízhan from bondage and from darksome pit,
And will re-seat him on the famous daïs.
Abide with me three days in joy, quaff wine,
Be free from care, for no division parteth
My house from thine, and thou and I are one
In treasure, soul, and body."
At his words
Gív sprang up, kissed his hands and head and feet,
Applauded him, and said: "O man of name,
Endowed with strength and manhood, worth and fortune!
Mayst thou have ever thus the heart and strength
Of elephants and archimages' prudence.
Thou dost partake all excellence, and so
Hast cleansed my heart from rust."
When Rustam saw
Gív's heart content, and felt himself assured
That all would turn out well, he told his steward:—
"Set out the board and call the chiefs and sages."
Then Farámarz, Zawára, Zál, and Gív
Sat at the banquet of the valiant chief.
Cup-bearers and musicians with their harps V. 1105
Came to the hall of jewelled tracery;
The handles of the goblets blushed with wine,
The harps descanted and the cups went round.
Carousing thus in Rustam's palace Gív
Abode three days and made no haste to leave.

§ 17

How Rustam came to Khusrau

The fourth day they prepared to go, 'twas time;
So Rustam bade to pack the loads and make
All ready for the journey to Írán,
While at his gate his noble horsemen gathered,
Dight for the road. He came forth, mounted Rakhsh,
Girt up his loins, put on a Rúman vest,
And hung his grandsire's mace beside the saddle,
Intent on feats of arms and strategy.
Rakhsh struck the sky above him, but the head
Of crown-bestowing Rustam topped the sun.
They took their loads up, leaving Farámarz
Within Zábul, and Rustam, Gív, and troops—
Picked Zábulís, a hundred thousand strong—
Set forth upon the march toward Írán:
All hurried on with vengeance in their hearts.
When Rustam reached Írán, and when the throne
Of Kai Khusrau was coming into sight,
V. 1106 A sweet breeze wafted to him in its love
And gaiety the welcome of the sky.
Then Gív drew near to Rustam saying thus:—
"'Tis fit that I go first and tell the Sháh
That matchless Rakhsh hath measured all the road."
Said Rustam: "Go rejoicing, say to him:—
'Be quit of thy distress.'"
When Gív approached
The royal presence with much praise and homage
The Sháh demanded: "Where was Rustam left?
How have ye sped?"
Gív answered: "Sháh renowned!
Thy fortune bringeth all things to success.
He disobeyed thee not, I found his heart
Devoted to thee. When I gave thy letter

He pressed it to his face and eyes, and hitched
His reins to mine as should a faithful liege.
I have pushed on that I might tell the Sháh
That matchless Rustam is upon the road."
"But," said Khusrau, "where is that Prop of chiefs,
That Seed of loyalty? We needs must honour
One both so good and faithful."
Gív replied:—
"Two stages back; I came on first to tell thee."
Then Kai Khusrau gave orders to the sages,
The royal princes, and the mighty men,
To go forth with the host to welcome Rustam,
Who came obedient to the Sháh's command.
They told Gúdarz son of Kishwád, Farhád,
And Tús—chief of the offspring of Naudar.
The more part of the warriors and nobles,
Mace-bearers and foe-slayers, then arose
And dight themselves to go and meet the guest, V. 1107
According to the usance of Káús.
The world was azure-dim with horsemen's dust,
The standards fluttered, and the chargers neighed.
When they drew near to Rustam they dismounted
And did obeisance. That chief paladin,
Alighting, greeted all the veterans,
And asked about the Sháh and how things went
Beneath resplendent sun and shining moon;
Then swiftly as the bright Ázargashasp
The warriors and Rustam all remounted.
He came before that Sháh, who loved his lieges,
With measured tread and offered reverence,
For 'twas his duty to revere and love,
Then raised his head, gave praise, and said: "Be thou
Associate with the throne throughout thy years,
Urmuzd himself be present in this court,
Bahman be guardian of thy throne and crown,

May good Ardíbihisht, Bahrám, and Tír
Watch over thee, and may Shahrír endow thee
With triumph, fame, Grace, majesty, and prowess.
Be thine own sentinel Sapandármad,
May wisdom be the life of thy bright soul;
May Dai and Farwardín bless thee, the door
Of ill be barred, and may Ázar make night
As bright as day to thee, thyself rejoice,
Thy crown illume the world, and may Ábán
Make all thine undertakings glorious;
Be turning heaven before thee as a slave,
And may Murdád protect thy flocks and herds
Be ever glad in person and in fortune,
V. 1108 May ancestor and issue smile on thee,
And may Khurdád spread joy o'er field and fell."

When Rustam standing there had offered praise
The king of kings accorded him a seat
Upon the throne, and said: "Thou art well come;
Far be the hand of evil from thy life.
Thou art the paladin of this world's Kaians,
Who readest others but art read of none,
The Kaians' choice, the backbone of the host,
The warden of Írán, the army's refuge.
Thou hast rejoiced me by the sight of thee,
Who art so vigilant and worshipful!
Zawára, Farámarz, and Zál—are they
Hale, happy, and content?"

And Rustam answered,
Descending from the throne and kissing it:—
"O Sháh most honoured and of sleepless fortune!
Thereby all three are well and happy: blest
Indeed is he whom thou rememberest."

§ 18

How Kai Khusrau held Feast with the Paladins

The chamberlain threw wide the garden-gate,
And made all ready for a royal revel.
He gave command to set the golden crown
And throne beneath a bower that scattered roses,
And laid down court-brocade o'er all the pleasance,
Which shone as 'twere a lamp. They had a tree
Set up above the Sháh's throne to enshadow
It and the crown. The stem thereof was silver;
The branches were of gold and jewelry,
The jewels manifold and clustering,
The leaves of emeralds and carnelians,
And fruit hung down, like earrings, from the boughs.
The fruits were golden oranges and quinces
All hollow and all perforate like reeds,
And charged with musk worked up with wine that when
The Sháh set any one upon the throne
The breeze might shower musk on him; such showers
Descended on the Sháh what time he came,
And took his seat upon the throne of gold.
All the cup-bearers wearing coronets V. 1109
Of jewels, gold brocade, and robes of Chín,
With torques and earrings, stood before the throne,
All clad in gold. All hearts were full of mirth.
The wine was in their hands, their cheeks were flushed,
Though no one was bemused, like cercis-bloom,
Or like brocade of Chín. The aloe-wood
Burned and the harps descanted. Then the Sháh
Gave orders to the chamberlain on duty,
And said: "Call Tús, Gúdarz, and all the chiefs."
He ordered Rustam to approach the throne,
And sit with him beneath the tree. He said:—

"Thou happy bond 'twixt fortune and ourselves!
Thou art a shield betwixt Írán and ill
For aye with outstretched wings like the Símurgh,
And oft hast toiled for country and for king.
Thou knowest how the offspring of Gúdarz
In peace and war, in profit and in loss,
Stand in my presence with their loins girt up,
And always are my guides to what is good,
While, more than all, Gív shielded me from harm.
Such grief ne'er came before upon this house
(What greater sorrow than to lose a son?)
And wert thou not to undertake the task
I see none other helper in the world.
Now remedy this matter of Bízhan's,
Who hath been ill-entreated by Túrán,
And take of steeds and armour, men and treasure,
Whate'er is needed. Think it not a toil."

When Rustam heard he kissed the ground, sprang up,
And blessed the Sháh: "O thou fair-famed," he said,
"Who like the sun art potent everywhere!
V. 1110 Be greed and wrath and need afar from thee,
And may thy foe's heart burn and agonize.
Thou art Sháh, lord, and chief above all kings,
And monarchs are the dust upon thy feet.
The throne, the bright sun, and the shining moon
Have never looked on such another Sháh.
Thou hast discerned between the good and bad,
And bound the Dragon with thy charms and chains.
My mother gave me birth to toil for thee;
Thine own part is enjoyment and repose.
I am obedient to the Sháh's commands,
And go where thou shalt bid. By royal Grace,
And by my massive mace, I plucked the heart
Out of the dívs erst in Mázandarán;
E'en so for Gív sake, though the sky should rain
Fire on my head, I will not heed and, though

The spear-points reach the lashes of mine eyes,
I will not turn rein from Khusrau's behest,
But by thy Grace will compass this achievement,
And ask for neither chief nor warriors."
When Rustam had thus said, Gúdarz and Gív
With Faríburz, Farhád, the brave Shápúr,
And other chiefs, invoked on him God's blessing.
They took the cup and, pledging Zál and Rustam,
Became bemused with wine. Thus revelling
The Sháh oped festively the door of spring.

§ 19

How Rustam made Petition for Gurgín to the Sháh

Gurgín heard bruit of Rustam and, aware
That thus a key to loose his grief had come,
Dispatched this message: "Man of fortune, Grace,
And fame, thou Tree of greatness, loyalty,
And treasure, Gate of noble men and Bond
Of bale! if words of mine afflict thee not
I will address thee touching what I did.
Mark the behaviour of this hump-backed sky V. 1111
In quenching wantonly the light within me,
And pointing out to me the path of darkness!
'Twas written thus, and what hath been hath been.
I will lie down in fire before the Sháh
If I may find forgiveness; all is over
With my hoar head if my good name be lost;
So, if thou wilt plead for me, I will go,
Swift as a mountain-sheep, along with thee,
And wallow in the dust before Bízhan
If I may win mine unstained honour back."
When Rustam heard he heaved a deep, cold sigh;
The anguish shown and message sent perturbed him;
He grieved at that request so fondly urged,

And bade the envoy: "Go, return, and say:—
'Insensate wretch! hast heard not what the leopard
Said by the deep stream to the crocodile:—
'"If passion gain the upper hand of wit,
Then nobody will 'scape the clutch of it"?
The sage that quelleth passion hath a record
As of a noble Lion; thine hath been
An ancient fox's, yet thou didst o'erlook
The snare! I should not grant thy frantic wish
That I should bring thy name before Khusrau,
Yet, since I see thee in such straits and all
Confounded, I will ask him to forgive thee,
And lighten thy dark moon. Then, if Bízhan
By God the Ruler of the world's command
Escape, thou wilt be freed and save thy life
From Gív's revenge. Should heaven will otherwise
Deem life and person as unworth thy love.
First will I go forth on my quest and vengeful
In God's strength at the bidding of the Sháh,
V. 1112 But if I fail that man of prowess Gív
Will then take wreak on thee for his brave son.'"
Thus passed a night and day, and Rustam spake
Naught to the Sháh, but when upon the morrow
The sun displayed its crown and took its seat
Upon its silver-sheening ivory throne,
Came Rustam flying unto Kai Khusrau
To ask a boon of that victorious Sháh
While speaking of Gurgín, his fallen fortune,
And wretched plight. The Sháh said: "Chieftain mine!
Thou wouldst then break my bonds and break with me,
Because I swore by throne, crown, Mars, and Venus,
And sun and moon: 'Gurgín shall see but ill
From me unless Bízhan be freed from bondage.'
Excepting this ask of me what thou wilt
Of swords and signet-rings, of thrones and crowns."

He answered: "Virtuous and famous prince!
If he intended harm he suffereth,
And is prepared to offer up his life;
But if the Sháh will not forgive him first
He will be outcast from the Faith and honour.
Whoever turneth from the way of wisdom
Will writhe for his ill-doing at the last.
Vouchsafe to call to mind Gurgín's exploits,
How he hath taken part in every fight,
And been a champion with thine ancestors;
If for my sake the Sháh will pardon him
His fortunes may be somewhat brightened yet."
The Sháh, that Rustam might not plead in vain,
Released Gurgín from gloomy pit and chain.

§ 20

How Rustam equipped his Escort

The Sháh asked Rustam: "When wilt thou depart
For this campaign? Demand whate'er thou wilt—
Troops, treasure, and companions for the journey.
Malevolent Afrásiyáb, I fear me, V. 1113
Will not long spare Bízhan. The king is headstrong,
And the injurious Dív, who taught him magic,
Anon will turn his heart aside and prompt him
To slay our swordsman."
Rustam thus replied:—
"I will achieve this enterprise by stealth,
For only craft will loosen such a coil.
We must not give occasion for alarm,
But set off in the guise of merchantmen,
And tarry for a while within Túrán.
This is a case for drawing in the rein,
And not a time for maces, swords, and spear-points.
I shall require much silver, gold, and gems;

We start in hope but we shall stay in fear.
I shall need garments too and carpetings
For giving presents and as merchandise."
On hearing Rustam's words Khusrau commanded
His treasurer to bring him whatsoever
His minister directed from the hoards
Laid up of yore. The royal treasurer
Undid the purses and bestrewed the throne
With jewels and dínárs. Came matchless Rustam,
Inspected all, and chose whate'er was needed.
He took ten camel-burdens of dínárs,
Five score of other ware; he next commanded
The chamberlain: "Choose out a thousand horse.
Some of the proud and noble lion-men
Must also gird themselves—Gurgín and Zanga,
The son of Sháwarán, next Gustaham,
The Falchion of the brave, and fourth Guráza,
The sentinel of warriors, throne, and crown,
V. 1114 To lead the host, Ruhhám, Farhád, two men
Of valour, and Ashkash that lion-hero.
These seven warriors must make them ready
To overlook the escort and the goods."
These, every one in his allotted part,
Vied in their preparations for the start.

§ 21

How Rustam went to the City of Khutan to Pírán

Then Rustam bade those chieftains, those mace-wielders,
Those dealers out of death, to gird themselves
At dawn what time the officer on duty
Came to the gate. At daybreak, when the cock crew,
They bound the drums upon the elephants,
While Rustam came forth like a lofty cypress,

Mace in his hand and lasso on his saddle.
He left the royal portal with his troops,
And called down blessings on the land. The chiefs
Went first, the soldiers followed, and all took
Their lives in hand, their guides were spears and arrows,
And every hand had been imbrued in blood.
When Rustam reached the marches of Túrán
He picked out all the chiefs, then bade the troops:—
"Abide here cheerfully, move not unless
All-holy God deprive me of my life,
Be dight for battle and prepared for bloodshed."
Thus in those marches of Írán he left them,
And went, he and the chiefs, towards Túrán.
He doffed his mail and donned a merchant's dress, V. 1115
The warriors undid their silver girdles,
And he arrayed them all in woollen robes.
They fared toward Túrán—a caravan
All scent and colour. There were eight fine steeds,
One Rakhsh, the others were the warriors' mounts,
Ten camels bearing bales of jewelry,
And five score bearing soldiers' uniforms.
The waste rang like the horn of Tahmúras
With bells and shouting. Rustam journeyed on
Until he reached the city of Pírán,
For there was one in those Túránian marches
Belonging to that chief, but he himself
Was at the chase; his palace was unguarded.
Now when he came back from the hunting-field
The matchless Rustam saw him on the road,
And having covered over with brocade
A golden goblet filled with precious stones
Gave it and therewithal two splendid steeds,
With saddles made of gold adorned with jewels,
To the attendants, and preceding them
Strode to Pírán's throne swiftly, did obeisance,

And said: "O prince whose fortune and whose prowess
Are famous in Irán and in Túrán!
Thy Grace and crown are peerless, for thou art
King's minister and glory of the throne."
Pírán, so God ordained it, knew not Rustam,
But questioned him and said: "Whence art thou? Speak!
What man art thou and wherefore hast thou come?"
He said: "I am thy subject. God assigned me
A cistern in thy city. I have measured
A long and grievous journey from Írán
V. 1116 To traffic in Túrán. I sell and buy,
And deal in every sort of merchandise.
My soul hath good assurance of thy love,
Such was the power of hope within my heart!
If now the paladin will take me 'neath
His wing I will buy cattle and sell jewels.
Through thy just dealing none will do me hurt,
The cloud-rack of thy love rain gems upon me."
Then Rustam offered him before the lords
The cup of royal gems, and splendid Arabs
With coats too sleek to hold the wind-borne dust.
This wealth with many a blessing Rustam gave,
And fairly clinched the matter. When Pírán
Beheld the jewels in the brilliant cup
He praised and welcomed Rustam, seating him
Upon the turquoise throne, and said: "Depart
Content and enter with all confidence,
For I will lodge thee near me; be at ease
About thy goods, thou hast no foeman here.
Go fetch thy wares, seek buyers on all sides,
Make my son's house thy home, and be to me
As 'twere a kinsman."
Rustam answered thus:—
"I will abide here with my caravan,
O paladin! What goods I have are thine,

And 'twill be well with me be where I may,
But in that I have jewels of all kinds,
And must not lose one, by thy conquering fortune
We will remain outside in great content."
Pírán replied: "Go then and choose thy place,
And I will station guards for thy defence."
So Rustam chose a house, appointed it,
And filled the warehouse with his goods and packs.
News spread: "A caravan out of Írán
Hath visited the noble paladin,"
And buyers everywhere pricked up their ears V. 1117
When tidings reached them of those jewel-merchants.
Those that would buy brocade or stuffs or gems
Departed toward the court-gate of Pírán,
And when the sun arose the world to grace
The warehouse had become a market-place.

§ 22

How Manízha came before Rustam

Manízha heard and hurried to the city;
Bare-headed, weeping bitterly, she came—
That daughter of Afrásiyáb—to Rustam,
And, wiping from her lashes with her sleeve
The tears of blood, blessed, greeted him, and said:—
"Enjoy'st thou life and wealth? God grant that thou
Mayst ne'er have reason to repent thy toils.
May heaven perform thy will, the evil eye
Not harm thee, and since thou hast heart of hope
May this thy travail not result in loss.
May wisdom ever be thy monitor,
And may Írán be blessed and fortunate.
What know'st thou of the warriors of the Sháh,
Of Gív, Gúdarz, and the Íránian host?
Have tidings of Bízhan not reached Írán?

Will not his supplications aught avail,
That such a youth—a scion of Gúdarz—
May be released from irons? His feet are galled
With fetters and his hands with blacksmiths' rivets!
He hath been dragged in chains, made fast in bonds!
Poor wretch! his clothes are soaked in his own blood!
I get no rest myself for I must beg.
His lamentations fill mine eyes with tears."

v. 1118 Then Rustam in alarm roared out at her,
And drave her forth. "Be off!" he cried. "I know not
Khusrau or this young chief. I have no tidings
About Gúdarz and Gív, and thou hast chattered
My wits away."

Manízha looked at Rustam,
Wept bitterly, and showered tears of blood
Upon her bosom in her wretchedness.
She said to him: "O chieftain full of wisdom!
Such heartless words as these become thee not.
Drive me not from thee if thou wilt not talk,
For I am stricken to the heart with anguish.
Is it indeed the custom of Írán
To tell the poor no news?"

He answered thus:—
"What ailed thee, woman, then? Did Áhriman
Give thee a foretaste of the Day of Doom?
Thou didst prevent my trafficking, and therefore
I rated thee; but do not take to heart
My hastiness, my thoughts were on my trade.
Besides I have no home within the land
Of Kai Khusrau, I know naught of Gúdarz
And Gív, and ne'er have travelled in those marches."

He bade to give the mendicant such food
As was at hand, then questioned her at large:—
"Why is't that fortune is so dark with thee?
Why ask about the Sháh's throne and Írán?
Why look upon the road that leadeth thither?"

She said to him: "Why ask about my case,
My travail, and my trouble? From the mouth
Of yonder pit have I with aching heart
Made haste to thee, O noble man! to ask
The latest news of Gív and of Gúdarz,
The warriors, and thou didst shout at me
As fighters shout! Fear'st not the Judge of all?
The daughter of Afrásiyáb am I—
Manízha. Never had the sun beheld
My form unveiled, but now with eyes all blood,
And heart all pain, with sallow cheeks I roam
From door to door and gather barley bread, V. 1119
So hath God willed! Can fortune be more wretched?
Oh! that Almighty God would end it for me,
Because resourceless and in yon deep pit
Bízhan beholdeth neither night nor day,
Nor sun nor moon, but yoked and riveted
In heavy bonds is praying God for death.
Hence are my griefs redoubled, hence these tears.
Thou mayst, if thou art journeying to Írán,
Hear of Gúdarz son of Kishwád, or see
About the court-gate Gív or gallant Rustam;
Then say: 'Bízhan is in a pit and, save
Thou comest quickly, all is over with him.
If thou wouldst look upon him tarry not,
For iron is below him, stone above.'"

Thus Rustam answered her: "O fair of face!
Why rain these tears of love? Why not invite
Thy nobles' intercession with thy sire?
He may be pitiful, his blood may stir,
His liver burn; but for my fear of him
I would have furnished thee with countless things."

Then said he to the cooks: "Bring forth for her
Of every kind of victual that she needeth."

He bade them fetch a bird hot from the spit,

And, as he wrapped it in soft bread,[1] slipped in,
As with a fairy's touch, his signet-ring,
And said: "Convey this to yon pit. A guide
Art thou to those who have no help beside."

§ 23

How Bízhan heard of the Coming of Rustam

V. 1120 Manízha came back to the pit's mouth, running,
The food wrapped in a cloth clasped to her breast,
And gave all to Bízhan. He saw amazed,
Called to the sun-faced damsel from the pit,
And said: "Where didst thou get the food, my love!
That thou hast speeded thus? How much of toil
And hardship hath befallen thee, and all
On mine account, my love and succourer!"
Manízha answered: "From a caravan.
A merchantman—a man possessed of wealth—
Came hither from Írán in search of gain,
With merchandise of all kinds great and small—
A holy man of Grace and understanding,
Who bringeth many jewels of all sorts.
He is a man of might and open heart,
And hath put up a booth before his house;
He gave to me the cloth just as it is:
'Pray for me to the Maker,' were his words.
'Go to the dungeon to the man in bonds,
And take from time to time what he may need.'"
Bízhan with hope amid his fears unrolled
The good bread, in perplexity began
To eat, observed the ring, and read the name,
Then burst out laughing in his joy and wonder.
It was a turquoise ring with "Rustam" graven

[1] Bread in Persia usually is made up into flexible loaves about one foot wide, two or three feet long, and half an inch thick.

Fine as a hair thereon. Bízhan beholding
The fruit upon the tree of faithfulness,
And wotting that the key to loose his sorrow
Had come, laughed out and that right royally,
So that the sound was heard outside the pit.
Manízha marvelled when she heard him laugh
From that dark dungeon fettered as he was,
And said: "The mad will laugh at their own acts!"
She paused in sheer amazement, then she said:—
"O destined to high fortune! why this laughter? V. 1121
Why laugh, for thou discern'st not night from day?
What is the mystery? Reveal it! Tell me!
Doth better fortune show thee countenance?"
Bízhan replied to her: "I am in hope
That fortune will undo this grievous coil.
Now if with me thou wilt not break thy faith,
And make a covenant with me by oath,
I will reveal the matter every whit,
For 'though for fear of harm one go about
To sew up women's lips the words will out.'"
Manízha hearing this wept bitterly:—
"What hath malicious fortune brought," she said,
"Upon me? Woe is me! My day is done,
My heart is stricken, and mine eyes o'erflow!
I gave Bízhan my heart and home and wealth,
And now he treateth me with such distrust!
My father and my kin abandoned me,
I run about unveiled before the folk,
I gave withal my treasures up to spoil,
My crown, dínárs, and jewels, every whit.
I did hope in Bízhan but hope no more.
My world is darkened and mine eyes are dim,
For he concealeth secrets thus from me,
But Thou dost know me better, O my God!"
Bízhan replied: "'Tis true. Thou hast lost all
For me, and I," he added, "needs must tell thee,

O my beloved mate and prudent comrade!
'Tis fit thou counsel me in all, my brain
Is void through suffering, so know that he—
The jewel-merchant, he whose cook provided
The dainty meal for thee—came to Túrán
On mine account, for else he had no need
Of gems. The Maker pitied me, and I
Perchance shall see earth's broad expanse. This man
Will free me from these longsome griefs and thee
From plodding to and fro in heat and anguish.
Do thou draw near and say to him in private:—
'O thou the paladin of this world's Kaians,
V. 1122 Affectionate of heart and good at need!
Inform me if thou art the lord of Rakhsh?'"
Manízha left the forest like the wind,
And gave the message. Rustam hearing her,
Who from afar had come to him for help,
Knew that Bízhan had made the secret known
To that slim Cypress with the rosy cheeks.
He pitied her and said: "My Fair! may God
Ne'er take away from thee Bízhan's devotion.
What toils must thou have borne these many days
That thou hast grown so woe-begone with care!
Tell him: 'Yea! God who heareth cries for help
Hath given unto thee the lord of Rakhsh,
Who from Zábul Íránward, from Írán
Túránward, trod the weary way for thee.'
When thou hast said this keep the matter secret,
And give good ear at night to any sound.
Collect dry fuel from the wood to-day
And, when night cometh, set the pile ablaze
To guide me to the opening of the pit."[1]
Manízha, joyful at the words and freed
From trouble, hastened to the mountain-top,
Where in the pit her lover was confined,

[1] Line inserted from P.

And said: "I have repeated all thy message
To that illustrious, glorious one whose steps
Are blessed. He answered: 'I indeed am he,
Whose name and sign are asked for by Bízhan.
O thou who goest with a heart so seared,
And washest both thy cheeks with tears of blood!
Say: "We are dappled like a pard with galls
On hands and girdlestead on thine account,
And now that we have certain news of thee
Thou shalt behold our deadly falchion's point,
Now will I rend the earth beneath my grasp,
And fling that seated boulder to the sky."'
He said to me: 'As soon as heaven is dark,
And night freed from the clutches of the sun,
Set thou a fire, as 'twere a mount, ablaze,
And make it bright as day about the pit,
To guide me on the road.'" V. 1123

Bízhan rejoiced,
Although a prisoner still, and, looking up
To Him, the Almighty Maker of the world,
Said: "O compassionate and holy Judge!
Thou art my Helper out of every ill.
Pierce with Thy shaft my foeman's heart and soul.
Now do me right on him that did the wrong:
Thou knowest all my sorrows, pain, and grief.
Perchance I may regain my native land,
And leave behind me this malignant star!
And thou, my toil-worn mate, thou who hast made
Life, body, heart, and goods a sacrifice
For me, and in thy toil on my behalf
Hast counted every trouble as a joy,
Hast given up the crown and throne and girdle,
Thy parents and thy kindred and thy treasure!
If I do but escape this Dragon's clutch,
While I am still within the time of youth,

I, like the devotees who worship God,
Will run toward thee with mine arms outstretched,
And, like a servitor before a king,
Gird up my loins to make thee fair return.
Bear yet this toil, thy guerdon shall be great
In goods and treasure."
Bird-like to the boughs
She flew for wood, with arms full watched the sun,
And thought: "Oh! when will night rise o'er the hills?"
When Sol had vanished and dark night had led
Its army o'er the mountain-tops what time
The world, its features hidden, taketh rest,
Manízha went and set a-blaze a fire,
That scorched the eye of pitch-black night, and listened
To hear the clanging of the kettledrum
Which told that Rakhsh the brazen-hoofed had come.

§ 24

How Rustam took Bízhan out of the Pit

V. 1124 Then Rustam buckled on his Rúman mail,
With prayers for succour and support to Him,
Who is the Lord of sun and moon, and said:—
"Oh! may the eyes of evil men be blinded,
And may I have the strength to save Bízhan."
At his command the warriors girt themselves
With girdles of revenge, put on their steeds
The poplar saddles, and prepared for combat;
Then matchless Rustam led them toward the fire.
When he approached the boulder of Akwán,
Approached that pit of sorrow, smart, and anguish,
"Dismount," he told the seven warriors,
"And strive to clear the pit's mouth of the stone."
They strove in vain and sorely galled their hands.

Now while their sweat ran, for the stone stood still,
The lion-chief alighted, hitched his skirt
Of mail beneath his belt and, asking strength
From God its source, grasped, raised, and hurled the boulder
Back to the forest of the land of Chín:
Earth shook thereat. Then asked he of Bízhan
With lamentable cries: "How camest thou
To such a luckless plight? Thy portion here
Was wont to be all sweetness; why hast thou
Received then from the world a cup of poison?"
Bízhan replied: "How fared the paladin
Upon the way? Thy greeting reached mine ear,
And this world's poison was made sweet to me.
Such as thou seest is my dwelling-place, V. 1125
Mine earth is iron and my heaven stone,
While through exceeding anguish, hardship, sorrow,
And toil I have renounced this Wayside Inn."
Said Rustam: "God had pity on thy life,
And now, O man wise and magnanimous!
There is one thing that I desire of thee:
Grant pardon to Gurgín son of Mílád
For my sake, putting from thee hate and malice."
He answered: "O my friend! how shouldst thou know
What conflicts have been mine? And know'st thou not,
O noble lion-man! that which Gurgín
Hath done to me? If I behold him ever
My vengeance shall bring Doomsday down on him."
"If thou show'st malice and wilt not attend
To what I say," said Rustam, "I will leave thee
Bound in the pit, and mount, and hie me home."
When Rustam's answer reached the captive's ear
A wail went up from that strait prison-house
As he replied: "The wretchedest am I
Of warriors, of my kindred, and my people!

I must put up to-day too with the wrong—
The great wrong—which Gurgín hath done to me!
Yea I will do so and will be content;
My heart shall rest from taking vengeance on him."
Then Rustam let his lasso down the pit,
And drew up thus Bízhan with fettered feet,
With naked body, with long hair and nails,
And wasted by affliction, pain, and want,
His form blood-boltered, and his visage wan
By reason of those bonds and rusty fetters.
Now Rustam cried aloud when he beheld
Bízhan with body hidden by the iron,
And putting forth his hands he snapped the chains
And bonds, and freed Bízhan from ring and fetter.
They went toward Rustam's house; on one side of him
Bízhan rode, on the other side Manízha.
V. 1126 The youthful pair sat in their sorry plight,
And told their story to the paladin.
Then Rustam bade them bathe the young man's head,
And clothed him in new robes. When afterward
Gurgín approached and, prone upon the dust,
Sought to excuse his evil deeds, and writhed
For words so ill-advised, Bízhan condoned
The matter. Then they loaded up the camels,
And put the saddles on the steeds, while Rustam
Assumed his favourite mail and mounted Rakhsh.
The warriors drew forth their scimitars
And massive maces, sent the baggage on,
And dight themselves for strife. Ashkash the shrewd—
The army's Ear—went with the baggage-train.
Then matchless Rustam bade Bízhan: "Away,
And journey with Manízha and Ashkash,
For in my vengeance on Afrásiyáb
To-night I shall not eat, repose, or sleep.
Now will I do such exploits at his gate
That on the morn his troops shall laugh at him.

Thou hast endured enough with bonds and pit,
And shouldst not share the fight."
Bízhan said: "Nay,
I lead since ye for me renew the fray."

§ 25

How Rustam attacked the Palace of Afrásiyáb by Night

The baggage thus consigned to shrewd Ashkash, V. 1127
The seven warriors set forth with Rustam.
With bridles on their saddle-bows they drew
The sword of vengeance. While all slept within
He reached the court-gate of Afrásiyáb,
And, breaking with his hands both bolt and bar,
Fierce as a lion flung himself inside.
In every quarter sounds of tumult rose,
Swords glittered, arrows rained, the chieftains' heads
Were all struck off, their hands were filled with dust,
Their mouths with blood, while Rustam in the porch
Cried: "May sweet sleep distaste thee! For thy bed
Thou hadst a throne, Bízhan had but a pit.
Didst see an iron wall between us? I
Am Rustam of Zábul, the son of Zál,
And 'tis no season this for sleep and couching.
I have burst through thy prison, door and bar,
Where that huge boulder stood on guard for thee.
Bízhan is free both head and foot from bonds:
Let no one thus maltreat a son-in-law!
Of fighting and revenge for Siyáwush,
And dust from Rakhsh's feet upon the plain,
Thou hadst enough yet fain wouldst slay Bízhan!
I know thy wicked heart and drowsy head."
Bízhan too cried: "Dense and malignant Turkman!
Bethink thee of yon throne, thy glorious seat,
And me withal that stood in chains before thee.

I challenged combat leopard-like, but thou
Didst bind my hands together firm as rock.
Now see me free upon the plain—a man
Whom savage lions will not seek to fight."
V. 1128 Afrásiyáb exclaimed: "Hath sleep enfettered
My warriors? Cut off these men's retreat,
All ye who seek a signet or a crown!"
On all sides was the sound of hurried steps,
The bloodshed made a river at the gate,
And when a soldier of Túrán appeared
His place was void forthwith, The Íránians
Came seeking vengeance, but Afrásiyáb
Escaped by flight. The lord of Rakhsh rode in
Upon the carpets of brocade. The warriors
Took the fair slaves who caught them by the hand
Took too the noble steeds with poplar saddles,
Whose flaps of pard-skin were beset with gems,
Then left the royal palace, packed the baggage,
And stayed not in Túrán but hastened on
To save the booty and avoid mishap.
So spent was Rustam that he scarce endured
His helmet, while the horses and their riders
Had no pulse left. He sent to bid the host:—
"Unsheathe your vengeful scimitars; no doubt
The earth will be bedimmed by horses' hoofs,
Because Afrásiyáb will gather him
A mighty host whose spears will veil the sun."
They marched along, those warlike cavaliers,
All ready for the fray, with sharpened lances
And reins well gathered in. A scout ascended
The look-out and from far surveyed the route
Whereby the Turkman cavaliers would come.
Manízha then was sitting in her tent;
Before her were her handmaids and her guide,
V. 1129 And matchless Rustam spoke to her this saw:—
"If musk be poured away the scent will stay."

Such is the fashion of this Wayside Inn,
Whiles sweets and smiles, whiles travail and chagrin!

§ 26

How Afrásiyáb went to fight with Rustam

When Sol rose o'er the hills the Turkman horsemen
Prepared to march. The city was astir,
And, thou hadst said, a deafening clamour rose.
Before the court-gate of Afrásiyáb
The troops formed rank, the great men loosed their loins,
And bowed their heads in dust before the king,
Exclaiming: "Things with us have passed all bounds!
What must be done? This business of Bízhan
Will be a lasting stigma, the Íránians
Will call us men no more, but women armed."
Thereat Afrásiyáb raged like a pard,
And bade them fight for shame. He bade Pírán
To bind the tymbals on, and thus he said:—
"This flouting from Írán is over-much!"
The brass blared at the court-gate of the king,
The troops were all in motion in Túrán,
The warriors ranked themselves before the palace,
Arose the din of trump and Indian bell,
And to the frontier from Túrán a host
Marched that left earth no surface save the sea.
Now when the Íránian watchman from the look-out
Saw earth heave ocean-like he came to Rustam, V. 1130
And said: "Make ready, for the world is black
With dust of horsemen!"
Rustam made reply:—
"We fear not, we will strew it on their hands."
He left Manízha with the baggage, donned
His battle-mail, went to a height, observed

The foe, and roared out like a savage lion.
That gallant horseman spake a proverb, saying:—
"What doth a fox weigh in a lion's claws?"
Then to his valiant warriors he shouted:—
"The wage of war confronteth us to-day.
Where are the swords and iron-piercing darts?
Where are the ox-head maces and the spears?
Now is the season to display your prowess,
And rank yourselves upon the battlefield."
Anon arose a sound of clarions,
While matchless Rustam mounted Rakhsh and led
His army plainward from the heights what time
The foe was seen approaching.[1] Both the hosts
Deployed upon that broad expanse and formed
Two camps empanoplied. Then Rustam chose
His battle-ground, whereat the world grew black
With horse-raised dust. Ashkash and Gustaham
Were on the right with many cavaliers,
Upon the left were Zanga and Ruhhám.
All rose superior to that conflict. Rustam,
The warriors' warden and the host's support,
Was at the centre with Bízhan the son
Of Gív. Behind the host was Mount Bístún,
In front a citadel of scimitars.
Afrásiyáb, when he beheld that host,
With Rustam who was seen commanding it,
In dudgeon donned his armour for the battle,
And bade his troops to halt. He drew them up
In due array against the foe. The earth
Was hidden and the air like indigo.
The left wing he intrusted to Pírán,
While brave Húmán departed to the right;
The centre he consigned to Garsíwaz
And Shída; he himself o'erlooked the whole.

[1] "aussitôt que l'armée *ennemie* eut paru dans le défilé *de la montagne opposée*" (Mohl).

The matchless Rustam went about the host,
And seemed a sable mountain in his mail.
He cried: "Thou luckless Turkman, thou disgrace V. 1131
To province, crown, and throne! thou hast no heart
To fight like cavaliers, yet shamest not
Before thy warriors, but assailest us,
And coverest the earth with men and steeds,
Though when the armies grapple I shall see
Thy back toward the fight. Hast thou not heard
Those sayings of old times which Zál repeateth:—
'No lion is affrighted at a plain
Of onagers; stars ape the sun in vain;
The lusty mountain-sheep if it shall hear
A wolf's claws named will shiver, heart and ear;
No fox is daring, try he e'er so much,
No onagers the lion's claws will touch'?
Be never king as light of wit as thou,
Or he will give his kingdom to the winds.
Upon this plain thou shalt not get away
Alive and scathless from my hands to-day."

§ 27

How Afrásiyáb was defeated by the Íránians

As soon as that grim Turkman heard the words
He shook, drew one quick breath, then cried in fury:—
"O warriors of Túrán! are we engaged
In banquet, feast, or battle on this field?
Ye must endure hard toil in this emprise,
For I will give you treasure in return."
They shouted when they heard the monarch's words;
The sun so gloomed with dust that thou hadst said:—
"Earth is submerged!" Upon the elephants
The drums were beaten, horns and trumpets blown.
The warriors with their breastplates formed a wall V. 1132

Of iron on the battlefield. The plain
Shook and the hills re-echoed with the shouts
Raised by the cavaliers upon both sides;
The trenchant swords flashed mid the clouds of dust;
Thou wouldst have said: "The Day of Doom hath come!"
Steel sparths descended like a storm of hail
Upon the coats of mail, the helms, and casques,
While at the gleam of Rustam's dragon-flag
The bright sun's face grew azure-dim; he veiled
The air with arrows, "Smearing," thou hadst said,
"The sun with pitch." Where'er he urged on Rakhsh
He trampled on the heads of cavaliers.
Grasped in his hand he bore an ox-head mace,
And seemed a dromedary broken loose.
He came forth from the centre like a wolf,
And scattered all the foemen's vast array.
Then horsemen's heads were shed as leaves are shed
Before the blast, and fortune left the Turkmans.
Swift as the wind Ashkash upon the right
Sought to engage the swordsman Garsíwaz,
Gúrgín, Farhád, and brave Ruhhám o'erthrew
The left wing of the monarch of Túrán,
While in the centre dexterous Bízhan
Esteemed the battlefield a banquet-hall.
Blood flowed in streams, the Turkman monarch's standard
V. 1133 Sank, he beheld his fortunes all averse,
The warriors of Túrán all slain, so flung
His Indian scimitar away and, mounting
A fresh steed, fled attended by his nobles
Toward Túrán, balked of revenge, and followed
By lion-taking Rustam, who rained mace
And arrow on the enemy, and blasted
For two leagues, thou hadst said, like dragon grim
The warriors. A thousand cavaliers

Were captured. Rustam then returned to camp
In order that he might divide the spoil,
And, when the elephants were loaded, he
Marched back to Kai Khusrau victoriously.

§ 28

How Rustam returned to Kai Khusrau

When tidings reached the gallant Sháh: "The Lion
Hath come back from the Wood victorious;
Bízhan is free from prison and from bonds,
And from the clutches of his dragon-foe;
The army of Túrán is overthrown,
The foe's whole purpose foiled," he went rejoicing,
And fell upon his face, before the Maker.
Whenas Gúdarz and Gív received the news
They hasted to the conquering Sháh. A shout
Went up, troops mustered, and the tymbal-players
Set forth, the trumpet sounded at the gate,
The soldiers shouted. All the riding-ground
Was black with chargers' hoofs, the kettledrums
Roared through the city, horsemen proudly pranced,
And mighty elephants tusked up the earth.
Before the army went the drums and horns,
Gúdarz and Tús came after with the standard.
Upon one side were pards and lions chained,
Upon the other were brave cavaliers.
In such wise the victorious Sháh commanded V. 1134
The troops to go to meet their paladin.
They set forth on their journey troop on troop;
The earth was mountain-like with warriors.
When they distinguished Rustam from the rest,
Gúdarz and Gív alighted, as did all
The other mighty men and Rustam also,
To whom both young and old did reverence.

Gúdarz and Gív saluted him and said:—
"O thou illustrious and valiant chief!
May God be thy protection now and ever,
May sun and moon both circle to thy wish.
Of thee the lion learneth to be bold,
Of thee may heaven weary nevermore!
Thou hast made all our kindred slaves to thee
Through whom we have recovered our lost son.
Thou hast delivered us from pain and grief,
And made us all thy servants in Írán."

The chiefs remounted and approached in pomp
The palace of the monarch of the world,
And, when that chief—the refuge of the host—
Drew near the city of the king of kings,
The Sháh himself,—the warden of the troops
And crown of chiefs—went out to welcome him.
When Rustam by the pomp knew that the Sháh
Had come, he lighted and did homage, grieved
That Kai Khusrau had come so far. The world-lord
Took Rustam in a close embrace and said:—
"Thou Stay of chieftains and thou Soul of honour!
As glorious as the sun are all thy gests,
And thine achievements broadcast through the world."

Then quickly taking by the hand Bízhan,
Who was abashed before his Sháh and sire,[1]
V. 1135 The matchless Rustam brought, presented him,
Rose to his feet, and made the bent back straight.
Thereafter he delivered to the Sháh
A thousand captives from Túrán in bonds.
The monarch blessed him lovingly and said:—
"May heaven ever favour thy desires,
May thy hand flourish, may thy heart rejoice,
And thy pure body 'scape all hurt from foes.
How blest is Zál, who will bequeath the world
A Memory like thee! Blest is Zábul,

[1] Reading with P.

Whose milk hath nourished such undaunted heroes.
Blest is Írán, blest are its warriors,
Possessing such a paladin as thee;
Yet is my fortune higher than them all
In having such a servant of my throne.
Thou art Írán's crown and the chieftains' stay,
And lacking thee I care not for the world."

Then said the monarch of the world to Gív:—
"The Almighty's purposes toward thee are good,
Who hath restored to thee by Rustam's hand
Thy son, thy well belovéd, and in triumph."

Gív blessed the Sháh and said: "Live and rejoice
As long as time shall be, may thy head flourish
Through Rustam ever, and may he possess
The heart of glorious Zál with happiness."

§ 29

How Kai Khusrau made a Feast

Khusrau commanded: "Let the board be spread,
And call the chiefest nobles to the feast."

Now when the guests had risen from the table
They had the place set for a drinking-bout.
Fair slaves illumed the hall, with cup-bearers V. 1136
And earringed harpers harping on their harps;
Their heads were crowned with massive coronets
Of gold with patterns traced thereon in gems.
All cheeks were ruddy as brocade of Rúm,
And fairy fingers made the harps resound.
There were gold chargers full of purest musk,
And in the front a laver of rose-water.
The Sháh, resplendent with imperial Grace,
Shone like a full moon o'er a straight-stemmed cypress.
The paladins, the lieges of Khusrau,
All left the palace, well bemused.

Next morning
Came Rustam to the court, with open heart

And girded loins, for leave to hie him home.
He took much prudent counsel with the Sháh,
Who gave commandment, and a change of raiment
Bejewelled, with a tunic and a crown,
A vase of royal gems, a hundred steeds
All saddled and a hundred laden camels,
A hundred fair-faced handmaids ready girt,
A hundred slaves adorned with torques of gold,
Were brought before the master of the world,
Who gave them all to Rustam of Zábul.
That hero kissed the ground and then stood upright.
He set upon his head that royal crown,
He bound that royal girdle round his loins,
Did homage to the Sháh, then left the presence,
And made his preparations for Sístán.
Next to the nobles that had been with Rustam
In toil and fight, in happiness and sorrow,
The Sháh gave gifts, to each in his degree:
They left the palace of Khusrau, rejoicing.

The Sháh, when he had finished with the chiefs,
And sat at leisure on his throne, commanded
Bízhan to come, and spake of all his troubles,
While for his part Bízhan informed the Sháh
At large of that strait dungeon, of his conflicts,
And what had happened in those evil days.
The Sháh forgave him and much pitied too
The pains and sorrows of the luckless damsel,
v. 1137 Called for a hundred garments of brocade
Of Rúm, gem-patterned on a ground of gold,
A crown, ten purses also of dínárs,
Girl-slaves and carpets and all kinds of wealth,
And said thus to Bízhan: "These precious things
Bear to the lady of the mournful soul,
Use her not hardly, speak no chilling word,
Consider all that thou hast brought on her.
Go through this world rejoicing by her side,

And take thou heed of time's vicissitudes,
How it will raise one to the heights of heaven,
And bear him all unharmed by care and anguish,
Then how that heaven will fling him to the dust,
Where all is fear, anxiety, and dread!
The man whom fortune cherished on its breast
It casteth wantonly to depths of need,
And raiseth thence another to the throne,
And setteth on his head a jewelled crown!
The world is not ashamed of such ill doings,
For it respecteth no one; and, although
For ever dominating good and bad,
Ensueth not the peace of any one."
  Such is the manner of our earthly lot!
It leadeth us alike to good and ill,
And noble hearts may live untroubled still
  So long as poverty oppresseth not.

The story of Gúdarz I next unfold
And of Pírán; that of Bízhan is told
As I have heard it in the tales of old.

XIII

KAI KHUSRAU (*continued*).

PART VI

THE BATTLE OF THE TWELVE RUKHS

ARGUMENT.

Afrásiyáb and Kai Khusrau continue the war with renewed vigour, Pírán and Gúdarz being in chief command on the Túránian and Íránian sides respectively. After some abortive negotiations the campaign opens, Húmán and Bízhan fight in single combat, and the former is slain. A general engagement between the two hosts follows, but the result is indecisive and both generals send for reinforcements. In the interval they arrange a combat of eleven champions a side in which the Íránians are completely victorious, all the Túránians, including Pírán himself, being slain with the exception of Gurwí—the executioner of Siyáwush—who is taken alive by Gív. Kai Khusrau comes up, and Lahhák and Farshídward—Pírán's two surviving brothers—abandon their army and take to flight. They are pursued and captured by Gustaham, who is himself severely wounded but is saved by Bízhan and cured by Kai Khusrau, to whom also the Túránian army capitulates, and Gurwí is put to death.

NOTE

The Battle of the Twelve Rukhs or Champions is one of the most celebrated and favourite passages in the Sháhnáma from the Persian point of view, probably owing to the completeness of the Íránian triumph, the poet being determined, in spite of some evident qualms of conscience, that the Túránians should not get the best of it in any way. The English reader being unprejudiced probably would prefer a more equally balanced result.

The word Rukh is the familiar Rook of the game of chess, and

is used metaphorically by the poet as an equivalent for Champion. The word really means cheek, the two sides of the chess-board where the Rooks or Castles are placed being looked upon as its two cheeks. Formerly, moreover, the Castles moved as the Queen does now, and were therefore by far the most powerful pieces or Champions of the board, the piece which we call the Queen being then restricted to close attendance on the King and to a single move, as appears from the poet's own account of the game when he gives the legend of its origin, after describing its introduction into Persia during the reign of Núshírwán.

The reader will notice that there are really only eleven combatants on each side in the battle of the champions. To make up the full number the preliminary struggle between Húmán and Bízhan must be included, and even then there are only eleven combatants on the Íránian side to twelve on the Túránian, as Bízhan fights twice.

Bízhan appears to have been a special favourite of the poet, who never loses an opportunity of putting him forward.

§ 1. The Prelude is translated in the metre of the original, which, the reader may be reminded, is uniform throughout the Sháhnáma.

§ 4. "We will not rest and sleep, my mace and I,
The field of battle and Afrásiyáb."

These lines, which form a couplet in the original, are said to have been quoted to Mahmúd on a certain occasion by one of his ministers, and to have caused the Sultán to seek too late for a reconciliation with Firdausí.[1] The tradition goes back to within a century of the poet's death. The reading of the first hemistich of the couplet varies.

§§ 8-11. The time of the usually prudent Húmán being at hand he becomes fey, as Bahrám did on a previous occasion.[2]

§ 14. Shabáhang (Sirius) is given elsewhere as the name of Farhád's steed.[3] Bízhan's steed was called Shabrang.[4] Shabáhang seems used *metri causá* for Shabrang. One would gather from another passage, taken alone, that Bízhan used Gív's steed in the battle with Húmán.[5]

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[1] See Vol. i. p. 45. [2] See Vol. iii. p. 95. [3] *Id.* p. 313.
[4] *Id.* and pp. 296 and 302. [5] See p. 45.

§ 1

The Prelude

THE world, while thou anguishest, passeth away, V. 1141
Abate both the woe and the weal of the day,
But if thou adventure the pathway of greed
The process of this world is longsome indeed!
One view is—'Tis well after greatness to seek
All be that it lurk mid the Dragon's own reek,
And servants of greed and provokers of strife
Will hear not commendment from any in life:
The other—What reck if, since none can abide,
Our Hostel of Sojourn be narrow or wide?
Whenas the tall Cypress is bent in the grove,
And darkened the light of the Lustre above,
When leafage is withered, when roots are unsound,
And top is beginning to nod toward the ground,
From dust having issued to dust it will go,
While all is dismayment and horror and woe.
Man's nature, when prudence and wisdom are his, V. 1142
Accepteth untroubled the world as it is,
Yet travail of body, if long be thy stay,
Enforceth the need for thy passing away.
Life's ocean is deep, and no bottom we see;
A hoard 'tis of secrets whose door hath no key.
Thy wants will but greaten what while thou remain,
And each day's provision prove provand for pain.
But three things are needful—food, raiment, and bed;
For these no reproaches descend on thy head.
Content thee, for all else is travail and greed,
And greed is a torment no lighter than need.
Thou knowest that this world is fleeting, why let
Thy soul and thy spirit with covetise fret?
Enjoy what thou hast, seek not more to possess,
For greed will but make thine own glory the less.

§ 2

How Afrásiyáb called together his Host

The Turkman monarch's heart, as I have heard,
Was ever vexed by greed. When he had quitted
The field where Rustam gloomed the world for him
He fared apace until he reached Khallukh,
Avoiding other kings in his disgrace,
And entered with a heart fulfilled with anguish
His palace with his prudent veterans—
Pírán and Garsíwaz, his counsellor,
And Shída, Kurákhán and Karsiyún,
Húmán, Kulbád, Rúín son of Pírán—
A warrior-crocodile—and Farshídward.
He spake with them at large of what had passed,
Recalling every circumstance, and said:—
"Since I assumed the crown of sovereignty,
And sun and moon bestowed on me their light,
V. 1143 I have held sway among the potentates,
And nobody hath turned aside my rein;
Thus ever since the war with Minúchihr
Írán hath not laid hand upon Túrán.
Now from Írán they make a night-attack
Upon my life at mine own palace-door!
The craven hath become courageous,
The Stag hath ventured to the Lion's lair!
We must be up and doing in this strife,
Or they will make our marches reek. 'Twere well
To scatter messengers about the realm,
And gather of the Turkmans and from Chín
A thousand thousand girded for the fray
To compass all the army of Írán,
And make a battlefield on every side."
Then all the priests advised him shrewdly, saying:—
"Cross we Jíhún and beat the royal tymbals

On yon wide plain, and, speeding night and day,
Camp at Ámwí; that is the place for battle,
For bloodshed, and for fighting Gív and Rustam—
Those haughty, city-taking warriors,
Who privily have dipped their hands in bane."
Thereat the monarch's face and fortune brightened,
And, as the great are wont, he praised the priests
And paladins, then called and charged a scribe.
He sent ambassadors to the Faghfúr
And monarch of Khutan, sent through the realm,
Moreover, letters to all chiefs and nobles,
And summoned troops because he purposed war,
Enraged at Rustam's doings. Two weeks passed,
Then from the Turkman states, Chín, and Khutan,
A host assembled; like a troubled sea
Earth heaved; it was so that the waste was hidden.
Afrásiyáb collected in the city V. 1144
All horse-herds running wild, undid the sacks
Of treasures closely kept and handed on
For generations since the time of Túr,
And parted with dínárs by night and day.
When all the army was equipped for war,
So that there was sufficiency for all,
He chose out fifty thousand warriors,
Arrayed for strife and eager to engage,
And said to Shída, his heroic son,
Exalted o'er the Lions of the fight:—
"I give to thee this well-appointed host;
Prepare to march toward Khárazm; there guard
The borders and be ever girt for battle."
He bade Pírán choose fifty thousand men
Of Chín, and said: "Go thou against Írán,
And set a throne above the young Sháh's throne;
Seek not in any wise the door of peace,
And speak no word unless of war and vengeance;
To mingle fire and water spoileth both."

Those two illustrious, prudent paladins
Went at the bidding of Afrásiyáb,
The old at leisure and the young in haste,
With iron mace and sword and golden gong,
And, like a cloud that thundered, roared along.

§ 3

How Kai Khusrau sent Gúdarz to fight the Túránians

Thereafter tidings reached the conquering Sháh :—
"A Turkman host hath marched upon Írán.
Afrásiyáb, that tyrant-miscreant,
Can neither rest nor slumber in his vengeance,
But fain would raise his head from its disgrace,
And from all sides hath sent forth troops to war;
He rubbeth poison on his lance's point,
If so he may turn rein upon Írán.
V. 1145 Three hundred thousand warlike cavaliers
Will cross Jíhún and thence send up the dust
In battle-time to heaven. The warriors
Can sleep not at his court for tymbal-din.
What with the blare of brass and clang of bell
Thou wouldst have said: 'Men's hearts are in their mouths!'
If that host cometh to Írán for battle
No lion, lusty though he be, will meet them.
Pírán is posted by Afrásiyáb
With no small army on the Íránian coasts,
While fifty thousand girded for the fight
Have marched toward the borders of Kházrazm.
Their chief is Shída of the lion-heart,
Whose scimitar will pluck the core from fire.
The troops resemble maddened elephants,
Such as would level mountains in the strife."
The monarch at the news sat full of thought,

Then said: "Ye wise! the archimages say:—
'The Turkman moon, when heaven's height is won,
Shall meet disaster from the Íránian sun.
Strike the black snake that cometh from its bed
Toward the cudgel with uplifted head.
The king that shall unjustly plant a tree
Will lose his fortune and his sovereignty.'"
Then, having summoned all the archimages,
He laid before them that which he had heard.
The great men and the warlike sages sat
In secret with the monarch of Írán,
As Zál and Rustam, as Gúdarz and Gív,
Shídúsh, Farhád, and brave Ruhhám, Bízhan,
Ashkash and Gustaham, Gurgín and Zanga,
And Gazhdaham, great Tús, son of Naudar,
And Faríburz, blest scion of Káús,
With all the other nobles of the host,
Who were the worldlord's flock. He thus addressed
The paladins: "The Turkmans seek to war V. 1146
Against my throne, so we too must prepare."
He gave command and at his palace-gate
The trumpets blared and brazen cymbals clashed.
He went forth from the palace to the plain.
They set his throne upon an elephant;
He mounted, dropped the ball within the cup,
And "smeared earth," thou hadst said, "with indigo,"
Such was earth's hue; the air was black with dust;
The brave troops of the host resembled leopards,
With maces in their claws and war at heart;
The land heaved like a sea with warriors.
A proclamation went forth from the court:—
"Ye paladins of the Íránian host!
None that can ply the stirrup and the rein
May now abide at home in idleness."
The monarch gave command: "We need," he said,
"Three hundred thousand warlike cavaliers,

With warriors and mighty men from Rúm
And Hind, and gallant Arabs of the desert,
Accoutred well—fierce Lions girdle-girt.
Those that reach not the presence of the Sháh
In forty days shall not obtain a crown."
They sent out horsemen with the royal letters
On all sides. Two weeks passed; throughout the realm
Troops were in motion at the Sháh's command,
And battle-cries went up from all the world.
One morn at cock-crow rose the tymbals' din
On all sides, and the chiefs of provinces
Arrayed their troops before the monarch's gate.
He oped his ancient treasures and bestowed
Such largess that all heads were crowned with gold,
While with horse-armour and men's coats of mail
The massed array looked like a hill of iron.
V. 1147 As soon as this equipment was complete
The Sháh made choice among the cavaliers
Of thirty thousand armed with scimitars,
Put them in Rustam's charge, and said: "Famed hero!
Lead these toward Sístán and Hindústán.
When at Ghaznín make for the upper road,[1]
So thou mayst win a signet, crown, and throne;
But when thou hast achieved the sovereignty,
And pard and sheep are drinking at one trough,
Give Farámarz the signet and the crown
Together with such troops as he may choose;
Then sound the kettledrums, the horns, and pipes,
And stay not in Kashmír or in Kábul,
Because this war against Afrásiyáb
Depriveth me of provand, rest, and sleep."
He gave the Aláns and Gharcha to Luhrásp,[2]
And said: "O hero of illustrious race!
Go with a mountain-like array. Select it
Out of the host, and lead thy seasoned horsemen

[1] "la route du nord" (Mohl). [2] The future Sháh.

To rob the Turkmans of the breath of life."
He bade Ashkash march forth with thirty thousand—
Impetuous Lions, brandishers of spears,
An army that was like a ravening wolf—
Toward Kházam with mighty kettledrums,
Set up his place hard by the entering in,
And challenge Shída to the battlefield.
He gave a fourth host to Gúdarz and said:—
"O hero of a race of paladins!
Go with the great men of Írán, with Zanga,
Gurgín and Gustaham, Shídúsh, Farhád,
Kharrád and Gív, the general Guráza,
And brave Ruhhám."
He bade them arm for war,
And hasten to the marches of Túrán.
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, the general,
The paladins and nobles, all obeyed
And mounted, and Gúdarz assumed command. V. 1148
The Sháh then bade him: "Thou art bound for battle;
See that thou do not aught injuriously:
Destroy no house that is inhabited,
And see that no non-combatant be harmed
Since God approveth not our evil deeds;
Here we have no abiding but pass on.
In leading forth the host toward Túrán
Keep head and heart both cool. Be not agog
Like Tús, mount not the drums on all occasions.
Be just to every one in every thing,
Remembering God—the Source of good. Dispatch
Some wise and heedful veteran to Pírán,
Thus by much counsel gain that general's ear,
And clothe him in the raiment of good will."
The captain of the host said to the Sháh:—
"Thy hest is higher than the orbèd moon.
I will go even as thou biddest me,
For thou art worldlord and I am a slave."

Then from the portal of the paladin
Shouts rose; the earth rocked with the din of drums;
The soldiers trooped to camp, and all the scene
Grew dark with horsemen's dust. Before the host
Three score fierce elephants weighed down the world,
And of those mighty elephants of war
Four were caparisoned for royal use;
Upon their backs was placed a throne of gold
Whereon a Sháh might sit encrowned in state,
But there the monarch bade Gúdarz to sit,
And, as he urged the elephants, the dust
Suggested this conceit of happy presage:—
V. 1149 "Pírán's soul will we make go up in smoke
As these beasts send the dust up with their feet."
Then by the Sháh's command the host moved on
From stage to stage, inflicting harm on none.

§ 4

How Gív was made the Bearer of Overtures from Gúdarz to Pírán

Now when Gúdarz was drawing near Raibad
He chose him captains out of all the host—
A thousand valiant wielders of the spear,
Exalted and renowned, and furthermore
Ten famous horsemen of the Íránians,
All ready speakers well beseen in fight.
The chief next summoned Gív, told what the Sháh
Had said, and added this: "My prudent son,
Whose head is lifted over many a head!
I have selected for thee worthy troops—
Men who are chieftains in the provinces—
That thou mayst make a journey to Pírán
To speak to him and to receive his answer.
Thus say to him: 'I with a host have reached

Raibad according to the Sháh's commands.
Thou knowest what thy words and deeds have been,
What peace and toil and trouble have been thine,
And how the country of Túrán hath girt,
With its illustrious kings, its loins for ill.
The glorious Farídún had cause to weep,
While in this world, for pain and misery,
Írán was full of pain, the Sháh of grief,
The moon shone not through mourning for Iraj.
Thou only of the people of Túrán
Dost pride thyself on kindness and good faith,
Though that word kindness is a lie with thee;
I see not peace and kindness in thy heart;
Howbeit that courteous Sháh of ours said thus V. 1150
To me: "Address him with all gentleness,
For in the days of noble Siyáwush
He built no ill, and hath a claim upon me
As being guiltless of my father's blood."
The Sháh condoneth all thy past misdeeds,
And holdeth evil on thy part as good,
Since thou hast wronged not any of our Sháhs.
Thou art not to be slaughtered by my hand
Because thy many faults are overlooked;
Else in this warfare with Afrásiyáb
Thy destiny would make short work of thee.
The great men of Írán and this my son
Will tell thee mine advice. Hold parle with them;
Then, if thou art persuaded, thou art quit
Of care and sure of life, thy land and kindred
Will flourish, and thy neck escape my sword;
But if the fault be thine thy life will be
In danger from the Sháh, and in this strife
We will not rest and sleep, my mace and I,
The field of battle and Afrásiyáb,
To take revenge on whom our sovereign
Hath no need to array a mighty host;

But if thou wilt attend to mine advice,
And wilt give credit to my prudent words,
Then first: all those that brought about the feud,
Those that rolled up their sleeves for shedding blood,
Put forth their hands to murder Siyáwush,
And wrecked the world by their unrighteousness,
Thou shalt dispatch to me in chains like dogs
That we may send them to the Sháh, for him
To take their heads or to forgive their crimes.
My Sháh, who is the warden of the world,
Hath given me a list of all their names.
V. 1151 Hast thou not heard that which the mighty lion
Said to the wolf—a pregnant utterance?
"Fate hath no place except the dust in store
For him whose hand hath shed a monarch's gore.'
Moreover all the treasures that thou hast
Are but the enemies of thy dark soul;
So thou shalt send to me thy noble steeds,
Thy gems, dínárs, brocade, crowns, scimitars,
Horse-armour, coats of mail, casques, Indian swords,
The equipment of thy troops, thy gold, and silver.
With that which thou hast gained by force or fraud
Thou mayst buy life and see the pathway opened
To safety. What is worthy of a king
Will I send to the monarch of the world,
And give the rest as booty to the troops
Instead of taking vengeance for wrong done:
And furthermore when thou shalt have dispatched
Thy favourite son—the guardian of thy throne
And signet—with those leaders of thine army,
Thy brethren twain, who ever lift their necks
Above the moon—all three as hostages
That I may feel assured—to this famed host,
Then will thy tree of honesty bear fruit.
Consider now and choose between two courses.
By taking one thou wilt approach the Sháh,

Wilt go with kith and kindred to Khusrau,
And rest beneath the shadow of his love,
Wilt put away that of Afrásiyáb,
And never even dream of him again.
I will give pledges to thee that Khusrau
Will raise thy head above the shining sun;
Thou knowest best the kindness of his heart,
And that he will entreat thee royally.
Or if from terror of Afrásiyáb
Thou art not willing to approach Írán,
Go from Túrán and lead thy troops to Chách, V. 1152
Take thy teak throne and set thy crown on high;
But if thy heart is with Afrásiyáb
Depart to him and battle not with us,
For in regard to those with whom I strive
I have a lion's heart, a leopard's claws,
And I will leave the Turkmans naught of throne;
My bows are clouds that pour down showers of bane.
If thou wilt none of this but willest strife,
And thy head be all ill advice and guile,
Rise and come hither all equipped for war
If thou canst face the lion ravening.
When both the hosts shall be arrayed for battle
Will those in fault appear as innocent?
Nay, and unless thou hearken to my words
Thou wilt repent at last, but then repentance
Will profit naught, fate's sword have reaped thy head!'"
The paladin with these words charged his son,
"Repeat them to Pírán," he said, "each one."

§ 5

How Gív visited Pírán at Wísagird

Gív left his father's presence, and departed
To Balkh, with all those bitter words in mind.

Alighting there he sent a messenger
Before him as directed by Gúdarz,
On that same night assembled all his troops,
And left the gates of Balkh for Wísagird,
The city where Pírán was with his powers,
And menaced the Íránian crown and throne.
The messenger in audience of Pírán
Said thus to him: "Gív hath arrived at Balkh
With nobles and with gallant warriors."
Pírán pricked up his ears on hearing this,
While shouts rose from the warriors of the host.
He blew the trumpets and bound on the tymbals;
The horse-hoofs turned the earth to ebony
As five score and ten thousand cavaliers
Came forward dight for war from his array.
V. 1153 He left the more part, called his veterans,
Advanced to the Jíhún and ranked them there,
Made by the stream a wall of spears, and held
An interview with Gív. Two weeks they parleyed
In order that they might not war unjustly;
The Íránians spake on all points, and Pírán
Heard; but the Turkmans did injuriously,
For while the Íránian chiefs employed their tongues,
And grew more instant with their enemies
In speech, Pírán dispatched a messenger
To hasten to Afrásiyáb and say:—
"Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, hath with his troops
Placed his own helmet o'er the Íránian throne,
And Gív, his favourite son—the shatterer
Of hosts—hath reached me with an embassage;
But I attend to thy commands alone,
And stake my life upon my loyalty."
Now when this reached the monarch of Túrán
He chose him thirty thousand mighty men
Among his troops who drew the scimitar,
And sent them to Pírán, the cavalier,

With these words: "Draw the scimitar of vengeance,
And rid the earth of them; spare not Gúdarz
Or Gív, Farhád, Gurgín or brave Ruhhám,
For troops, whose object is the Íránian throne,
Flock from all sides. These will I lead, will make
The whole land of Írán a stream of gore,
And by the counsels of the wise and brave
Send up this time the dust from Kai Khusrau."
Pírán, when he beheld that mighty host,
Each man as thirsty as a wolf for blood,
Was, being reinforced, inclined to war.
He washed his heart of honour and chose ill:
That heart so well disposed grew overbearing,
Grew full of thought and passionate for strife.
He said to Gív: "Arise and go thy ways
Back to the paladin and say to him:—
'Seek not from me what sages will condemn— V. 1154
First to surrender to thy hands these chiefs
Of high renown! How is this possible?
And for thy next demand—the arms and troops,
The noble chargers and the throne and crown,
A brother who is my bright soul, a son—
My well-belovèd and my paladin—
"These things," thou sayest, "put afar from thee!"
Can words so crude be uttered by the wise?
Death would be better for me than such life:
Shall I that am a prince do slavishly?
In this regard the leopard coming near
To battle with the fearless lion said:—
"To have thee shed my blood and keep my fame
Is better than to live a life of shame."
Besides instructions from the king have come
To me, and troops, with orders to engage.'"
Gív with his chiefs on this reply departed,
Whereon Pírán, the captain of the host,
Prepared for fight, sent up the battle-shout,

Pushed on to Kanábad and set his ranks
In war-array upon the mountain-flanks.

§ 6

The Arraying of the Hosts

Gív, when he reached the presence of his sire,
Informed him of the answer word for word,
And said: "Array the host upon the spot
Where thou wilt fight; Pírán hath no idea
Of peace, no room for justice in his heart.
I told him all thy words, appealed to him
In all ways. When the fault proved clearly theirs
He sent the king a camel-post to say:—
'Gúdarz and Gív are come to fight, and troops
Must be dispatched to me forthwith.' Thereat
V. 1155 Came reinforcements from Afrásiyáb,
And crossed the river while we were returning.
Now bind the drums upon the elephants
For battle since Pírán forestalleth us."
Gúdarz said: "He is sick of life. I thought
No other of the miscreant, and yet
By order of the monarch of the world
I had to send—there was no remedy—
And now the Sháh hath proved him to the heart.
I spake to that effect before the Sháh
When he gave orders for the troops to march:
I said to him: 'Put from thy heart the love
Of one whose heart and tongue do not accord.
Pírán's whole love is for the Turkmans; let
The Sháh wash hands of him.'"
The brave Pírán
Led in Gív's tracks his army lion-like,
And when Gúdarz knew that the host approached
He beat the tymbals, marched out from Raibad,

And drew his army up on that broad plain
With mountains in the rear. The day's light failed
What time Pírán marched forth from Kanábad.
A hundred thousand Turkman cavaliers
Went girt for battle, mailed, and carrying
Long spears and Indian swords. The embattled hosts
Looked like two mountains with their iron helms.
Then there arose the sound of clarions,
And thou hadst said: "The mountains are astir!"
The hosts stretched from Raibad to Kanábad:
The vales and plains were black and blue with them.
The lances' heads were stars, the swords were suns,
The clouds were dust-clouds and the ground was iron.
The earth re-echoed with the warriors' shouts, V. 1156
The sky was iron with the helms and spears.
Gúdarz surveyed the army of Túrán,
Then all in motion like a heaving sea,
Flag following flag and troop succeeding troop
Without a break till night rose from the hills.
Both hosts placed elephants to bar the way,
Lit up the watch-fires, and thou wouldst have said
At all the shouting of the eager chiefs:—
"The world is Áhriman's and full of foes
From skirt to sleeve!" That darksome night the rocks
Were riven to their cores with tymbal-din!
The dawn ascended from the sombre mountains,
And then the leader of Írán bestrode
A fresh horse in the presence of the host,
And made his dispositions on all sides.
The army's right wing rested on a hill,
Undaunted mid the battles of the brave,
While to the left a river ran, as apt
As soul for body. In the front were ranged
The spearmen with the footmen in their rear
With coats of mail and iron-piercing shafts,
And bows flung o'er their arms. The soldiers' blood

Boiled in their veins. Arrear of these there came
The warlike cavaliers, whose falchions robbed
The fire of lustre, then the elephants
Like mountains; earth was wearied with the tramp.
Full in the centre of the host and shining
Moon-like with jewels stood the glorious standard.
What with the flashing of the blue steel swords
Beneath the shadow of the flag of Káwa
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky, this darksome night,
Is shedding stars!"
Gúdarz arrayed the host
Like Paradise and planted in the garden
Of loyalty the cypress of revenge.
V. 1157 He gave the army's right to Faríburz:
Hajír was with the baggage in the rear.
Guráza, chiefest scion of Gívgán,
And that o'er-looker of the Kaian throne,
Zawára, went to aid, and ranked themselves
With, Faríburz. Gúdarz then bade Ruhhám:—
"O thou, the inspirer of crown, throne, and wisdom!
Go with the cavaliers toward the left.
Like Sol from Aries on New Year's Day
Illuminate the army by thy Grace,
And nurse it tenderly, but like a lion
Smite foemen with thy chief-consuming steel."
Ruhhám went forth with his companions,
With Gustaham, and matchless Gazhdaham,
And Furúhil whose arrows pierced the sky.
Gúdarz then bade ten thousand cavaliers
On barded steeds to go with Gív, committing
The rear to him, a post for men of war;
Gurgín and Zanga bare him company.
A banner and three hundred horse to guard
The army's river-flank, as many more
To guard the mountain-flank, Gúdarz dispatched.

A watchman went upon the mountain-top,
And kept his neck outstretched both night and day
Above the army, with his eyes intent
To watch the movements of the Turkman troops,
And shout, if he perceived an ant's foot move,
To rouse Gúdarz, who ordered so that field
That sun and moon were eager to engage.
The valiant crocodile will not affright
The host whose leader is well seen in fight.
Gúdarz then took the post of chief command
To guard the army from the enemy.
He raised the flag that gladdeneth the heart, V. 1158
And gave the chiefs that battled at the centre
To each his station, summoning them all.
Behind him was Shídúsh, Farhád before.
Thus posted in their midst Gúdarz, their leader,
Had Káwa's standard over-shadowing him,
And dimming sun and moon.
Pírán from far
Looked forth upon that host, upon that pomp
And circumstance of war, and hearts whence care
And travail ebbed. Dale, desert, mount, and waste
Were full of spears, and rein was linked to rein.
The chieftain of Túrán was sorely grieved,
And raged at fortune's gloomy sun. Thereafter,
Surveying his own host, the battlefield
Displeasured him; he saw not room to fight
Or rank his troops, and in his anger smote
His hands together, being forced to form
As best he might since he must charge the brave.
Then of his own chiefs and his men of war,
And of the warriors of Afrásiyáb,
That longed for fight, he chose him thirty thousand,
Men fit for war and armed with scimitars.
He gave the centre to Húmán—a host
Of lion-flinging, battle-loving troops.

Andarímán he summoned with Arjásp,
He gave Burjásp the chief command of both,
And put the army's left wing in their keeping
With thirty thousand gallant warriors.
The brave Lahhák and Farshídward drew up
With thirty thousand heroes of the fray
Upon the right, and earth turned black with iron.
V. 1159 He sent the brave Zangúla and Kulbád,
Along with Sipahram, the good at need,
And spearmen twice five thousand, to support
The cavaliers, the wielders of the sword.
Then with ten thousand warriors of Khutan
Rúín in brazen panoply marched forth
To ambush like a lion in the wood,[1]
With outposts on the river and the mountain
To threaten the Íránian general,
On whom, if he advanced beyond his lines
And ventured forward on Pírán himself,
Rúín the chief should fall, as 'twere a lion,
And take him boldly in the rear. Pírán
Placed likewise scouts upon the mountain-top
To watch by day and count the stars by night,
That if a horseman of the Íránians
Should turn his reins toward the Turkman chief,
The keeper of the watch should raise a cry,
And all the battlefield be roused thereby.

§ 7

How Bízhan went to Gív to urge him to fight

Three days and nights the opposing hosts—all men
Of name and eager for the fight—remained
Embattled face to face: thou wouldst have said:—
"No one's lip moveth!" Quoth Gúdarz: "If I

[1] Reading with P.

Yield to the foe my station, and advance,
They will assail my rear; I shall but grasp
The wind."
Both night and day before the host
He stood in quest of favourable signs
From sun and moon. "Which is the auspicious hour,"
He thought, "for action when the wind of battle
Will blow and blind the Turkman horse with dust?
Then haply I may get the upper hand,
And lead the army onward like a blast."
Pírán on his side waited anxiously
Until Gúdarz should seethe at heart with rage,
And by advancing leave his rear exposed
To those in ambush.
Came Gív's son, Bízhan, V. 1160
The fourth day, from the rearward to the centre,
Came to his father's presence with his clothes
Rent, flinging up the dust to heaven and crying:—
"Why tarriest thou thus indolently here,
My veteran sire? The fifth day now approacheth,
Yet all is peace by day and night. The sun
Beholdeth not our warriors' scimitars,
And no dust riseth to obscure the sky.
Our cavaliers are in cuirass and helm,
And yet the blood hath stirred in no man's veins!
Once, after famous Rustam, in Írán
No cavalier was equal to Gúdarz;
But ever since the battle of Pashan,
And all the carnage of that mighty field,
When at Ládan he saw so many sons
Slain and Íránian fortune overturned,
He hath been liver-stricken, all distraught,
And indisposed to see another fight.
We must consider that the man is old,
And that his head is turned toward heaven above,
As one who counteth not his followers,

But reckoneth the stars around the moon.
Know that he now is bloodless and hath grown
Too feeble for the battles of the brave.
I wonder not at veteran Gúdarz,
Whose heart is no more set upon this world,
My wonder, O my father! is at thee,
From whom fierce Lions seek accomplishment.
Two hosts are looking at thee. Rouse a little
Thy brain to action and display thy wrath.
Now when the world is warm and air serene
The army should be ordered to engage,
For when this pleasant season shall be gone,
And earth's face bound as hard as steel with frost,
What time the hand is frozen to the spear,
With war in front of us and snow behind,
What warrior will come before the host
To challenge combat on this battlefield?
While if thou art afraid of ambushes,
Then of the soldiers and the men of war
V. 1161 Thou shouldst commit to me a thousand horse
Of mine own choosing, apt for fight, and we
Will raise our foemen's ambuscade in dust,
And send their heads cascading o'er the moon."
Gív smiled to hear Bízhan, praised his brave son,
And said to God: "I give Thee thanks that Thou
Hast granted me a son so excellent,
And made him strong, God-serving, and discreet,
Versed in affairs and eager for the fray.
In this brave youth restored to me[1] I have
The typic offspring of a paladin.
Thus said the lion to the lioness:—
'Suppose our cub should prove a coward, we
Will own no love or consanguinity,
His dam shall be the dust, his sire the sea.'
Yet, O my son, impetuous in thy speech!

[1] After his captivity in Part V.

Loose not thy tongue against thy grandsire thus,
For he is wiser and experienced,
And is the leader of this noble host.
The veteran needeth not in aught a teacher.
If our own cavaliers have much to bear
The Turkmans are not very bright and fresh,
But luckless and dejected, with their eyes
Suffused with tears and livers full of blood.
This ancient veteran would have the Turkmans
Advance to battle. When they leave the hills
He will attack in force, and thou shalt see
How he will ply the whole march with his mace.
He watcheth too the aspects of the sky,
And, when the auspicious time shall come, will void
Earth's face of Turkmans."
"Chief of paladins!"
Bízhan said, "if my glorious grandsire's purpose
Be such we need not carry Rúman mail.
I will depart, put off my fighting-gear,
And make my shrunken face rose-red with wine,
But when the chief of paladins hath need
Of me I will return in battle-weed."

§ 8

How Húmán asked Pírán for Leave to fight

Within the Turkman army brave Húmán V. 1162
Came like a lion to his brother, saying:—
"O paladin of great Afrásiyáb!
We long for fight. The fifth day is at hand
That all these cavaliers have borne their mail;
Their loins are chafed with iron, their hearts with vengeance,
Their eyes are on Írán. Why keep the hosts
Confronting thus? What is thy purpose? Speak!

If thou intendest to engage, engage,
And if thou meanest to retreat, retreat,
For 'tis a shame to thee, O paladin!
And old and young will laugh at thy proceedings.
'Twas this same host that fled from us in battle,
Disgraced and pale; their slain filled all the field;
The whole earth ran with blood; but, as for us,
We lost not any cavalier of name;
Moreover Rustam is not in command.
If thou distastest fight and bloodshed choose
Some troops, give them to me, and be spectator."
Pírán, on hearing, answered: "Be not hasty,
And harsh. Know, brother! that this man of war,
Who thus hath come against me with a host,
Is of the chiefs of Kai Khusrau the choicest,
The greatest noble, and a paladin.
Now in the first place Kai Khusrau is higher
Amidst all peoples than my sovereign;
Next, of the paladins of Kai Khusrau
I know not any equal to Gúdarz
In dignity, position, manliness,
In prudent counsel and sagacity;
Then in the third place he is inly seared,
And full of anguish, for his many sons,
Whom with their heads dissevered from their trunks
We left, and laid the earth's dust with their blood;
V. 1163 So long as life is in him he will writhe
In serpent wise to compass his revenge;
And fourthly he hath brought and massed two hosts
Between two mountains. Seek where'er thou wilt
There is no way to him. Perpend, for this
Is no brief toil. We must induce the foe
To quit their station on yon walls of rock,
And haply they may make through weariness
Some weak manœuvre and attack us first;
Then, when the foes have left their vantage-ground,

We will pour showers of arrows on their heads,
Enclose them as with walls and, like fierce lions,
Prey on their lives, appease our lust on them,
And our renown shall go up to the sun.
Thou art the army's stay, our monarch's chief;
Thy crown is raised o'er Saturn and the sky,
Should one so famous hanker still for fame?
Moreover none among their famous men
Will venture forth against the roaring Leopard:
Gúdarz will send out from among his troops
Some one of small renown, and much ambition
To fight with warriors, to contend with thee;
And then if thou shouldst roll earth over him
'Twould not enhance thy fame, while to the Íránians
It would be no great loss, but should he shed
Thy blood the Turkman host would be dismayed."
Húmán gave heed to what Pírán was saying,
Yet thought his conduct foolish and replied:—
"What cavalier among the Íránians
Will come to fight me? Thou art bent on kindness,
But lust of fighting hath come over me.
If thou art not desirous to engage,
And hast no fire of battle in thy soul,
I will go saddle me my gallant gray,
And challenge combat at the break of day."

§ 9

How Húmán challenged Ruhhám

Húmán on reaching his encampment gnashed V. 1164
His teeth as wild boars do. When morning came
He mounted on his steed, like some fierce lion,
And, taking with him an interpreter,
Approached the Íránian host. His heart was full
Of fight, his head of vengeance on Khusrau.

Grief made the world seem narrow to Pírán
On learning that his brother had gone forth
To battle, and in deep distress of heart
He called to mind some sayings of his sire's:—
"The wise deliberateth every way,
And hasteth not to mingle in a fray;
The fool exhibiteth both dash and go
At first, but in the end thereof is woe.
Although the tongue within a brainless head
Should shower pearls none would be profited."
"I know not," said he, "what Húmán will gain
By showing so much temper in this fight.
May God, the Judge of all the world, assist him,
Because I see not any help besides."

Now when Húmán, the son of Wísa, bent
On challenging the brave, drew near to where
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, lay with his host,
The captain of the watch encountered him.
The outpost—horsemen of Írán and all
Suspicious—came to the interpreter,
And asked: "Why doth this eager warrior
Display himself as freely on the plain
As he had been a herald and yet carry
A mace in hand and lasso at his saddle?"

He said: "The time for sword and mace and bow
Hath come, for this famed, lion-hearted man
Desireth to encounter you in fight.
He is the head of Wísa's sons, Húmán
By name; his scabbard is the lion's heart."

Now when the Íránians saw his mace, equipment,
And royal stature, all their spear-armed hands
Refrained from action through that chieftain's Grace.
V. 1165 All turned from him to the interpreter,
And said: "Go tell Húmán our words in Turkman:—
'We have no purpose to contend with thee
For want of leave to combat from Gúdarz;

But to the famous leader of our host
The way is open if thou seekest battle."
They told Húmán at large about the chiefs
Of that proud host, told who the soldiers were,
And who commanded on the left and right.
The outpost sent a cameleer in haste
To tell Gúdarz: "The leopard-like Húmán
Hath come to combat with the paladin."
Húmán passed by the outpost, came apace
Toward Ruhhám, and shouted lustily:—
"Son of the chief whose fortune is discreet!
Ply now thy reins upon this battlefield
Between the hosts arrayed. Thou dost command
The left wing and thou art the Lions' Claws,
A guardian and a captain of Írán;
Thou shouldest fight me. Be the where thy choice—
Stream, mountain, desert. If not, Gustaham
And Furúhil perchance will charge together.
Who will fight me with sword, spear, massive mace?
Whoever cometh, fortune will make earth
Reel under him. Pards' hides and lions' hearts
Burst in the battle when they see our sword."
Ruhhám replied: "O famous warrior!
Among the Turkmans we considered thee
As wise; but thou art other than we thought,
For thou hast come alone upon this field V. 1166
To brave a host, and weenest that no swordsman,
Nor any cavalier, can be thy match.
Recall to mind a saying of the Kaians,
And, being snared by wisdom, save thy neck:—
'No need for him who leadeth an attack
To settle by what road he will go back.'
All whom thou challengest by name are keen
For fight but, since the general of the Sháh
Hath not so bidden, will not volunteer.
If thou art fain to combat warriors

Why dost thou not accost the paladin?
Get licence for the combat from Gúdarz,
And then ask us to prove our readiness."
Húmán said: "Ply me not with fond excuses,
But take a spindle and put down the spear;
Thou art not one for war, no cavalier."

§ 10

How Húmán challenged Faríburz

Húmán, departing toward the centre, sped
To the other wing. With his interpreter
To Faríburz, like furious elephant,
He came and shouted: "Wretch, degraded one!
Erst horsemen, elephants, and golden boots
Were thine with Káwa's flag, but on the day
Of battle thou didst yield them to the Turkmans.
Íránian chieftains hold thy manhood cheap.
V. 1167 Thou wast the leader; but hast been reduced,
And shouldest wear the girdle of a slave.
As brother of the noble Siyáwush
Thou rankest o'er thy chief. I am from Túr,
King of Túrán, perchance in composition
Thine equal. Since thou art of worth to challenge
Thou shouldst prepare for fight; so now for once
Come forth with me upon the battlefield
That we may wheel in presence of the hosts.
Thou wilt be famous to the shining sun
Through meeting me. If thou wilt not, so be it.
See where Zawára and Guráza are;
Bring to encounter me some warrior
That hath a name among the Íránians."
Then Faríburz replied: "Forbear to fight
The rending lion; days of battle end
For this in triumph, and for that in woe.

When thou hast conquered, fear calamity,
Because high heaven keepeth not one stay,
And angry men bring things to such a pass
As to lay desolate their own old home.
The king deprived me of the flag, 'tis well.
He gave to whom he would the elephants
And host. Since Kai Kubád, in Kaian wars,
If any one hath donned the crown of power,
And girt himself to make earth prosperous,
It is the chief Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
Who ever fighteth foremost. His forefathers
Have been the chiefs and champions of the Sháhs,
And through his mace no doubt thy leader's day
Will end. 'Tis for Gúdarz to give command.
If he shall bid me fight with thee, and leecheth
The sear upon my heart, thou shalt behold
How I will raise my head from shame to heaven
Upon the battlefield."

Húmán replied:— V. 1168

"Enough! I see thee great in talk. What fighter
Hast thou e'er hurt when girded with that sword?
Contend then with that despicable mace;
On helm and breastplate it will leave no trace."

§ 11

How Húmán challenged Gúdarz

Húmán, returning thence triumphantly,
"A Lion," thou hadst said, "intent on mischief,"
And keen for vengeance on the noble chiefs,
Approached Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, and shouted:—
"O haughty chieftain, binder of the Dív!
I heard about thy converse with the Sháh,
And thereupon thy leading forth the host,
About the Sháh's gifts and about thy pledge

And exhortations to Pírán our leader.
An envoy reached the army of Túrán—
Gív, thy dear son, the refuge of the troops—
And afterward thou swarest by the Sháh,
By sun and moon and throne and diadem:—
'If e'er mine eyes shall light upon Pírán
In battle I will take away his life.'
Fierce as a lion hast thou ranked thy powers
In thine anxiety to fight with us,
Then why sulk thus behind a mountain-range
As though thou wast a wretched mountain-sheep?
Thus doth the quarry in its headlong course,
When fleeing from the lion's bold pursuit,
Make for some narrow covert in the wood,
Forgetting honour in its fear for life.
Lead just for once thine army to the plains.
Why keepest thou the host behind the heights?
Was this thine understanding with Khusrau—
To make a hill thy stronghold in the war?"
Gúdarz replied: "Attend to me; 'tis right
That I should speak. That none took up thy challenge
Thou thoughtlessly imputest unto me.
V. 1169 Hear that I proffered oath and covenant
By order of the Sháh, but now that I
Have come with this great host—the pick of all
The valiant chieftains of Írán—ye lurk
Like old fox in a brake, frayed by the hunter!
Ye practise cunning, artifice, and guile
To 'scape mace, spear, and lasso. Brag not thou,
Nor challenge us, for foxes meet not lions."
Húmán, on hearing what Gúdarz replied,
Raged like a lion on that scene of strife,
And answered: "If thou comest not to fight
'Tis not that fight with me disgraceth thee,
But ever since the battle of Pashan
Thou hast avoided Turkmans in the fray.

Thou didst approve me at Ládan and praise
My prowess on the field, and therefore now,
If it is even with thee as thou sayest,
And thou art eager to make good thy words,
Choose thee a champion from among thy troops
To counter me upon the battlefield.
I like a lusty crocodile have challenged
Ruhhám and Faríburz, and passed along
Before thy host, not one opposing me.
They were restrained from fighting by Gúdarz;
'Twas waste of time to listen; but thou art
The man that saith: 'In battle with my sword
Will I make tulips on the yellow hills!'
So let some warrior with his massive mace
Confront me here. Thyself hast many sons,
O man of name! and all have girt themselves
To fight with us; set one of them against me,
For if thou seekest fight why this delay?"
"Which of the warriors," Gúdarz considered,
"Shall go? If I oppose some famous man,
Some raging Lion, to this enemy,
And if Húmán be slain upon the field,
None of the Turkmans will come forth to fight;
Their general will writhe for grief of heart,
And will not take the offensive in the war;
His host will tarry on Mount Kanábad, V. 1170
And we shall have to fight at disadvantage;
While should one of the nobles of this host
Be lost so would my fame. The warriors
Would have but broken hearts for this campaign,
And would not tarry on the waste. 'Tis best
Not to engage and foil the ambuscade.
His troops may grow adventurous, seek fight,
And march against us from their cramped position."
Then to Húmán: "Depart, thou art a boy
In action, and intemperate of speech.

Thy words have made me know thee in and out.
Hath none among the Turkmans wit to think
Aright? Know'st not that on the day of battle
The savage lion smircheth not his paws
With fox's blood? Besides both hosts are ranked,
All necks are stretched for war, and all the chiefs
Will gnaw their hands if only two engage.
Let all advance and combat, host with host.
Now go back to thine army and exalt
Thy head before thy boyish chieftains, saying:—
'I challenged oftentimes the Íránians,
But no one stirred unless to heave a sigh.'
This field of battle will exalt thy name,
Pírán too will fulfil thy whole desire."

Húmán exclaimed: "What sort of chieftains then
And warriors are all these? I am reminded
Of what a king said—one that ruled the world:—
'Thou longest for a throne—stop that desire!
Or still long on resolved to face the fire.'
Thou wishest not for war; but know that one
Who plucketh roses must encounter thorns.
Thou hast no lion-man to counter me
Before the host and wouldest by a shift
Dismiss me, but to know me is to know
That I reject thy guile."

The warlike chiefs
V. 1171 Said to Gúdarz: "Thou shouldst send one of us
To fight him," but Gúdarz said: "Not to-day."

Húmán, when he had had his fill of speech,
Raged like a valiant lion, laughed and, turning
His back upon the chief, sped toward an outpost.
He strung his bow and flung four cavaliers
Upon the meadow. When they saw from far
The shots of that Túránian chief the guards
Gave way and fled, attempting no resistance.
He went toward the heights like one bemused,

And laid the mountains prostrate with his shouts:
He brandished round his head his spear and cried:—
"Húmán, the son of Wísa, triumpheth!"
When his spear waved the blare of clarions rose
Above the desert, and the exulting Turkmans
Touched with their helms the orbit of the moon.
Now when Húmán departed thus in triumph
Gúdarz was troubled at his insolence,
And sorely vexed at that indignity.
Rage and vexation tyrannised o'er him
Whose warriors sweated under such disgrace,
But still he drew this augury of good:—
"The eagerness for blood is on their side,
Ill will be his who unto ill is guide."
Then, casting round his haughty chiefs his eyes,
He sought the fittest for the enterprise.

§ 12

How Bízhan heard of the Doings of Húmán

Bízhan was told: "Húmán the lion-like
Came boldly to thy grandsire, having challenged
The chiefs of both the wings. Not one went forth;
He then withdrew in anger and disdain,
First having slain four horsemen of the host,
And flung them to the ground despitefully."
Bízhan raged like a leopard; his hands itched V. 1172
For combat with Húmán. He bade to saddle
His favourite elephantine charger, donned
His Rúman war-mail, quickly girthed Shabrang,
And came, full of resource, before his father,
To whom he spake about his grandsire, saying:—
"My father! said I not so, point by point?
'Gúdarz,' I said, 'is failing in his wits;
Dost thou not see the change in him? His heart

Is full of fear, his liver full of blood
Through his exceeding grief for all his sons
Slain and beheaded on the battlefield.'
For proof—this Turkman boldly, lion-like,
Came midst our warriors to Gúdarz, with spear
In hand and shouting like a drunken man,
And yet no horseman of this noble host
Was fit to fight, to loft him on a spear,
And make him like a bird upon the spit!
Array, my loving and most prudent sire!
My shoulders in the mail of Siyáwush,
For none but I may battle with Húmán,
And cause his manhood to go up in dust."
Gív said, "My prudent son! give ear a while.
I said to thee: 'Be not impetuous,
And say not aught untoward to Gúdarz,
Because he hath experience and more wisdom,
And is the leader of this noble host.'
His cavaliers would fight an elephant,
Yet bade he none to battle with Húmán;
But youth, as it would seem, hath made thee rash;
Thou hast set up thy neck and come to me
With this request; I am not of thy mind,
And therefore let me hear no more thereof."
V. 1173 Bízhan replied: "If thou accedest not
To my desire thou wouldst not have me famous.
I will go girded to the general,
And smite my breast for leave to fight Húmán."
He wheeled his charger, hurried to Gúdarz,
Saluted him, and told him all with sorrow:—
"O paladin of our world-ruling Sháh,
Versed in affairs, thou glory of the throne!
I see this cause for wonderment in thee,
Though I am one of little wit, that thou
Hast made a pleasance of this battlefield,
And purged thy heart of warfare with the Turkmans!

The seventh day is hard at hand; but day
And night bring rest, not action, for the sun
Beholdeth not the warriors' scimitars,
And no dust riseth in the face of heaven!
More wonderful than that—from yonder host
One Turkman—one misguided wretch—came forth,
Whom God who giveth good, but bringeth ill
On evil men, led from Túrán in arms
In order to be slaughtered by thy hand,
And thou didst spare the netted onager!
I do not understand thy policy.
Supposest thou that, if Húmán were slain
E'en now, Pírán would not come forth to fight?
Think not that ever he will be the first
To move his army to the open field.
Behold now I have bathed my hands in blood,
And girded up my loins to fight Húmán,
Whom, if the paladin will give me leave,
I will encounter like a furious lion.
Now let the general order Gív to give me
The arms of valiant Siyáwush, the helm
And Rúman mail, unbuckling them himself."
On hearing what Bízhan said and perceiving
His courage and his wise advice Gúdarz,
Rejoicing, mightily applauded him, V. 1174
And answered: "Fortune ever prosper thee.
Since thou bestrod'st the pardskin, crocodiles
Have held their breath and lions sheathed their claws.
Thou never restest but art first in fight
And in adventures, faring gallantly
And, like a lion, always conquering.
Still ere thou challengest Húmán think well
If thou canst meet him on the battlefield,
For he is a malignant Áhriman,
And like a mail-clad mountain in the fray,

While thou art but a youth. Heaven scarce hath turned
Above thy head. Thou lovest not thyself.
Wait, and I will dispatch to fight with him
Some veteran Lion, like a thundering cloud,
To shower arrows down on him like hail,
And pin his steel casque to his head."

Bízhan
Said: "Paladin! a gallant youth should have
Accomplishment. If thou saw'st not my fight
Against Farúd now is the time to prove me.
I rolled up earth when fighting at Pashan.
None hath beheld my back upon the day
Of battle, and I am not fit to live
If I have not such prowess as the rest.
Now if thou dost deny me this, and say:—
'Adventure not thyself against Húmán,'
I will complain of thee before the Sháh,
And give up belt and helm from this time forth."
Gúdarz smiled joyfully upon the youth,
So like a noble cypress-tree, and answered:—
"How fortunate is Gív in such a son!
And may I ne'er forget the glorious day
Whereon a virtuous mother gave thee birth.
Pards' claws have proven impotent since thou
Didst stretch thy hands to fight. Thou mayest meet
Húmán, and may good fortune be thy guide.
Now in the name of God who ruleth all,
And by the triumphs of our warriors' Sháh,
Endéavour that destruction may o'erwhelm
This Áhriman, God willing, by thy hand.
V. 1175 Now will I say to Gív: 'Give to Bízhan
The suit of armour that he asketh for.'
If thou shalt vanquish thine antagonist
Thou shalt receive addition at my hands,
And shalt be greater than Farhád and Gív

In treasure and in troops, in throne and crown."
Thus spake the grandsire to the grandson—one
Full of resource and ruse—who, lighting, kissed
The ground and praised him. Then the paladin
Called Gív. Talk passed about the youth and how
He fain would combat in that royal mail.
"Chief paladin!" said to the sire the son,
'This one is mind and soul and world to me;
His life is not so worthless in mine eyes;
I would not lose him down the Dragon's maw."
"Fond one!" Gúdarz said, "think not thus of him.
Bízhan, though young and fresh, is led by wisdom
In all things, and besides we should fight here,
And purify the world of Áhrimans.
We, whom the Sháh commanded to take vengeance
For Siyáwush, may not heed kin or spare
Our lives although the clouds rain swords of steel.
We must not break Bízhan's heart for the fight,
Or veil his hopes of fame. A youth if slothful
Will prove but mean of spirit, dull of soul."
Gív, left without resource by such reply,
Made yet one more endeavour to persuade
His son, if haply he would shun the strife.
The son replied: "Thou wilt disgrace my name."
Then Gív said to Gúdarz: "Chief-paladin!
When our own lives are put in jeopardy
We cease to care about son, host, and treasure, V. 1176
Respect for, and command of, chief and Sháh.
I have a ruggèd time in front of me;
Why should I sacrifice my life for him?
Where are his own arms if he fain would fight?
He hath his mail: why should he ask for mine?"
The champion said: "I do not want thy mail.
Think'st thou that all the warriors of the world
Will seek for fame in thine accoutrements,
And no chief aim at glory and renown

Unless he hath the arms of Siyáwush?"
He spurred his charger from the troops around
That he might quit them for the battleground.

§ 13

How Gív gave the Mail of Siyáwush to Bízhan

Now when Bízhan had vanished from the host
Gív's heart swelled up with sorrow, and repenting
He wept blood in his anguish. See what grief
And love a son may cause! He raised his head
To heaven with full heart and with liver stricken,
And said to God: "O Judge of all the world!
Vouchsafe to look upon this wounded heart.
Oh! burn it not with anguish for Bízhan,
My feet are in the mire made by my tears!
O Thou, the Omnipotent! restore me him
Unhurt."
He went in sorrow for the youth,
His son, and thought: "I pained him wantonly:
Why did I thwart his wishes? Should ill come
Upon him from Húmán, what good to me
Are armour, sword, and belt? I shall be left
All anguish, care, and wrath; on his account
My heart will ache, mine eyes will weep."
He went
Like dust, approached his son upon the field,
And said: "Why dost thou grieve us thus and haste
V. 1177 When thou shouldst tarry? Doth the black snake rage
So greatly on the battle-day that so
The crocodile may issue from the deep?
And is the shining of the moon so bright
As to eclipse the radiance of the sun?
Now thou art rushing on Húmán and turnest
Thy head from my behest, adopting thus

Thine own course, knowing not the task before thee!"
Bízhan replied: "Turn not, my valiant sire!
My heart from its revenge for Siyáwush.
Húmán is not of brass or iron, not
A mighty elephant or Áhriman.
He is a man of war. I challenge him,
And backed by thy good fortune will not shrink.
My fortune may be written otherwise
Than I desire, the Judge disposeth all;
Since what must be will be grieve not nor trouble
On mine account."
Gív, hearing his brave son
Whose loins were girt for battle like a lion,
Dismounted, gave to him the steed and mail
Of Siyáwush, and said: "If thou art bent
On fight, and self-will lordeth thus o'er wisdom,
Mount on this rapid charger, which will roll
Earth under thee. My mail too will be useful,
Since thou wilt have to fight an Áhriman."
When he beheld his father's steed before him
Bízhan alighted from his own like wind,
Put on the mail and made the buckles fast;
Then, having mounted on that royal charger,
Bound tight his girdle, took his mace in hand,
Chose from the army an interpreter—
One well acquainted with the Turkman tongue—
And went, like some huge lion, with his loins
Girt up to take revenge for Siyáwush.
Bízhan, or ever he approached Húmán,
Beheld an Iron Mountain—one that moved—
The desert all a-gleam with the cuirass,
And under the cuirass an Elephant.
He bade the interpreter shout to his foe:—
"Turn back if thou art eager for the fray, V. 1178
Bízhan is ready to contend with thee,
And thus he saith: 'O veteran cavalier!

Why urgest thou thy steed about the field,
Sent by Afrásiyáb to come to ill?
Thou shouldest have the curses of Túrán;
Thou art the miscreant that made the feud,
And art the guiltiest in all the land;
I look to God for succour and I thank Him
For bringing thee to meet me on this field.
Draw in the reins of thine impetuous steed:
My blood is boiling for revenge upon thee;
Select a spot whereon we may engage,
And wheel with me on desert, dale, or mountain,
Or else between the hosts' embattled lines,
For name and fame, where friend and foe alike
May look upon thee and of all the chiefs
Approve thee most.'"

Húmán laughed long and loud,
And answered: "Luckless one! thou trustest much
Thy body haply weary of its head!
I will dispatch thee to the host so mauled
That Gív shall be in pain and grief for thee,
Soon will I separate thy head and trunk
Like those of many of thy gallant kin.
Thou wilt be in my clutches as a pheasant,
When borne with shrieks and weeping tears of blood
Above the cypress-branches by a hawk,
Which sucketh at the gore and teareth out
The plumes; but what availeth? Night is near.
Go sheltered by its murk and I will go
Awhile to mine own host, present myself
At daybreak to the chief, and hurry back
With head erect and dight to counter thee."

"Begone," Bízhan replied, "and may a ditch
Be in thy rear and Áhriman in front!
V. 1179 To-morrow, if thou comest to the field,
Thy king and host shall ne'er behold thee more,
And I will bear thy head so far away

That thou shalt cease to trouble for thy troops."
They wheeled and sought their camps and paladins,
Then passed in troubled, vexed repose that night
With hearts that were impatient for the fight.

§ 14

How Húmán came to Battle with Bízhan

When morning breathed above the mountain-tops,
And dark night's skirt was no more seen, Húmán
Equipped himself, and told Pírán: "I challenged
Bízhan, the son of Gív, and spent the night
Preparing."
Calling an interpreter,
He mounted on his wind-swift bay and reached
The appointed place, expectant of Bízhan,
Who with his own interpreter anon
Came dight for combat, riding Shabáhang,
Girt tightly, and advancing haughtily
Like warrior-pard to battle. He was mailed
Withal on his heroic breast, his head
Shone with his royal casque. He thus addressed
Húmán: "O light of wit! but yesternight
Thou didst bear off a souvenir from me—
Thy head! To-day my hope is that my sword
Will part it from its body in such wise
As with thy blood to turn the dust to clay.
Thou mayest take to heart an apologue:
The mountain-sheep once said to the gazelle:— V. 1180
'Though all the plain were silk no more again
The snare once 'scaped for me! Be thine the plain.'"
Húmán replied: "To-day Gív's heart shall break
For his bold son. Wilt thou contend with me
Upon Mount Kanábad, or make the scene
Raibad, and far from aid on either side?"

Bízhan said: "Why this talk? Fight where thou wilt."
They left Mount Kanábad, rode toward the waste,
And reached a desert-spot where they beheld
No footprints left by man, where vultures flew not,
And lions trod not, far from host and help.
There they agreed: "Whichever shall survive
Shall spare the fallen man's interpreter
To bear his king the news of what befell."
This done, they lighted from their steeds, made fast
The divers straps and buckles of their mail,
And fixed their saddles firmly; then the twain—
Those wrathful warriors with vengeful hearts—
Next gat their bows in order for the fray,
And hurried forward to the battleground.
V. 1181 They strained their bows until the notches touched,
Discharged their poplar arrows tipped with steel,
Then took their spears, and wheeled to left and right
While bits of armour flew and spearheads gleamed.
Watch how the fortune of the day inclined!
Their mouths gaped like a lion's with the heat;
Both longed for rest and water; presently
They damped their burning rage and stayed to breathe,
Then took their shields and trenchant scimitars:
Thou wouldst have said: "The Day of Doom hath come!"
But steel was foiled by steel, though in the fight
The flashing sword-strokes showered down like fire;
Each hero failed to shed the other's blood,
And both their hearts were still insatiate.
They took their maces, having done with swords,
And passed all measure in their combating;
Thereafter they essayed each other's strength;
Each grasped his foeman's girdle and endeavoured
To drag him from his steed and fling him down.

The stirrup-leathers in the violent strain
Snapped, but each rider still retained his seat,
And neither of them had the mastery.
Then both the warriors lighted from their chargers,
And breathed themselves a while. The interpreters
Held the two steeds. Anon the combatants
Rose like fierce lions, wearied as they were,
And gat them ready for a wrestling-bout.
Thus from the morning till the shadows lengthened
These champions, on the poise of hope and fear,
Contended with each other; neither turned V. 1182
His head away; their mouths were parched, their bodies
A-sweat with toil and with the blazing sun:
Then by consent they hastened to a pool.
Bízhan, when he had drunk, arose in anguish,
All shaking like a willow in a gale,
And, in his heart despairing of sweet life,
Called upon God and said: "Omnipotent!
Thou knowest all within me and without.
If thou perceivest justice in my cause,
Both in my challenge and my purposes,
The strength which I possess take not away,
And give me self-possession in the fray."

§ 15

How Húmán was slain by Bízhan

Húmán, distressed and raven-black with pain,
Advanced. All wounded as they were both came
Like pards to fight again, strove mightily,
And first one, then the other, touched the ground.
They put forth all their strength and artifice
Until high heaven's own artifice was seen,
For, though Húmán was mightier, all prowess
Is but defect in him whose sun is set.

Bízhan put forth his hands like leopard's claws
To catch upon Húmán where'er he could;
His left hand gripped his foeman's neck, the right
His foeman's thigh, he bent that mighty Camel,
Raised him aloft, and flung him to the ground;
Then holding down Húmán, and drawing forth
A dagger, swift as wind beheaded him,
And flung away his carcase like a dragon's.
Húmán lay rolled in dust, the waste ran blood.
Bízhan surveyed that elephantine form,
Fall'n like a stately cypress in a meadow,
V. 1183 With great amazement, turned away, looked up
To Him who ruleth o'er the world, and said:—
"O Thou that art above both place and time,
Above the revolution of the sky!
Thou and Thou only rulest o'er the world—
A matter which no wisdom can gainsay.
I have no portion in this doughty deed,
Not having pluck to fight an elephant,
Yet have cut off Húmán's head in revenge
For Siyáwush, and my sire's seventy brothers.
Now may his spirit be in thrall to mine,
His body rent to pieces by the lions."
He bound Húmán's head to the saddle-straps
Upon Shabrang and flung the trunk to dust,
With armour shattered and with girdle snapped,
His head in this place and his trunk in that.
The world is all imposture, nothing more,
It will not help thee when distress is sore;
It showeth fairly, but it doth not so,
And therefore let thy heart its love forego.
Húmán, the son of Wísa, being slain,
The two interpreters ran to Bízhan
To worship him as Brahmans do an image
In Chín. He looked around the battlefield,
And saw no way save past the Turkman host,

And fearing lest that murderous multitude,
When they perceived the upshot of the fight,
Should come forth in a mountain-mass to battle
While he was not prepared to fight alone,
He put from him the mail of Siyáwush,
And donned instead the armour of Húmán;
Then mounted on the elephantine steed,
And took in hand the banner, of that prince.
He went his way with blessings on the place,
His wakeful fortunes, and the glorious field.
Húmán's interpreter, when he beheld
His master's fate, was fearful of Bízhan,
Who said: "Fear not, I will observe the pact.
Go tell thy host what thou hast seen me do."
He went what while Bízhan with bended bow
Rode rapidly toward Mount Kanábad.
Now when the Turkman outposts saw afar V. 1184
The lance and standard of that chief of Túr,
They sprang up cheering in their joy and sped
A cameleer like smoke to tell Pírán:—
"Húmán, such is our king's victorious fortune!
Is hasting from the place of combating,
The standard of the Íránian chief is down,
His corpse defiled in dust and drenched in gore."
The whole host shouted and their leader listened
To hear Húmán's approach—a short-lived joy,
And then the hail descended on their heads!
Anon the interpreter returned and told
What he had seen, and tidings reached Pírán:—
"The glory of the empire is bedimmed."
From the Túránian army rose a cry,
The warriors unhelmed themselves; the world
Grew overcast; there was no brightness left,
And all their frantic words availed them not.
Now when Bízhan in crossing 'twixt the hosts
Approached the shadow of the great king's throne,

At once that warrior of lion-heart,
The army's refuge, dipped the sable standard.
The watchmen of the Íránian host, perceiving
The sable banner thus inverted, turned
Their faces toward the paladin and raised
A shouting from the watch-tower. They dispatched
Post haste a cameleer to tell Gúdarz:—
"Bízhan is come in triumph, lionlike,
And carrieth the sable flag reversed."
Gív bare himself meanwhile like those distraught,
All clamorous and restless everywhere,
In quest of news of his heroic son,
And sorrowed greatly at a time of joy.
Then tidings came. He hurried forth. He saw
The well-loved face. He lighted from his steed—
V. 1185 His fitting course—and wallowed, head in dust,
Returning thanks to God, then clasped his son
Upon his breast, that youth so wise and brave.
Thence, still returning thanks, they sought Gúdarz,
Whose grandson lighting from his steed, which bare
Húmán's head in its saddle-straps, presented,
With mail besmirched with blood and head with dust,
The armour, steed, and head of brave Húmán.
"The paladin," thou wouldst have said, "will pour
His soul out," he rejoiced so o'er Bízhan,
And then began to praise the Judge of all
For that good omen and unsleeping fortune.
He next gave orders to the treasurer,
And said: "Bring forth a crown and royal robe
With patterns jewelled on a golden ground,
The crown and belt with pendent pearls like suns."
He likewise brought ten chargers with gold bridles,
And ten boy-slaves fay-faced and girt with gold,
Bestowed them on Bízhan, and said: "Brave Lion!
None else had laid this Dragon low. Our host
Hast thou delivered by thy sword and hand,

And broken too the Turkman monarch's heart,
While our own warriors like lions ride
On steeds which plunge and caracole in pride."

§ 16

How Nastíhan made a Night-attack and was slain

On the other side Pírán all pain and wrath,
With heart grief-stricken and with eyes all tears,
Dispatched a messenger to Nastíhan
To say: "O famous warrior, good at need!
Make ready to engage and dally not
O'er this our brother's blood, attack the Íránians
By night and make earth a Jíhún with gore.
Lead forth ten thousand cavaliers of proof,
Armed for the fray. Thou mayst avenge Húmán,
And bring our foemen's heads between the shears."
Then Nastíhan: "So will I do for I V. 1186
Will make earth like Jíhún."
Two-thirds of night
Passed, then the plain shook with the tramp of horsemen—
The Turkmans eager to exalt their necks
By that emprise. As Nastíhan led on
His vengeful powers toward the Íránian host
He came, as dawn was breaking, to a place
Where from the look-out the Íránian watchman
Saw him, and shouted to the scouts: "A force
Is on us from Túrán!"
They lightly sped
Toward Gúdarz to say: "A host approacheth
As 'twere a gliding stream; thou wouldest say:—
'They have not speaking tongues.' The general knoweth
How men are wont to make a night-attack."
Gúdarz said to the troops: "Be vigilant

And bright of heart, let every ear be open
To any indication of the foe."
With that he called the son of Gív—Bízhan,
The swordsman and heroic paladin—
And said: "Success and fortune are thine own,
The hearts of foes are shivered at thy name.
Take whom thou needest of my famous troops,
Go lion-like, receive the foemen's charge,
And by thy courage bring the heavens down."
Bízhan chose out a thousand cavaliers,
And, when the two hosts met, they drew their maces;
Murk gathered overhead wherefrom dark dust
Descending veiled the Turkman soldiers' eyes.
Bízhan, when he perceived the Turkman host
Thus hidden, bade his warriors string their bows.
V. 1187 The war-din rose. Encountering Nastíhan
He saw the flag of Wísa's family
Borne by that chief whose steed an arrow reached
Sent from the broad breast of Bízhan. The charger
Fell in its anguish, then Bízhan came up,
And with his mace smote Nastíhan's helmed head,
Brained it, and there an end. Then cried Bízhan:—
"If any soldier handle aught but mace
And scimitar, then will I break his bow
Across his head because although the Turkmans
Have fairy faces they are naught in fight."
His warriors took courage at his words,
And every one unsheathed his glittering glaive;
The air seemed rusty, earth a sea of blood.
Most of the Turkman troops blood-boltered fell
Beneath the chargers' feet, the others fled
Toward their host, the Íránians in pursuit.
Pírán missed Nastíhan, the earth turned black
To him, he bade the scouts: "Dispatch at once
A cameleer to the Íránian host
That he may get me news of Nastíhan,

Or if not I will pluck out both his eyes."
They instantly dispatched a cameleer,
Who went, beheld, returned to them in haste,
And said: "Lo! Nastíhan is on the field
With other chieftains of the Turkman host,
Beheaded, lying like an elephant,
His body blue with bruises from the mace!"
Pírán swooned at the news, then tore his hair
And wept, rejecting food, repose, and sleep.
He rent his Rúman vest, and wailings rose. V. 1188
He said: "Almighty Ruler of the world!
In sooth I must unwittingly have sinned
Against Thee, for Thou hast deprived mine arms
Of might, so darkened are my star and sun!
Alas! that lion-quelling hero-taker,
That cavalier so young and brave and goodly—
My brother dearer to me than my life—
The head of Wísa's race, my brave Húmán,
And Nastíhan, that Lion fierce in fight,
To whose claws any leopard was a fox!
Whom have I left upon the field? My course
Is to lead out the host."
He blew the trumpets,
Bound on the drums, and with the heaven murky,
The earth like ebon, sun and moon obscured,
Marched from Mount Kanábad. Gúdarz too sounded
His clarions, marched, and took up his position.
Full in the centre, guarded by blue falchions,
Was Káwa's flag, while chiefs intent on strife
Stood ready with the lance and ox-head mace.
As morning dawned the hosts advanced, and battled
Till daylight failed, then both, still fit for fight
And eager for revenge, returned to camp.
The Íránian general occupied Raíbad,
And could not rest for his anxiety.
"A mighty battle have we fought to-day,"

He said, "and slain the leaders of the foe,
And now methinketh that Pírán will send
His king a cameleer and ask for succours
In this campaign against me, and I now
Will send intelligence to Kai Khusrau."

§ 17

How Gúdarz asked Aid of Khusrau

V. 1189 Gúdarz then called to him a letter-writer,
And said: "I have some secrets to impart,
And if thou openest thy lips thereon
Thy tongue will bring disaster on thy head."
He had a letter written to the Sháh
About the host, the parley with Pírán,
The ambassage of Gív to proffer league
And love, and show Pírán heaven's purposes,
The answer that Pírán had made to Gív,
And to the wise and valiant chiefs, and how
A Turkman host had pard-like followed him
Up to Mount Kanábad to battle there;
Then how they had prepared a battlefield,
And had relieved their hearts by combating.
Gúdarz gave to the Sháh a full report
About Húmán and valiant Nastíhan,
And how Bízhan upon the day of fight
Had served the mace-men of Túrán; that done,
Gúdarz spake thus about Afrásiyáb:—
"He hath approached the river; should he cross
Thou knowest that we cannot stand against him,
O monarch of Írán, lord of the world!
Unless Khusrau shall come to our support,
And set a crown upon his warriors' heads;
But if Pírán shall come alone the troops
Will need no help; Khusrau shall learn how I—

His slave—have by his fortune used Pírán;
And furthermore the conquering Sháh perchance
Will condescend to let his servant know
What Rustam—binder of the Dív—hath done,
And what Luhrásp hath done, and wise Ashkash."
The letter being tied and sealed, Gúdarz
Bade bring out many rapid courier-steeds
With royal saddles. Then he called Hajír, V. 1190
Who though a youth was prudent as an elder,
And said: "Wise son! give all thy heart hereto,
For thou, if ever thou desire my favour,
Canst win it now. Charged with this missive speed
Forth like a blast, repose not night and day,
Nor pausing e'en to scratch thy head, and bear
The Sháh my letter."
He embraced Hajír,
Who came out from his glorious father's presence
And, calling from the host two of his kindred,
And mounting them upon swift-footed steeds,
Left his sire's camp-enclosure. With relays
Of horses for each stage they ate, reposed,
And slept upon their steeds both day and night,
And on the seventh day approached the Sháh.
One went to tell Khusrau, who sent Shammákh
With many haughty chiefs to welcome them.
"O lion-taking son of paladins!"
Shammákh said, "what hath chanced that thou hast come
Thus all unlooked for to the worldlord's court?"
Then at the Sháh's command they raised the curtain,
And let Hajír ride through, who, when the Sháh
Perceived him, rubbed his visage in the dust.
Khusrau much greeted him, then made him sit
Beside the throne, and asked about Gúdarz,
The leaders, and the rest. The prudent youth
Of ardent soul gave him the great men's greetings,

Informed him fully of the host's affairs,
Then gave the letter of the paladin.
V. 1191 The monarch called a scribe and had it read,
Then filled Hajír's mouth with bright gems and ordered
The treasurer, "Bring dínárs forth and brocade,"
Who, when he heard the order, brought forth sacks
Of coin and emptied them upon Hajír
Until his head was hidden; then produced
A suit of king's apparel—cloth of gold—
And crown inlaid with jewels. Furthermore
They led before Hajír ten noble steeds
With golden saddles, while Hajír's companions
Were clad in robes of honour and received
Dínárs and drachms and goods of every kind.
They left the throne-room with the Sháh and sat
A night and day with wine and revelry.
Khusrau considered every circumstance,
And, having bathed his head and body, went
First, freshly garmented in robes of service,
While both his eyes were raining like a cloud,
At dawn before the Ruler of the world;
Then, stooping lowly with his head abased,
He offered praises to the righteous Judge,
To whom he prayed for Grace and victory,
And pleaded for the crown and throne of might.
He plained to God about Afrásiyáb,
And in his grief poured water from his eyes;
Then, like a stately cypress, left the place,
And sat upon the throne in all his Grace.

§ 18

The Answer of Khusrau to the Letter of Gúdarz

The Sháh then called a wise scribe and dispatched
A fair reply yet harsh in some regards.

He lauded first the paladin and said:—
"Live evermore and may thy soul be bright!
Blest be the prudent captain of the host,
The heedful and discerning warrior,
Lord of the iron mace and blue steel sword, V. 1192
Who brighteneth Káwa's flag. Praise be to God,
The Worldlord, that our troops have been triumphant.
When fortune shone on thee it quickly raised
Smoke from the foe. Thou sayest first: 'I sent
Some noble, prudent warriors with Gív
As envoys to Pírán. What good advice
I gave him! But his ill-conditioned mind
Rejected all. He would not league with me!'
A king whose officer made war on him
Gave utterance to a saw in this regard:—
'When subjects turn from right, and do instead
Such ill as this, their lives are forfeited.'
Pírán, I knew, would not give up the struggle;
Still for past kindness' sake I did not seek
War to the death with him. Now time hath shown
That all his sympathies are with Túrán;
Afrásiyáb is all the world to him,
So strive no longer to divert his love,
For he preferreth sentiment to wisdom,
And no endeavour will bring grass from flint.
That thou didst speak the foeman fair is good;
Fair speech befitteth well the noble race.
And next, from thy description of the encounter
Between the warriors with their massive maces,
Of our good fortune, of the favouring sun
And moon, and efforts made, I am persuaded
That thy might will secure the victory;
But know that strength and courage are from God; V. 1193
Acknowledge this and give Him all the praise.
And thirdly, thou hast said: 'Afrásiyáb
Will cross the river, having marched thereto

Because Pírán hath sent to ask for aid.'
The matter is so, and we thus reply:—
'Know, O my thoughtful sage, mine officer
Approved in all things! that Afrásiyáb
Abideth not by the Jíhún to fight
With us; the Khán is marching forth from Chín
Upon him; he is ambushed on both flanks,
Or rather, through the innumerable host,
Whose chiefs are now disposed around Túrán,
As Rustam—refuge of the warriors
On battle-days—Luhrásp and deft Ashkash,
Afrásiyáb is threatened on all sides,
And therefore marcheth to the river-bank.
If he advanceth from his present ground
He will resign his country to the foe.
And fifthly, since thou askest me for tidings
About the chieftains whom thou lovest well,
Know, and may fortune ever go with thee,
That on the road that lion Rustam took
The dust hath risen from Kashmír and Hind,
While from Khárazm, whereto the shrewd Ashkash
Went, hath gone up the battle-cry, and Shída
Defeated sought Gurganj; and where Luhrásp
Marched all the chieftains gave him passage, yielding
The Aláns as well as Ghuz which now are ours.
So if Afrásiyáb shall cross Jíhún
These noble chiefs will take him in the rear,
And leave him nothing but the wind to grasp.
He will not then advance, be well assured,
And leave to foes the towns and broad champaign,
His fair support, whate'er Pírán may urge.
V. 1194 He openeth not his lips by day or night
Unknown to me. May that day ne'er be blest
When he shall lead his host across the river,
And may none see the day of gloom and straitness
When he shall get the upper hand of us.

Now will I order Tús, that ardent chief,
To mount the drums, seize Dahistán, Gurgán,
And lands around, and thus exalt his head
High as the sun; ourself will follow Tús
With throne and host and elephants to aid thee.
Meanwhile confront Pírán, array thy troops,
And offer fight; Húmán and Nastíhan
Are gone; regard his hands as full of grief,
And if he challengeth our chiefs to combat
Decline not thou. If he should offer battle
Be of good courage, meet him like a lion.
Dread not a conflict with Afrásiyáb;
Take heart and turn not from him; thou wilt win
If thou hast confidence, and God, I trust,
Will favour me. Methinketh that when I
March to support you ye will have your will
Upon your foes and raise your own names sunward."
He sent the host much greeting from Káús
And Tús. The letter with his seal imprest
He handed to Hajír whom too he blest.

§ 19

How Khusrau arrayed the Host

Now, when Hajír had left the presence, Khusrau
Took counsel with a scribe. The Sháh's great love V. 1195
Toward his troops turned all his thoughts to war.
He said thus: "If Afrásiyáb bestir
Himself and cross the river he will drive
My troops back; my course is to go myself."
Thereat he called to him the head of all
The scions of Naudar, commanded him
To lead a host to Dahistán forthwith,
To occupy the whole waste of Kházm,
Watch o'er Ashkash upon the day of battle,

And enter into combat like a pard.
Then from the court of Tús the tymbals, trumpets,
And kettledrums resounded, chief and host
Marched forth, and earth was hidden by the horse-hoofs.
"The circling sun," thou wouldst have said, "stood still,
Frayed by those cavaliers!" Tús marched two weeks,
And light departed from the sun and moon,
While news about the Sháh's own movements spread,
For, when Tús left, Khusrau prepared to march,
With five score thousand of the chosen chieftains,
Toward Gúdarz with elephants and drums,
The Grace and crown and throne of king of kings.
Hajír sped proudly on before Khusrau,
Glad, with a robe of honour, and in favour;
Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth up the earth."
As he approached the camp the clarions blared,
And all the golden-girdled chiefs went out
V. 1196 To welcome him. In presence of Gúdarz
He told of his reception by the Sháh,
What graciousness and interest were shown,
What magnanimity and statesmanship,
Spake of the Sháh's affection for his troops,
And how his face cleared when he heard the message.
Hajír then gave the letter of Khusrau,
With greetings from the nobles, to Gúdarz,
Who, hearing of the monarch's graciousness,
And having pressed to his own eyes and face
The letter, broke its seal and handed it
When open to a scribe to read to him.
The chieftain called down blessings on the Sháh,
And kissed the ground on hearing his commands,
Spent all the night consulting with his son,
And took his seat at dawn for audience.
Then all the men of name throughout the host
Came helmed before the throne, anon Hajír
Produced the letter of the glorious Sháh,

And gave it to a scribe who read it out.
Gúdarz brought into camp all steeds at grass,
And bade the quarter-masters do their office,
Allowing them the keys of all his hoard
Of mail, dínárs, gold casques, swords, crowns, and girdles;
For since the moment for revenge had come
He poured that wealth out on the host till horse
And foot were furnished; thus an army gathered
As 'twere a mountain; earth shook at the tramp
Of wind-foot steeds, the hearts of lions quaked
At troops so whelmed with iron, gold, and silver.
He bade them to prepare for strife and give
Their hearts and ears to compassing revenge.
They marched past their brave chief by companies—
A mountain-mass of men—while he reviewed them, V. 1197
Saw earth obscured and heaven azure-dim,
And said thus: "From Jamshíd's days until now
None hath arrayed the like with steeds and arms,
Gold, silver, elephants of war, and Lions.
Hence with God's aidance will I ride to Chín."
This said he called the noble and the wise
To entertain them at a drinking-bout
With harp and pipe, and with the men of might
Discussed the manner of the coming fight.

§ 20

How Pírán wrote to Gúdarz Son of Kishwád

News of the Sháh's proceedings reached Pírán
And filled his heart with terror; he took refuge
In knavery, deceit, and artifice,
And then—his sole resource—he bade a scribe
Indite a letter to the paladin,
Wherein he proffered first great praise to God—
His refuge from the potent Dív—then said:—

"In public and in private my one prayer
To God, the All-ruler of the world, is this—
To ban this scene of strife between our hosts.
If it be thou, Gúdarz! that hast desired
Thus to fulfil the world with thy revenge,
Thy lust is sated. Say, what wouldst thou more?
Behold how many of my gallant Hearts,
Of mine own nearest kindred and my Lions,
Hast thou flung—headless trunks—upon the dust!
Hast thou no reverence, no fear of God?
From love and wisdom thou hast turned thy face,
And now that thou hast gained thine end 'tis time
For thee to sicken of revenge and be not
Henceforward bold in bloodshed. Do thou mark
V. 1198 How many of the horsemen of Írán,
And of Túrán, have perished in this war!
It is high time that ruth should come to thee,
With some remission in the quest of strife.
In seeking vengeance for one dead and gone
How many living ones wilt thou behead?
Now, since the past will not return to us,
Sow not fresh seed of vengeance in the world,
Vex not thy spirit nor expend thy body,
But cease from bloodshed, for the dead are cursed
That leave a long-enduring name for ill,
And whensoever sable locks turn white
Small hope of life is left. If our two armies
Again encounter on this field I fear
That thou wilt see none left on either side;
Lives will be lost, but vengeance will survive,
While after all who knoweth which will win,
Which be the luckless, which the illustrious?
But if thy resolution to shed blood,
And make a fight of lions with me here,
Is all to win advantage for Írán,
So say and I will send a messenger

To ask Afrásiyáb for his commands
That so we may divide earth, and lay by
The strife as in the days of Minúchihr
When every one observed the settlement.
Declare what lands thou claimest for Írán
That we may move the Turkmans out of them,
From settlement and desert, field and fell,
As Kai Khusrau, the righteous judge, shall order.
First will I draw toward the hills, and quit
Írán from Gharcha to the land of Bust,
Quit Tálikán as far as Fáriyáb
Including Andaráb, and cities five
As far as Bámiyán, and all the coasts,
And Kaian dwelling-places, of Írán,
The country of Gúrkán, that favoured spot, V. 1199
Thus titled by the master of the world,
With all from Balkh as far as Badakhshán
That beareth indications of his sway;
While, lower down, the desert of Ámwí
And Zam shall be included with Khatlán,
Besides Shingán, Tirmid, and Wísagird,
Bukhárá and the cities round about.
Proceed moreover to the land of Sughd;
None will claim aught thereof. To valiant Rustam
I yield Nímrúz and will withdraw the troops,
Allowing him free access to the East,
And all as far as Hind ungrudgingly.
Kashmír, Kábul, and Kandahár with all
That fronteth Sind shall likewise be included.
The Aláns and parts invaded by Luhrásp,
And all between them and Mount Káf, I yield,
Without strife or contention to Khusrau,
With all the region threatened by Ashkash.
This done I will recall from every side
My troops, and swear to be thy foe no longer.
Thou knowest that I have been friendly, true,

And upright. I will send Afrásiyáb
Intelligence that we have ceased from strife;
Do thou moreover look on us with favour,
And in thy kindness write Khusrau a letter
To say that I have made thee overtures,
And vie with thee no more in shedding blood.
When we have ratified the covenant
I will dispatch the treasures which Khusrau
Demanded, and he too perchance will stop
His warlike operations. Afterward
V. 1200 I will send hostages with goods of all sorts,
And by a friendly, just, and sacred treaty
Will sew the eye of feud up with the hand
Of good faith, broken in the great Sháh's time
By evil-natured Túr and savage Salm,
When Farídún was well-nigh crazed with grief
Because the illustrious Íraj was slain.
What thou requirest else be good enough
To state, then write and tell the Sháh of all.
Think not because I speak thee fair: 'These people
Are giving way,' I only speak in love;
Mine object is to make a happy ending.
My treasures, troops, and military fame
Surpass thine own, but this persistent strife,
And impious bloodshed, cause my heart to burn
Upon the troops' account, and I would stop
The feud: besides I stand in awe of God
Both in my public and my private life,
Who as the Judge will not approve ill deeds,
But utterly destroy our fields and fells.
Now if thou turnest from these words of mine,
And seekest war against me to the death,
Condemning me though I am innocent,
And not regarding aught that I can say,
Since justice and injustice are all one
To thee, and thou wouldst further spread the feud,

Choose out some chiefs that wield the massive mace,
And I too will select among my troops
Such warriors as are needful for the strife.
These will we pair for combat. Let us twain
Encounter likewise on the battlefield.
Those innocent of bloodshed then perchance
Will find repose from strife. Those whom thou holdest
As guilty, those that grieve thy heart, will I
Bring forth to thee upon the day of battle.
Moreover thou shalt make a covenant
That if thou shalt prevail to shed our blood, V. 1201
And if the Turkman warriors' fortune sinketh,
Thou wilt in no wise harm my host or burn
My country and my throne, but give my troops
Free passage home and ambuscade them not.
If I prevail, my good star bear me fruit,
I will not ambuscade the Íránians:
We will not be injurious or vindictive,
But give them access to their king and country
Without the loss of property or life.
If thou consentest not, but wouldst prefer
A general engagement, set thy host
In order and the blood shed in the fight
Shall rest upon thee in the other world."

He tied the letter and then called his son,
A chief of brazen body hight Rúín,
To whom he said: "Go to Gúdarz; address him
In prudent words and list to his reply."

Rúín, when he had left the chieftain's door,
Came with ten horsemen and inspired by wisdom
In haste to where the paladin was camped,
And, when he saw Gúdarz, drew near to him
With folded arms and head inclined. That chief
Rose, clasped Rúín, and asked about Pírán,
The host, the mighty men, the king and realm.
Rúín then told his message and delivered

V. 1202 The letter, which a scribe approached and read
With all its goodly language and advice,
And wise Pírán's proposals for a peace.
Then said Gúdarz: "Son of the general,
And happy youth! first thou must be our guest,
And then thou mayest ask for my reply."
They cleared a camp-enclosure for his use,
Providing him a lodging fit for kings.
Gúdarz, filled with anxiety of heart,
Sat with his counsellor—the twain, no more—
While they prepared an answer, picking out
The fairest words. A sennight thus elapsed
While minstrels, wine, and harp were in request,
And daily when the sun sank in the sky
Rúín was called to share the revelry.

§ 21

The Answer of Gúdarz to the Letter of Pírán

Gúdarz upon the eighth day called a scribe,
And bade him write the answer, planting thus
Another tree of feud. He offered praise
To God, then point by point made this response:—
"Thy letter I have read and understand
V. 1203 Thy purposes. Rúín too hath delivered
Thy message, but I wonder at thy writing
Such goodly words, because thy tongue and heart
Accord not, and thy soul is poor in wisdom.
In all affairs thou speakest courteously,
And usest phrases so instinct with grace
That any one that is not really wise
Would rest with confidence on thy good will;
Yet art thou like those salt-marsh tracts which look
Afar like water when the sun is on them;
But lies and trickery are no avail

When it is time for mace and spear and lasso.
I will have naught with thee but war and strife,
This is no time for parley and rejoinder,
For glozing, league, and love, but to discern
The aspect of the sky, and mark to whom
God will give strength, the sun, and conquering fortune.
Still hear me, and let wisdom be thy guide;
First for thy saying: 'I, through loving kindness,
Through fear of God, and recent happenings,
Wish not for war; my heart is strait and darkened
By all this coil.' Thy tongue and heart agreed not
What time these words were passing through thy lips,
Because if justice had possessed thy heart
Thou hadst not been the foremost to shed blood.
When Gív first came to thee with prudent nobles,
Brave officers, and other clear-brained chieftains,
With fair discourse and prudent counsellings,
Thou didst array thine army for this fight,
And leave thine own land to invade another.
In every conflict thou hast been aggressor.
This tardy wisdom should have come before,
And peace been thy beginning not thine end;
But thine ill disposition and ill strain V. 1204
Are forcing thee to quit the path of wisdom,
Because the nature of thy race is evil—
A race that is inured to treachery.
Thou knowest how high-born Íraj was used
By Túr in envy of the crown and throne;
How ill came on the earth through Túr and Salm,
How vengeance and injustice spread around;
How Farídún in agony of heart
Had open lips to curse them night and day;
And how by help of God who giveth good,
Who tendered and supported Minúchihr
In seeking vengeance and in justifying
The world by Grace of his supremacy,

Túr was requited for his wickedness.
Thus much time passed until the evil strain
Had reached Afrásiyáb through men of name
But little wit; he sought a new revenge
On Minúchihr, Naudar, and Kai Kubád,
Did that whereof we wot to Kai Káús,
Sent dust up from the homesteads of Írán,
And lastly with the blood of Siyáwush
Prepared the base of new and lengthy strife.
Thou hadst no thought of justice at the time
When Siyáwush though guiltless yielded up
Sweet life. How many great men of Írán
With crown and state have perished in this feud!
Thou sayest next: 'O thou with hoary hair!
How long wilt thou be girded to shed blood?'
Know, veteran deceiver who hast witnessed
The ups and downs of life! that God hath given me
A length of days and an illustrious fortune
That I, in vengeance on the day of battle,
Might send the dust up sunward from Túrán;
And all mine apprehension is that God
May end my life ere I have been revenged,
And trodden underfoot your fields and fells.
Thou sayest thirdly: 'I see not in thee
The heart-felt fear and awe of holy God.
V. 1205 Dost thou not realise that wanton bloodshed
Will be thine own undoing in the end?'
If for thy gentle words I turn from fight
Almighty God will ask at Question-time
About the days that I have spent on earth,
And say: 'I gave thee leadership and strength,
With manhood, wealth, and skill; why didst not thou
Gird in the presence of the Íránians
Thy loins in wreak for Siyáwush?' And when
The just Judge asketh me about the blood
Of all those seventy noble sons of mine,

How shall I tell the Maker of the world
The motives that seduced me from revenge?
And fourthly as to wreak for Siyáwush
Thou sayest, ancient prince! 'For one now dust
'Tis wrong to take the lives of living men.'
Remember all the foul deeds which have been
Most grievous to the heart in every way,
The deeds which ye have wrought upon Írán,
What numbers of our monarchs ye have wronged,
What treaties have been broken, feuds begun,
And your eternal instancy in ill!
How can I think of these things and make peace,
For all along thou hast held evil good?
Thou sayest fifthly: 'I will covenant
With thee, will give the chiefs as hostages,
Send treasure to Khusrau and end my travail.'
Know then, O chieftain of the Turkman host!
That we have no such orders from the Sháh.
He bade me fight, avenging Siyáwush
With blood for blood, and if I disobey
My soul will shame before him. If thou hopest
That he will look with favour on thy words
Send him Lahhák and that stanch liege Rúín
As hostages, with treasures such as may be,
At once; the road is open to Írán.
And sixthly for the lands, the populous
And fertile provinces, of which thou said'st:—
'We will evacuate and surrender them,' V. 1206
God hath forestalled thee; if thou knowest not
I will explain. Luhrásp hath all the west
As far as to the marches of Khazar;
Toward the south, and all the way to Sind,
The world is like a glittering Rúman glaive,
For gallant Rustam with his trenchant sword
Hath raised therefrom a Resurrection-blast,
And hath despatched the prince of Hindustán,

Together with his black flag, to the Sháh.
In Dahistán, Kházrazm, and in those parts
Where Turkmans ruled, the plains are cleared of those
Who made the raids; Ashkash hath hailed on Shída,
Hath brought him down nigh unto death, and sent
Khusrau withal the captives and much spoil.
Now here the contest is betwixt us twain.
Thou hast beheld these famous Lions' prowess
And mine; if thou wilt meet me face to face
I will release thee from all further parley,
For by God's power and at the Sháh's command
Will I submerge this battlefield in blood.
Observe, O famous leader of the host!
The revolutions of the sun and moon,
For heaven hath nigh enthralled thee and the head
Of Turkman fortune is within the shears.
Mark what the Maker will bring down upon thee
For thine ill deeds; time hath uncloaked thy crimes,
And ill is manifest, requiting ill.
Be very heedful, ope thine ears and hearken
To wise men's words. Know that this host so famed,
These hundred thousand horsemen drawing swords,
And all in quest of honour and revenge,
Will not be charmed off from this battlefield.
I reach the seventh point. Thou 'stablishest
V. 1207 Thine honesty by oath. 'Twixt me and thee
There is no talk of league; no dealings hath
Thy soul with wisdom since in all thy compacts
Thou leavest honesty in tears. Thine oath
Wrecked Siyáwush. May no one trust thy words.
Thou didst not save him in his evil day,
Much as he called on thee in his distress!
The eighth point is, thou say'st: 'My crown and throne,
My valour and my fortune, are more great
Than thine, and I possess more men and treasure,
But out of love for thee my soul is sad.'

Methinketh that thou hast without a doubt
Proved me in war ere this. Thou know'st if thou
Hast found me wanting in the day of battle.
Now scan me well again: in wealth and crown,
In throne and prowess, haply I exceed thee
At every point. And lastly thou hast said:—
'Choose champions for the fray; I too will bring
Exalted horsemen from the Turkman host,
For, out of tenderness toward my troops,
I would not spread injustice and revenge.'
Thou dost not proffer this in tenderness,
Because thou knowest thine own heart and purpose.
The Sháh, the world-lord, will be wroth with me
If I shall cause our armies thus to part;
Before me is a guilty host wherewith
My people are aggrieved, the Sháh will never
Allow me to shun fight on such a plea.
First in full force our armies like two mountains
Must shock in battle. Let them be arrayed
In line upon the space which is between them,
And haply victory may declare itself;
But if not, we will choose a ground and champions,
And my word shall be kept though thine be broken.
But if thou wilt not with thy present force V. 1208
Encounter me, then ask thy king for more,
And carefully consider thy position.
As for the wounded absent from the ranks,
Among thy kith and kindred and allies,
Wait till the leeches make them whole, for now
To gain time is of consequence to thee.
If thou wouldst have of me delay or respite
Well—but if battle set thy host in order.
I speak thus that upon the day of fight
Thou mayst not dare excuse thyself and say:—
'Thou camest on us unexpectedly,
Didst lie in wait, and gavest us no time.'

If I shall seek revenge a hundred years,
Or now at once, 'tis all the same to me.
There is no hope that I shall leave this feud;
'Tis ever present to me night and day."
Whenas the letter of reply was done
The envoy fairy-like appeared therefor
With girded loins upon a rapid steed,
Escorted by a band of cavaliers.
Rúín the warrior lighted from his horse,
And introduced his escort to Gúdarz.
The chieftain ordered that the archimages,
And all the famous sages of the host—
Wise men and shrewd—should come to him forthwith.
The paladin bade read to them his answer.
The great men, having heard that cogent letter
Recited by the well-graced scribe, ignored
The sense and counsel of Pírán, and thought
His rede but shallow, while they praised Gúdarz,
And hailed him as the paladin of earth.
He sealed and gave the letter to Rúín,
Son of Pírán of Wísa's race, and bade,
What time they rose to go, prepare a robe
Of honour—Arab steeds with golden trappings,
And crowns and scimitars with golden sheaths.
V. 1209 He gave Rúín's companions gold and silver,
With crowns and belts to those of rank for them.
Rúín departed with his little troop
Back to his host. Arrived, he came before
His sire, as was his duty, and bent low
Before the throne. The veteran Pírán
Embraced him. When Rúín had given the answer,
Sent by the general of the Sháh, he told
What he himself had witnessed. Then a scribe
Read out the letter to the paladin,
Whose cheek upon the instant grew like pitch.
His heart became all pain, his soul all dread;

He recognised that his decline was near,
But took it patiently and silently,
And kept it from his troops whom afterward
He thus harangued: "Gúdarz is obstinate;
His heart is instant with him to avenge
The slaughter of his seventy sons beloved.
If on the past he base revenge anew
Shall I not gird me to avenge forthwith
My brothers and nine hundred famous heads
Lost to their bodies on the day of battle,
For in Túrán there is no cavalier
To gird him like Húmán and Nastíhan—
That shadowing cypress-tree which in a breath
Evanished from the copse? And now to arms!
I will not leave the Íránians field or fell,
But, by God's strength and our sharp scimitars,
Bring down upon that folk the Day of Doom."
Such in the herds of horses as were fit
He brought at once to camp from every side.
He mounted all the infantry and gave
To each of them two chargers fit for service.
Then, opening a hoard laid up of yore,
Began to make disbursements from his store.

§ 22

How Pírán asked Succour from Afrásíyáb

This done, Pírán, about the hour of sleep, V. 1210
Sent to Afrásiyáb a messenger,
Shrewd, well advised, and old, of ready speech,
A warrior, a cavalier, and brave,
Thus saying: "Go, say to the Turkman king:—
'O righteous king who seeketh diadems!
Since first the vault of yonder lofty sky
Revolved above the sad, dark dust of earth

No king like thee hath sat upon the state;
The name of king hath not pertained to any;
None else is worthy of the throne, to bind
The girdle on, and compass crown and fortune.
The Ruler of the world will send up dust
From those that meet thee on the day of battle.
A slave am I and guilty in thy sight
In that I did not follow thy shrewd counsels.
The Sháh hath been much plagued by Kai Khusrau,
And all through me, but yet I am not conscious
That I did wrong; it was the will of God;
What hath been hath been, much talk will not profit.
The monarch, if he seeketh good in me,
Will spare and pardon. Now I send him tidings
How heaven hath been dealing with his slave.
I led mine army to Mount Kanábad,
And checked the progress of the Íránians;
Upon their side a mighty host advanced,
Led by Gúdarz and other generals;
No greater host since Minúchihr was Sháh
Hath issued from Írán against Túrán.
They took up their position at Raibad
Upon the mountains. For three days and nights
The hosts faced one another like two leopards.
We did not take the offensive for we thought:—
'Perchance the foe will march out on the plain.'
V. 1211 Gúdarz however was content to wait,
And would not leave the mountains; then Húmán,
My brother, that world-conqueror, longed for fight,
And went to challenge the Íránians;
I know not what possessed that lion-man.
The son of Gív came out, encountered him,
And having slain him turned my head with sorrow.
Who ever knew a lofty cypress-tree
Killed by a blade of grass? This broke the hearts
Of our chief men, and happiness was dashed

By grief; moreover noble Nastíhan,
With twice five thousand proven cavaliers,
Departed from me at the break of day,
And perished by the mace-blows of Bízhan.
Grieved to the heart I led the army on,
And went forth shouting to the battlefield.
We fought in force till night rose o'er the hills,
But when nine hundred of the king's great men
Were headless on the field, and of the rest
The more part had been wounded to the heart
With grief, their bodies by the scimitar,
The Íránians gat the upper hand of us.
Their purpose of revenge is absolute,
And I am fearful that the turning sky
Will wholly cease to favour us. Since then
Ill news have reached me and perturbed me more,
That Kai Khusrau is coming with a host
To aid his general in this campaign.
If this prove true the king is ware that I
Can not encounter them unless he set,
With his fierce troops, his face toward Írán,
Take part in this campaign, avert this evil,
And make revenge the girdle of his loins,
For if we perish by the Íránians' hands
None will be left to take revenge for us!"
The messenger on this went like a blast. V. 1212
He mounted swift as fire upon a courser—
A mighty beast whose feet were like the wind—
And journeyed, till he reached Afrásiyáb,
Without a halt for breathing, rest, or sleep.
He came swift as a blast before the king,
First kissed the throne, then told his tale. The monarch,
On hearing from Pírán such woeful tidings,
Grew sorely troubled and his colour changed.
He was heart-broken, grieving for the slain,

Whose hap became to him a lasting sorrow;
He grieved too that his army had been worsted,
And country harried. War pressed everywhere,
The world was strait to him in his distress;
Still, having heard the message of Pírán,
And seeing that his troops maintained their ground,
He blessed the general and showed joy. His heart
Grew brighter. Then he called the messenger,
Bestirred himself, took counsel all that night,
And when at dawn he donned the crown anew
He gave the messenger an interview.

§ 23

The Answer of Afrásiyáb to the Letter of Pírán

The monarch bade the messenger return
To brave Pírán, that man of prosperous counsels,
With this reply: "O warrior famed and true!
Since thy pure mother bare thee thou hast made
Thyself my shield. Thou standest first with me,
And rankest o'er the other paladins,
V. 1213 Still choosing toil in all affairs with all
Thy wealth for me, conducting hosts Íránward
From Chín, and blackening foes' hearts and fortunes.
Prince and the paladin of earth art thou;
A thousand blessings be upon thy soul!
Thy friendship dateth from Pashang and Túr;
The heaven raiseth not a paladin,
The army seeth not a general,
And no sage girdeth up his loins, like thee.
First for thy saying: 'I was most to blame
For Kai Khusrau's escape and his revenge.'
Know thou that I, the king, am not aggrieved,
And never laid the matter to my heart,
So let not thine be straitened for this cause

Or fear disgrace. God will accomplish what
He hath decreed, and needeth not a teacher.
Call not Khusrau my grandson; it is false,
Because his Grace deriveth not from me.
I will not ever be a grandsire to him,
Or take advantage of our kinsmanship.
In this affair of his none is to blame;
Nor do I strive against the Omnipotent:
What happened was according to His will;
Why then should my heart be aggrieved at thee?
And secondly thou speakest of the army,
And of the bias of sky, sun, and moon;
But heaven's bias is not all one way,
It giveth sometimes sorrow, sometimes joy;
Be not heart-broken then on this account,
Impose not chains like these upon thy soul.
Thus is it written in respect of warfare:
The sky abandoneth all sides in turn,
It raiseth to the sun and casteth down. V. 1214
To talk about the slain is but to dream;
Forgo not to take vengeance for thy brother;
The heart in anguish for a brother's loss
Will not be cured by leeches' remedies.
Thou sayest thirdly: 'Kai Khusrau hath left
His throne and cometh with his army hither.'
The tidings that have reached thee: 'Kai Khusrau
Is coming from his kingdom,' are not true,
For it is Tús, the general, with his troops
That is upon the march to Dahistán;
May no one ever look upon the day
When he shall outstrip us, for I myself
Will lead the host o'er the Jíhún at dawn.
I will not spare Gúdarz, Khusrau, or Tús,
Or throne, or crown, or troops, or kettledrums,
But so attack Írán that none shall see
The Sháh's throne more. I will not leave the world

For Kai Khusrau, but take him unawares,
And let his mother mourn a headless son,
Unless the will of heaven be otherwise.
Oh noble veteran! God hath suffered thee
To lack for naught; all that thou wouldst is thine
Of men, of treasure, and of might of hand.
A splendid force of thirty thousand men—
Intrepid, shrewd, and gallant cavaliers—
Behold! I have dispatched to reinforce thee,
And brighten thy dark mind, for ten Íránians
Would look but small compared with one of these.
On their arrival tarry not a day,
Deprive Gúdarz of both his head and crown,
Drag off with thine own steeds the very mountains
Whereon he hath entrenched his host, and when
Thou hast the victory be not slack in bloodshed."
V. 1215 The envoy, having heard the monarch's message,
Came to the captain of the host. Pírán,
On hearing, called the troops. The messenger
Repeated all the words, which gave good heart
To all and freed them from their griefs, albeit
Pírán was inly sorrowful of soul,
His heart was full, his fortune soiled, he saw
His king's host shrunk by battle everywhere,
He feared withal an onslaught by Khusrau,
And thus he prayed: "O Thou, the Omnipotent!
What marvels happen in this life of ours!
No outcast he whom Thou hast set on high!
Save Thee there is no world-lord, none abiding.
Khusrau for instance! Who supposed till now
That he would be a king? How turning fortune
Hath helped a self-made man! From withered thorns
He bringeth forth fresh roses, and for him
His sleepless fortune turneth dust to musk!
Do one more marvel: let that noble man
Possess his soul in sorrow evermore!

Between two kings—a grandsire and a grandson—
I know not why this battlefield is needed.
What with two warlike monarchs of two realms,
What with two armies serried face to face,
How can I tell the issue of this strife
And fortune's trend?"
Then wailing bitterly
He prayed: "O glorious and almighty Judge!
If on this battlefield Afrásiyáb,
With other nobles of the Turkman host,
Shall perish in the struggle, and the head
Of all our fortunes shall be overthrown
When Kai Khusrau shall come forth from Írán
For vengeance, and the world be turned to him,
I am content to have my breastplate pierced, V. 1216
And that the Omnipotent should take my soul.
Ne'er may these eyes of mine behold the man
That followeth the course that I have followed,
For unto him whose daily course is run
In disappointment life and death are one."

§ 24

How the Íránians and Túránians fought a pitched Battle

Now when the sun spread out its gold brocade
The ocean of the plain of battle heaved,
A war-cry rose from both contending hosts,
And earth shook underneath the horses' hoofs;
On every side the troops advanced in force,
And all the plains and hills were clad in mail.
Both chieftains, both like leopards, mustered all
Their powers for that encounter. Arrows showered
Like rain descending from a darksome cloud.
The world was like a winter's night[1] for murk,

[1] More literally "Like night (in the month) of Bahman."

But what a murk! Its rain was shafts and swords!
The earth was iron with the horses' hoofs,
The warriors' breasts and hands were red with gore.
So many headless corpses strewed the field,
That there remained no longer room to turn,
Or passage for the horses' feet; the earth
Was tulip-hued, the air like indigo,
And waves ran high upon that sea of blood.
Both chiefs said: "If our warriors thus maintain
The fight by nightfall nothing will be left
Save heaven, the world, and God!"
Now when Pírán
Saw how the battle went he bade Lahhák
And Farshídward: "Dispose in three divisions
What troops ye have efficient to restore
The fight, and let the shrewdest of the three
Compose our rear while ye march to our flanks."
V. 1217 He bade Lahhák to lead his troops in mass
Toward the heights, and Farshídward withal
His toward the stream, and raise dust o'er the sun.
As those Túránian chiefs led on their men,
Intent on fight, a watchman of Írán
Sent forth a messenger to tell Gúdarz,
But he was with his army, on the watch,
And when, along the route whereby they came
To fall upon their foemen unawares,
Lahhák and Farshídward sent up the dust
From both the flanks the Íránian cavaliers
Closed with the foe and mixed the dust with blood,
While messengers from all sides came in haste
To tell the paladin, who looked to see
What warriors he had still keen for fight.
His noble son, Hajír, that angry Lion,
Was in reserve with shaft and sword; Gúdarz
Bade him to go to Gív, the army's Stay,
Bid him send reinforcements toward the mountain

And river, and withal leave in his stead
Some valiant man and hurry to the front.
Thereat the brave Hajír girt up his loins,
And sped forth to his brother with that charge.
Gív chose at once a man of high renown—
A warrior named Farhád—and having called him
Committed to his hands the chief command;
Then ordered Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
With ten score valiant veterans to fall
On Farshídward and raise the dust from stream V. 1218
And mountain. Swift as wind he gave Gurgín,
Son of Mílád, two hundred with a standard,
And said: "Lead hence thy glittering spears and maces,
Display thy prowess and assail the foe,
For their supports are broken and their chiefs
Downhearted in the strife."
Then to Bízhan
He said: "O lion-man! a rending Tiger
Art thou upon the battle-day, and now
Thy lion-manhood will bestead thee well,
For thou must fight the foe. Our army's hopes
Are set on thee and thou must take the field.
Spare not the enemy, expose thyself,
The time for battle and revenge hath come.
Go to the centre and engage Pírán,
For all his country hath its stay in him,
And he will burst his skin at sight of thee.
If thou shalt conquer him our work is done;
May God and thy good fortune be thine aid.
Then will our soldiers rest from toil and stress,
Our world-possessing Sháh will be rejoiced,
Thou wilt obtain much treasure and much goods,
And thy prosperity will be assured;
'Twill break the backbone of Afrásiyáb, V. 1219
And fill his heart with blood, his eyes with tears."
When Gív had ceased, his son girt up his loins,

And urged his steed on like Ázargashasp.
Those heroes fell upon the foemen's centre,
As they were lions on a hunting-day,
Bestriding windfoot steeds with outstretched necks,
And satisfied the vengeance of their hearts.
The horsemen and mailed chargers of Túrán
Were scattered by the onset o'er the plain.
What numbers fell beneath the horses' feet,
Their grave the lion, mail their winding-sheet!

§ 25

How Gív fought with Pírán and how Gív's Horse jibbed

When, from the rear, Rúín, son of Pírán,
Observed the onset with its cloud of dust
He issued from the mighty Turkman host
With other nobles, as they had been wolves,
And like a stout pard grappled with the foe.
He struggled but prevailed not in the strife;
Then flung away his Indian scimitar,
And showed his back despairing of the battle.
Pírán the chief with none of his own kin
Stayed at his post amazed. Gív, seeing him,
Wheeled to attack, and of the body-guard
Speared four and flung them vilely to the ground.
Pírán, the son of Wísa, strung his bow,
And showered arrows on his enemy,
While bold Gív held his shield above his head,
And with his spear came charging like a wolf,
But, when he sought to fall upon Pírán,
V. 1220 His charger jibbed. Enraged he lashed his steed,
And seethed, and cursed the foul, malicious Dív;
Then with his shield of wolf-skin o'er his head,
He dropped his spear, strung up his bow and drew it
In hope to pin Pírán's hand to his shield.

Four times he hit Pírán's breast, thrice his steed,
But neither horse nor rider suffered aught.
Pírán, on Gív's companions drawing near,
Fought yet more fiercely, charging him like smoke,
To wound him and defeat his valiant troops.
Gív too rushed forward and dishelmed Pírán,
But hurt him not, and Gív was vexed at heart.
Bízhan approached and said: "My glorious sire!
I heard our monarch say: 'Pírán will fight
In many a fierce engagement and escape
The clutch of sharp-clawed Dragons, but Gúdarz
Will take his life at last.' Strive not so fiercely
With him, my sire! His time hath not yet come."
Gív's troops, brave men and full of wrath, came up
Whereat Pírán turned toward his own array
With groans, in dudgeon, and with livid face,
And, when he reached Lahhák and Farshídward,
Said: "O my men of name, brave Hearts, and swordsmen!
It was because of moments such as these V. 1221
That erst I fostered you upon my breast.
Now when the host hath come forth to the fight,
And when the world is black to us with foes,
I have not seen one come before the host,
And battle there for glory!"
At his words
The chieftains' hearts breathed vengeance. As they fared
They said: "If we have not unsullied souls
We need not be in terror for our bodies.
Bind we our skirts together,[1] ne'er must we
Relax our girdles from this strife."
They went,
Lahhák and Farshídward, to challenge Gív,
And brave Lahhák thrust at his girdle, hoping

[1] *Cf.* EHI, i. 537, and the passages there quoted.

To bring him from his saddle headlong down.
The coat of mail was shivered by the shock
Yet Gív lost not his stirrups, and his spear
Pierced the swift charger of Lahhák. It fell
In agony. Lahhák regained his feet
While Farshídward rode up and with his sword
Struck at the spear of Gív as quick as wind,
Clave it in twain and gloried in the stroke.
Gív, when he saw the blow of Farshídward,
Drew from his girdle his huge mace and bellowed
Like some fierce-breathing dragon. With one blow
He sent the falchion from his foeman's hand,
Struck him another blow upon the neck,
And rained a fiery shower upon his body,
Which made his blood from mouth to liver tingle,
Took all his strength away and dazed his head.
While Gív was thus engaged Lahhák bestrode
As rapidly as smoke a wind-foot steed,
And those two warriors with mace and spear
All lion-like attacked Gív, many a blow
Rained on him from those valiant chieftains' maces,
V. 1222 Yet sat he firmly on his pard-skin saddle,
And that contention frayed him not a whit.
Now when Lahhák and Farshídward encountered
Such stout resistance from that lion-man
They said to one another in fierce wrath :—
"Ill hath descended on us from the stars!
He on yon saddle hath a brain of brass,"
Thou wouldest say, "on chest but lion's hide!"
Gív called to his companions for a spear,
And wheeled to right and left in his attack,
But neither of the twain was overthrown.
He thought: "A novel task confronteth me!
The chiefs have come not from Túrán, but dívs
Out of Mázandarán!"
Upon Gív's right

Guráza with a mace of Rúman steel
Came dust-swift to encounter Farshídward.
He rode a charger camel-like in bulk,
And aimed a blow; the wary Turkman ducked,
And with his spear struck at Guráza's belt,
But failed to pierce the mail. Then sword in hand
Bízhan came lion-like to help Guráza,
And smote upon the helmet Farshídward,
Whose prowess rent the earth. Bízhan then sought
To clutch his foeman's helm with his right hand;
His foeman stooped; Bízhan's attempt was foiled.
Behind Bízhan came Gustaham in haste,
And other nobles of Írán withal
Nigh the Túránian host, with anxious hearts
And eager for the fight. Andarímán
Came rushing dust-like to encounter them,
And let fly with the mace at Gustaham
To break his ribs; he parried with his sword,
Which snapped in twain and filled his heart with fear.
Hajír came up to aid those warriors,
And showered arrows on Andarímán,
Whereof one struck the saddle, piercing through V. 1223
The horse's mail, and horse and life grew strangers.
The rider disengaged himself, held up
His shield above his head, and rose crestfallen.
The Turkmans shouted, and their cavaliers,
Who charged like dívs, made shift to bear him off
In presence of the foe. From morn, till night
Rose o'er the hills, the horsemen on both sides
Kept sending up the dust of war, and mixed
The earth with blood until all spirit went
From steeds and cavaliers, and mouths gave o'er,
For they could raise the battle-cry no more.

§ 26

How Gúdarz and Pírán arranged a Battle of Eleven Rukhs[1]

Now, when earth's face turned ebon, from both hosts
The drums and trumpets sounded, and the drummers
Upon their elephants made haste to leave
The scene of action. Both the hosts agreed:—
"Since night hath fallen we will quit the field,
And in the morning choose us valiant men,
Men that would send dust from the ocean's depths,
Men of renown and eager for the fray,
To meet in single combat; thus our troops
Will be relieved and shed no more the blood
Of guiltless folk."
This settled, they withdrew,
And thought that they had made the long road short.
The two chiefs, both perturbed at that last fight,
Turned from the strife, one toward Mount Kanábad,
The other toward Raibad. Gúdarz sent out
His scouts. The troops were galled by mail and helm,
Their hands and falchions were adrip with blood;
They loosed the fastenings, put off mail and casque,
V. 1224 And, with their bodies freed from iron burdens,
Began to feast and drink. Then young and old
Alert went to the paladin for counsel.
Gív said: "My father! what strange hap was mine!
When I had broken through the foemen's ranks,
And come upon Pírán, my charger jibbed,
And would not stir a foot. Thou wouldst have said
That in my wrath I should behead my friend.
Then was it that Bízhan recalled to mind,
And told me of, a presage of the Sháh's
That by thy hand Pírán will die."
"My son!"
Gúdarz replied, "my hand will take his life

[1] See p. 7.

Assuredly, and in God's strength shall I
Avenge on him my seventy sons beloved."
Gúdarz then viewed the host and saw it worn
With bloodshed, stress of war, and combating,
And, grieved to see his noble folk thus wan,
Dismissed them to recruit. They went their ways,
And at the dawn returned equipped and vengeful.
They greeted him: "Famed paladin of earth!
Hast risen refreshed by sleep? Dost purpose fight?"
He answered: "Noble and illustrious chiefs!
Be instant, all of you! by night and day
In blessings on the Maker, for till now
The war hath met our wishes. Many a marvel
Have I experienced, and known this world
As one of changes. Many men like us V. 1225
The sky hath fashioned, reaping what itself
Sowed with delight. I instance first Zahhák,
The unjust, who rose to kingship. How he straitened
The world and yet its Maker suffered him!
Vile as he was, and noted as a tyrant,
The breezes wafted him supremacy!
Thus many years passed over his ill-doings;
Then God sent evil on the miscreant,
The Judge endured no longer his injustice,
And raised a just man to dispose of him.
The glorious Farídún, that righteous Sháh,
Girt up his loins to win the empiry,
Unloosened all the coil of Áhriman,
And decked the earth throughout with righteousness.
From miscreant and ill-disposed Zahhák,
A man vituperated by our Sháhs,
The taint descended to Afrásiyáb,
Who looketh not upon the face of good.
When he enlarged his vengeance on Írán
He left the path of justice, law, and Faith;
At last he slew the noble Siyáwush,

And robbed our country of the breath of life.
When Gív came to Túrán how many hardships
Awaited him! his bed was dust, his pillow
A stone, he lived on game, wore leopard-skin,
And wandered like a madman till he found
The traces of Khusrau and did him homage.
When they had set their faces toward Írán,
And news reached fierce Pírán, he with his host
Sped after to destroy them by the way,
And did what harm he could, but God's protection
Sufficed. Then in revenge for Siyáwush
Our army marched toward the Kása rúd,
V. 1226 And at Ládan, when mighty hosts had gathered,
And at the camisado of Pashan,
How many of my sons were slain before me
While all our chiefs lost heart! Pírán again
Hath come to fight and now confronteth us,
But feeling weak he will procrastinate
By ruse and parle till reinforcements come.
Now he is challenging our chiefs to combat,
And we must be prepared, for if we show
Unreadiness or weakness he will find
Excuse of some sort to avoid a battle.
If they will fight us let us send the dust
Out of their men of name; and if Pírán
Will keep his word and meet us on the field
I swear to you that I will fight and give,
White-headed as I am, my body up
For slaughter in the presence of our troops.
I and the brave Pírán, Rúín, and Gív,
Will quit ourselves like men, for none abideth
For ever here, our fame alone will stay,
And best it is to leave a lofty name,
Since death will fling its lasso at us all;
The end is one to die or to be slain,
We can but little trust the turning sky;

And by the self-same token do ye likewise,
Armed with your lances and man-slaying swords,
Gird, all of you of any name, your loins
For vengeance, for our foemen's fortune falleth,
And we must strike at once. Húmán who fought
With brave Bízhan had no peer in Túrán;
But since when fortune turned he was o'erthrown,
Beheaded wretchedly, and rolled in blood,
We need not fear them or withdraw ourselves.
If single combat pleaseth not Pírán, V. 1227
And he shall lead his army forth like dust,
We too must go forth like a mountain-mass,
And counter him for, since our foes are downcast
And fearful, sure am I that we shall gain
The mastery and make them reek to heaven."

The noble veterans blessed him, saying thus:—
"O chieftain, true of heart and pure of Faith!
Ne'er since God made the world hath man beheld
A paladin like thee. E'en Farídún—
The ruler of the world—had no such servant.
Thou art the army's stay, the Sháh's chief captain,
Through thee the warriors exalt their helms.
Thou hast devoted children, life, and goods,
And what can Sháhs ask more of their commanders?
All that the Sháh required of Faríburz,
And Tús, he will behold achieved by thee.
We are thy slaves; our hearts are full of love
For thee. If now Pírán shall bring a thousand
Against our ten, see which will turn from strife!
But should he come to fight on plain and mountain
In full force we are all heart-sore for vengeance,
Our loins are girt for war. Oh! may we give
Our lives for thee! To that we all are pledged."

Gúdarz was bright of heart at this, and cried:—
"O paladins of our earth-ruling Sháh!
Such ever is the wont of warriors,

Of noble Lions and brave cavaliers."
He bade the troops to mount and gird themselves
For fight, dispatched sun-faced Farhád to lead
The left wing, where Ruhhám had been, and sent
V. 1228 Katmára, a descendant of Káran's,
In haste to lead the right wing in the stead
Of Faríburz, and ordered thus Shídúsh:—
"My son and ready minister in all!
Be thy place in the rear with Káwa's flag,
And troops to give support to all the rest."
He then commanded Gustaham: "Go to,
Lead for the nonce, assume the chief command,
Be watchful, prudent, and the army's stay."
He issued orders: "Let no man advance
Beyond his post, look ye to Gustaham,
And be both night and day upon the saddle."
A cry rose midst the host, the soldiers mourned,
And hastened to Gúdarz, dust on their heads,
Because their leader with his hoary hair
Had girt his loins, and went to fight in person.
Gúdarz called Gustaham, gave him advice,
And said to him: "Be thou a trusty guard
Against the foe, be watchful night and day
In mail and ready for attack, unhelm not,
For, if thou shalt begin to be remiss,
Sleep will assail thee, and the sleepless foe
Will fall upon thee while thy head is nodding.
Maintain a watchman on the mountain-top,
And let the soldiers feel themselves secure.
If from Túrán by night and unawares
They fall on us by way of ambuscade
Thou must display the valour of a man
And warrior's prowess. Should ill tidings come
About us from the army of Túrán—
That they are slaying us upon the field,
And bearing to Túrán our trunkless heads—

Avoid a battle and abide three days,
For on the fourth will come the famous Sháh
To help with Grace and power."
Gustaham
Received the proffered counsels and, resolved
To act with loyalty, this answer gave:—
"I will obey thy bidding like a slave."

V. 1229

§ 27

How Pírán harangued his Men of Name

Since that last fight disastrous to Túrán
The troops were sorry and dispirited,
Sons with wan cheeks lamented for their sires,
And brothers were in grief for brothers slain;
Thus were they full of mourning and in dudgeon:
High heaven loured above them. When Pírán
Perceived that all his host was as a flock
Rent by a ravening wolf he called the chiefs,
And spake at large: "Experienced warriors,
Worn, young and old alike, with combating!
What majesty, what rank and dignity,
Are yours in presence of Afrásiyáb!
Ye have a name for glory and success,
Ye had the world at will, but now, because
Defeated once, ye will not fight at all!
Know that if we retreat in cowardice
The lusty leaders of Írán will come
With massive maces in pursuit, and lord
And liege see none of us alive again.
Now put away these terrors from your hearts,
And bear your griefs with equanimity.
There is a saying current with archmages:—
'It is the part of God to conquer always.'
As for the world 'tis full of ups and downs,

V. 1230

And such that we walk fearfully therein.
This host that now attacketh fled from us
Erewhile. Let all of you that have regard
For country and for child, for life and kindred,
Gird them for vengeance on the Íránians.
Gúdarz hath made a compact with me, saying:—
'I will make choice of chieftains from the host,
Then let us set our champions face to face,
Allowing both the armies to repose.'
If he shall keep his compact, and produce
His chieftains at their stations, be it so;
Or if he shall advance to fight in force
We will go forth with eagerness to battle.
Then if we give our heads up to the sword
There is a day for birth, a day for death;
Or if not I will set their heads on stakes;
The turn of fortune may be either way.
I will behead the man that disregardeth
These words of mine."
At once the warriors answered:—
"O paladin of great Afrásiyáb!
Though from of old thou hast had throne and treasure
Still hast thou chosen travail for our sakes,
Girt up thy loins before us like a slave,
And givest son and brother to be slain.
Why then should we, thy slaves, avert our heads?"
They spake and left the presence of Pírán,
And every one made ready for the fray.
They spent the livelong night in taking order
For all things as their prudent chief had bidden.
At dawn the sound of trump and pipe arose
Before his tent-enclosure, and the chiefs
Were in the saddle with their bows and arrows.
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth maketh for itself
An iron veil of horseshoes." Then Pírán
V. 1231 Said to Lahhák and Farshídward: "Great chiefs!

The safety of the army of Túrán
Must be your care upon this battlefield.
Set ye a watchman on the mountain-top
To watch by day and count the stars. If ill
Should come upon us from the turning sky,
And it shall wholly cease to favour us,
Be ye not hasty to engage in battle,
But fall back swift as smoke upon Túrán,
Since none, or few, except yourselves are left
Of Wísa's seed, for all the rest are slain."
With bitter tears and heart-felt grief they clasped
Each other to the breast and then departed
With lamentations on their several ways.
Pírán the chief, full of revenge, rode out
Upon the field and raised his battle-shout.

§ 28

How Gúdarz and Pírán chose the Warriors for the Battle of the Eleven Rukhs

Pírán perceived Gúdarz and held a parley.
"Wise paladin," he said, "how many souls
Thou torturest! But will it benefit
The soul of Siyáwush to cause Túrán
To reek? His soul is with the good in heaven;
Now that he resteth why not rest thyself?
Two armies hast thou flung upon each other
Like elephants beheaded. All the troops
Of two realms have been slaughtered, and 'tis time
For thee to quit the battlefield. The world
Is void of men. We battle coldly. Why
Must thou destroy the guiltless? Let us make
A pact. If thou desirest so revenge V. 1232
Advance thy soldiers from the mountain-foot,
And come thyself before them; then perchance

Thou wilt attain the vengeance that thou seekest.
We—thou and I—will wheel upon this field
Of battle and the others in like manner,
And those of us who gain the victory
Shall sit on thrones with every wish fulfilled.
If I shall perish by thy hand forbear
Revenge upon the soldiers of Túrán,
Who shall submit to thy commands and give
Their chiefs as hostages for their good faith;
But shouldst thou perish by this hand of mine,
Together with the nobles of thy host,
I fight not with thy troops, and they have naught
To fear from me."

Gúdarz, on hearing, marked
How fortune darkened all Pírán's endeavours,
First offered praises to the Omnipotent,
Then, calling to his mind the noble Sháh,
Made answer: "I have heard thee, famous chief!
Throughout. In that way did Afrásiyáb
Get profit from the blood of Siyáwush—
Speak out, turn not away—when they cut off
His head as 'twere a sheep's what time his heart
Was full, his liver pierced? Afrásiyáb
Thereafter sent a cry up from Írán
With all his slaying, raiding, strife, and turmoil.[1]
'Twas on thine oath that Siyáwush relied,
And lightly didst thou give him to the wind;
Then when my son approached thee afterward
Thou didst reject my counsel, and make ready
In fiery haste for war. My prayer hath been,
Both publicly and privily, to Him,
Who ruleth o'er the world, that I some day
Might meet thee in the fight; and now that thou
Hast come there is no room for tarrying,
So let us twain, with our hoar heads, contend

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii., p. 363.

Upon this battlefield. Do thou now choose
A band of champions to encounter mine,
Experienced chiefs with maces, swords, and lances,
And let them strive together till they bring V. 1233
Their foemen's heads to dust."
The Turkman chief
Made ready and chose out ten cavaliers,
Who sped forth from the centre to the place
Of combat, where no eyes were watching them.
This was the compact made between the chiefs—
That every Turkman warrior should encounter
One from Írán. They matched Gív with Gurwí
As peers in strength and pluck—Gurwí, the son
Of Zira, whom of all the foe the Sháh
Most loathed, Gurwí who, seizing by the beard
The spotless Siyáwush, beheaded him.
With Faríburz, the son of Kai Káús,
Kulbád, the son of Wísa, hastened out,
Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, went with Bármán[1]
In company but as antagonists,
Guráza went with Siyámak, fierce Lion
With snorting Crocodile. The old Gurgín,
A Lion too, went with Andarímán.
Rúín the brave, who robbed the world of lustre
In fight, went with Bízhan, the son of Gív,
Akhást with Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
And Barta with Kuhram, the good at need,
While Furúhil came forth with Zangula
With all speed from the centre of the host.
Hajír and Sipahram, as 'twere two dívs,
Sent up the war-cry on the battlefield.
Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, paired with Pírán,
And all were ready for revenge and strife.
The generals, as much opposed by duty
As by religion, were athirst for blood,

[1] *Id.* p. 119.

And sware together not to quit the field
V. 1234 Till one of them had proved victorious.
Between the armies and commanding them
There were two hills, the one was toward Írán,
The other toward Túrán, and to the plain
Betwixt them went the lucky and the luckless.
Gúdarz said: "Let each warrior and man
Of blood that conquereth his Turkman foe
Bring from the spot his banner to this hill."
Pírán, the chieftain, had his standard raised,
And gave like orders, on the other height.
Then they descended to the level ground,
With girdles tightly girt for shedding blood,
And with their lassos, falchions, bows, and arrows,
Essayed all modes of fight. As for the Turkmans—
Those gallant chieftains—had a mountain faced them
They would have levelled it anon, so well
They plied their heavy maces, swords, and shafts,
And yet their hands were slack, for God had barred
The door of might against them, they were trammelled
Within a net of bale for having shed
Much blood without just cause, their chargers jibbed,
And thou hadst said of them: "Their feet are hobbled."
Among the Turkmans everything went wrong
Because their day was over, and their blood
Quaked. Thus the Maker of the world ordained,
And thou hadst said: "Earth hath them in its grip."
With all the manhood that they had they strove
'Gainst fortune for the honour of their throne,
And in their fight for sovereignty surrendered
Their heads without reserve for fame and glory.
Both sides came rushing to the battlefield,
And strove together, yet Pírán the chief
Knew inly that the evil day had come,
V. 1235 (Such is the process of high heaven above—
The source to thee of grief and happiness!)

But saw that fighting was his only course;
The tyrant's turn it was to suffer force.

§ 29

How Farîburz fought with Kulbád

First, Farîburz, that gallant warrior,
Came speeding lion-like and, having strung
His bow, attacked Kulbád, the son of Wísa.
He wheeled about but, since his arrows failed,
Unsheathed with his right hand his glittering sword,
And clave his foeman's body to the waist.
Alighting he undid his royal lasso,
Secured Kulbád upon his charger's back,
And, having loosed the fastenings of his mail,
Rode to the hill triumphantly, exclaiming:—
"Oh! may our leader be victorious,
And all our Sháh's foes liver-stricken thus!"

§ 30

How Gív fought with Gurwí

Next there went out Gurwí, the son of Zira—
A valiant dív—with Gív, son of Gúdarz.
They fought long with their spears and mixed the dust
With blood till with the horsemen's combating
Their spearheads dropped affrighted at the fray.
They took their bows and arrows and fought on.
Gív purposed to dismount his foe alive, V. 1236
And carry him still living to Khusrau—
A novel present to him from the Turkmans.
Gurwí, when Gív was closing, dropped his bow
In terror and laid hold upon his sword,
But gallant Gív came charging furiously,

While grasping in his hand an ox-head mace,
And, roaring like a mighty leopard, struck
His foeman's casque and drenched his face with blood.
Gív, keeping his own seat, put forth his hand
And, seizing, strained Gurwí against his breast,
Who, fainting in the saddle, fell to earth
Insensible. The warrior-pard alighted,
Bound his foe's hands firm as a rock behind him,
Then, mounting, made his prisoner run in front,
And rode toward his comrades. Flag in hand
He scaled the hill; his shouts brought down the mountains.
The king of earth had given him grace to win
That triumph and he blessed the paladin.

§ 31

How Guráza fought with Siyámak

Next Siyámak of the Túránian host
Went with Guráza to the battlefield,
Both spear in hand and both with cries like those
Of maddened elephants. The chiefs were all
Wrath, rancour, and revenge. Anon they took
Their massive maces, raged like warrior-lions,
And smote each other on the head. Their tongues
Were cracked with thirst, they closed in furious fight,
Alighted, clutched, and raised the dust of strife.
Guráza put his hands forth like a lion,
And as a storm-blast bent his foeman down,
Then dashed him to the ground with violence
That brake his bones; he yielded up the ghost.
V. 1237 Guráza in the same breath bound the corpse
Upon his steed, swift as Ázargashasp
Remounted, took the horse of Siyámak,
And scaled the hill like one bemused with wine.

He held the glorious flag and proudly went
Rejoicing o'er his conquered enemy,
The victory of the Sháh, and that high fortune
Achieved beneath the shadow of the throne.
Dismounting then he prayed to God to bless
The fortune of earth's monarch with success.

§ 32

How Furúhil fought with Zangula

The fourth fight—Furúhil's with Zangula—
Was that of combatants like lions loose.
In truth there was no warrior in Írán
To match in archery with Furúhil,
Who, seeing that grim Turkman from afar,
Strung up his bow and, bending it, began
To shower shafts on Zangula, employing
The horsemen's ambuscade. One poplar arrow,
Which flew with wind-like swiftness, struck his thigh,
Transfixing horse and rider. The fleet steed
Came to the ground headforemost with the smart,
Unseating Zangula whose face was wan;
His head sank and he yielded up the ghost;
Full surely he was born for evil days.
Then Furúhil leaped down, beheaded him,
Stripped off the Rúman armour that he wore,
And made his head fast to the saddle-straps,
Then took with him the steed of Zangula,
And scaled the hill, as he had been a leopard,
With breast and hand and sword all drenched with gore.
He raised the glorious flag, glad-hearted he
At having gained his end triumphantly.

§ 33

How Ruhhám fought with Bármán

It was Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, that made
The fifth assay, and fought against Bármán.
V. 1238 Both seized their bows and shafts of poplar-wood,
The war-cry as of valiant horsemen rose.
Their bows both shivered and they took in hand
Their spears and scimitars. Both warriors,
Both brave, both horsemen, shrewd and veteran,
Fought long till e'en the combative Ruhhám
Quailed, yet by thrusting at his foeman's thigh
Dismounted him and had him at command.
Bármán made off like dust, but from the reek
Of battle came Ruhhám and from behind
Thrust yet again and pierced him through the liver.
Ruhhám trailed him along, rubbed his own face
With his foe's blood in wreak for Siyáwush,
Raised him upon the saddle and there bound him
Firm as a rock, with hanging head and feet
Below the girths, then mounting brought the corpse
Swift to the trysting-place. Ruhhám thus won
High fortune through the Sháh's victorious grace
And throne exalted, and began to call
Down praise upon him and his kin withal.

§ 34

How Bízhan fought with Rúín

In the sixth fight—Bízhan, the son of Gív,
Against Rúín—the warriors rushed forth,
Strung up their bows and wheeled to left and right,
But shot in vain. Then, brazen mace in hand,
Bízhan manœuvred for the vantage-ground,

And, with a rush earth-rending, smote Rúín
Upon the head; his helm ran brains and blood.
There on the saddle gave he up sweet life,
While calling on Pírán, the son of Wísa,
And from the steed came headlong to the ground— V. 1239
An iron body with a mouth all gore.
Ere he had had full joyance of his youth
He ventured all for gain and lost it all.
The world is full of cark and care, good sooth!
And after every rise there is a fall.
Bízhan dismounted lightly from his steed,
Like Áhriman upon his fallen foe,
And cut his head off with a scimitar;
For him was neither grave nor winding-sheet.
Bízhan next with his lasso bound the corpse
Upon the saddle: there was none to mourn;
Then, mounting like a furious elephant,
And seizing in his hand his foeman's reins,
Bízhan took up his own swift charger's bridle,
And hastened hill-ward with his lion-flag,
With rusty blue steel rings, in hand, and cried:—
"In every contest may our monarch win,
And crowned for ever be his paladin."

§ 35

How Hajír fought with Sipahram

Hajír rushed seventh from among the heroes—
A famous warrior and noble horseman—
While Sipahram, Afrásiyáb's own kinsman,
A hero high in rank and estimation,
Essayed fight with the offspring of Gúdarz—
A cavalier unequalled in the host.
They went upon the ground, dark dust-clouds rose,
They fought together with their scimitars,

And made sparks stream from iron. Lion-like
The brave Hajír confronted Sipahram
Right manfully and, in the Maker's name,
And by the fortune of the youthful monarch,
Struck with his sword the helmet of his foe
Upon the crest, and death came then and there.
The Turkman tumbled headlong from his steed
In miserable plight and drenched with blood.
V. 1240 The fortunate Hajír, alighting, bound
His foe's corpse firmly on the saddle, mounted
His own steed, led the other and departed.
He clomb the hill, he blessed his lucky star
And glorious country, but acknowledged still
In his bright fortune and his might God's will.

§ 36

How Gurgín fought with Andarímán

Gurgín was eighth and he went out to fight
Andarímán, one of the Turkman host.
Experienced both and veteran they went
And chose a battlefield. They wheeled with spears.
When these broke down they took their bows, and arrows
Rained while the chiefs held up their wolf-skin shields
To save their faces. Arrows showered like hail
On wolf-skin buckler, helm, and casque. At length
Gurgín shot at Andarímán a shaft
That pinned the Rúman helmet to his head,
And as the cavalier reeled with the smart,
Gurgín shot yet another, pierced his side,
And brought the blood-drops from his eyes with anguish.
Gurgín gat down like wind, took his foe's head,
And strapped it to the saddle. Having mounted
He led the Turkman's charger, and then scaled
In haste the hill, his bow slung on his arm,

By God's strength who had sheltered him from hurt,
And the victorious fortune of the Sháh—
The world-lord. Thus returned triumphantly
He set the heart-illuming flag on high.

§ 37

How Barta fought with Kuhram

The ninth fight was 'twixt Barta and Kuhram, V. 1241
The swordsman: both were men of blood and chieftains.
When they had tried all other ways they took
Their Indian swords in hand. Then all at once
Kuhram turned face from Barta. Barta smote
Kuhram's helm-top and clave him to the chest:
Fear filled foes' hearts at Barta, who, alighting,
Fast to his corken saddle bound Kuhram,
And mounted. Shouting up the hill he went
Like some fierce leopard. In one hand he grasped
His Indian sword, and in the other held
His conquering flag. Head-downward on his steed
Was flung Kuhram. He cried: "The Sháh hath won.
His crown is ever higher than the sun."

§ 38

How Zanga, Son of Sháwarán, fought with Akhást

Tenth went forth Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
Armed from the warriors and mighty men,
And his opponent chanced to be Akhást,
Whom none had ever worsted in the fight.
Both took their massive maces, and their strife
Surpassed all bounds. At length both were o'ercome
With their belabourings. Their Arabs jibbed;
Thou wouldst have said: "They have no pulses left."

The warriors when the sun began to sink,
And when the desert was a-glow like iron,
Were so exhausted that thou wouldst have said:—
"They cannot stir a step." "Our livers now,"
V. 1242 They said, "are scorching; let us stay to breathe
Awhile, and afterward renew the combat."
They went accordingly and led their chargers
Apart, and then securely hobbled them.
Thereafter, having taken rest, they rose
For fight again, and with their lances wheeled
Like fire about the centre of the ground,
Till Zanga got the better: rending earth
He charged and struck Akhást upon the waist,
Then flung him headlong from his steed face-downward,
And shouted like a rattling thunder-clap:
Thou wouldst have said: "He split the battlefield!"
Alighting, Zanga went and dragged his foe
Face-downward through the dust, made shift to lift him,
And flung him prone across the saddle-back,
Then, mounting his own charger, led the other.
Strange! what misfortunes fell upon the Turkmans!
He left the plain and reached the glorious hill,
Wolf-blazoned flag in hand. He set it up
Before his mates with blessings therewithal
Upon the Sháh and his chief general.

§ 39

How Gúdarz fought with Pirán

Whenas the ninth hour of the day had passed
There was no Turkman left on that broad plain,
Their lives had been dissevered by the sword.
Thou wouldst have said: "The world is pitiless!
For one, whom it is tending with all care,
And dowering with days, it will prepare

A night-surprise amid his happiness,
And bring upon him obloquy and stress.
Both first and last we are the wind's possession,
We ask for justice and behold oppression!"
Whenas the Turkmans in those luckless combats
Had struggled fruitlessly Pírán descried
None of his champions left upon the field; V. 1243
The leaders of Írán and of Túrán
Advanced together for their grim revenge,
And set earth's surface rolling as they came,
Grief in their hearts and vengeance in their heads.
The sun paused dust-stayed on that day of battle.
Those cavaliers tried every kind of sleight
With sword and brand, with lasso and with mace,
But Heaven's purposes were brought to pass,
Disaster came upon Pírán from God;
Against that will he had no remedy—
The will that made his steed fail under him.
Pírán saw well enough how matters stood,
And knew that God had caused that change of fortune,
Yet he acquitted him right manfully,
And strove against the purposes of fate.
The two chiefs of the host, those shrewd old men,
Then took their bows and arrows in their hands.
Gúdarz chose out a poplar arrow—one
That would pierce iron—shot it mightily,
And pierced the armour of his foeman's steed,
Which shivered, gasped, and fell. Pírán fell under;
His steed rolled o'er him; his right hand was broken.
He struggled out and rose upon his feet.
Though knowing well that his last hour had come,
And that he could not scape from that dark day,
Yet fled he from Gúdarz toward the hill,
Distressed by running and his injured hand,
And gained the top if so the paladin
Might not pursue. Gúdarz, perceiving this,

Wept bitterly. He feared a change of fortune,
Well knowing its inconstancy and how
'Tis ever prone to tyranny. He shouted:—
V. 1244 "O famous paladin! what aileth thee
That thou dost foot it thus like game before me?
Where are thy troops, O captain of the host!
Where all thy might and manhood, arms and heart,
Thy treasure and thy wisdom? Prop of heroes!
Afrásiyáb's main stay! the sun is louring
Upon thy king, and fortune utterly
Hath turned its face from thee. No room is here
For guile, attempt it not. Since thus bestead
Ask quarter for thy life that I may bear thee
Still living to the Sháh. That conquering one
Will pardon thee because, like me, thou art
A hoary paladin."
"Now God forbid!"
Pírán replied, "God grant that no such ill
Befall my latter end and I survive.
To beg my life were heaviness indeed!
Born was I in the world for death, and I
Thus fighting put my neck within thy power.
A saying have I heard among the great:—
'In this fair world, though many days be past,
Inevitable death will come at last.'
Herein I have no reason to complain."
Gúdarz rode round the hill and grieved to find
No road. He lighted, took his shield and went,
Like those in quest of quarry, up the mount,
His shield before him and a dart in hand.
Pírán descried him, leaped up on the crest,
And, arrow-fashion, hurled a javelin
Which struck the ancient chieftain on the arm.
Gúdarz thus wounded by Pírán's hand raged
For vengeance and sped forth a dart. It hit
Pírán upon the breast, crashed through his mail,

Transfixed his liver, and came out behind.
Pírán reeled and his head became distraught;
His liver's blood came pouring from his mouth, V. 1245
His soul departed to rejoin his comrades.
Thus fortune changeth sides from day to day,
It heareth not what counsellors may say,
But rendeth, having dipped its hands in bane,
The lion's heart and leopard's hide in twain.
Now when Gúdarz had clambered to the summit
He saw Pírán o'erthrown in sorry plight,
With broken arm and heart, his head in dust,
His armour riven and his girdle snapped.
"O Lion," said Gúdarz, "chief paladin,
And warrior bold! the world hath looked on many
Like me and thee but will have peace with none!"
He stretched his hand out, horrible to tell,
Drank of his foeman's blood, smeared his own face
Therewith, lamenting bitterly the murder
Of Siyáwush, then praised the Omnipotent,
And mourned before the just Judge for the death
Of his own seventy well-belovèd sons.
He was about to take his foeman's head,
But deemed the act unworthy of himself,
So raised the banner of Pírán beside him,
His head and body lying in its shade,
And went back to his warriors, while the blood
Poured from his wounded arm as 'twere a flood.

§ 40

How Gúdarz returned to the Warriors of Írán

Meanwhile the vengeful warriors of Írán
Descended from the hill toward the host,
Their slain opponents bound upon their saddles
According to the usages of war;

But since the paladin was not with them
A cry ascended both from old and young:—
V. 1246 "Perchance Gúdarz hath steeped his head in blood,
And perished by Pírán's hand, through old age."
The troops wept bitterly, beholding not
Their paladin, but soon amid the dust
They saw his flag come flaunting from the field.
The drums beat in the camp, dust kissed the sky,
The great men, smiling and rejoicing, went
To meet him. Said the troops: "The paladin
May be returning worsted by Pírán,
Because he is a lion-hearted hero,
And hath been courting combat all his life."
Then, while both young and old gave ear, Gúdarz
Spake, pointed with his finger to the field,
And told how fortune had entreated him,
Then bade Ruhhám to mount and fetch Pírán.
"Bind him upon the saddle, bring him down,"
He said, "from yonder height; and bring besides
His armour and his flag, just as they are,
But lay no hand upon his belt or loins."
Ruhhám departed like a rushing wind,
Laid on the saddle that illustrious form,
Whose mail was drenched with gore, with lasso-coils
Bound it securely and conveyed it down.
Whenas the warriors and haughty chiefs
Beheld Pírán's flag from the trysting-place
All of them blessed the chief of paladins,
And said: "Grand back-bone of the Íránians,
And servant of the Kaians' crown and throne!
Thou hast made both thy body and thy soul
A ransom for the host in victory,
And in defeat."
V. 1247 Gúdarz replied: "When war
Began to press methought: 'Afrásiyáb
Will lead his host to this side of the river.

His troops have been at rest from strife and toil
While mine are spent with hurry.' So I sent
A prudent man and gave the Sháh much counsel.
I said: 'If now the Turkman king shall bring
His host we cannot hold our ground.' Methought:—
'Khusrau will hasten to this battlefield,
And when we take the bodies of the slain
Upon this scene of vengeance to the Sháh,
Just as ye have them now upon the saddles,
He will rejoice and we shall be advanced,
Because this feud of the Íránians
And Turkmans came from these now passed away.'"
All praised him: "Ne'er may earth and time lack thee.
Whate'er we gain we gain it from thy words,
And sun and moon take lustre from thy looks."
They went and bore the slain just as they were,
But forced Gurwí to walk, a lasso bound
His hands, a halter was about his neck.
As soon as they approached the main encampment
The troops turned out to meet their general
With Gustaham the Lion leading them.
He came before the gallant paladin,
Then kissed the ground and offered praise. He said:—
"Behold thine army safe and sound. As thou
Committed'st it to me so I restore it."
With that the watchman's shout came to their ears V. 1248
From Mount Raibad: "The plain is dark as night
With dust. A wondrous din of kettledrum
And clarion ariseth; thou wouldst say:—
'The desert is in motion!' Glittering,
As 'twere the azure sea, a throne of turquoise
Is borne on elephants, the air is glowing
With hues of yellow, red, and violet,
As 'twere a silken banner, while afar
A glorious standard like a cypress-tree

Appeareth, round it are mailed cavaliers,
And earth throughout is violet-hued with steel.
Flag followeth flag, and some are charged with dragons
And some with eagles. In another day
They will be here if thus they keep their way."

§ 41

How Lahhák and Farshídward bewailed Pírán

The Turkman watch upon Mount Kanábad
Beheld that wonder and came in apace;
He said: "Unless mine eyes are dim, unless
This sight of mine be dazed exceedingly,
God hath wrought havoc on the Turkmans, all
Their toils have turned to dust. The Íránians
Have come down shouting from their height, and each
With flag in hand. That of Pírán the chief,
I see, is down, his body drenched in gore,
While as for those ten warriors who went hence
With him, I see them far away o'erthrown,
And flung with bloody bodies o'er their steeds.
V. 1249 Toward Raibad a cloud of darksome dust
Appeareth and the plain is azure-dim.
Amidst the warriors is Káwa's standard,
While in the vanguard glitter blue-steel swords.
The standard of the king of kings appeareth
With trump and drum, and earth is ebon-hued."
Lahhák and Farshídward went to the look-out,
And saw with their own eyes Pírán the world-lord,
Their chief and brother, slain, and with him those
Ten chosen cavaliers, the Turkman champions.
There, in the watch-tower, grievously distraught,
And wailing for their brother's blood, they cried
In their affliction: "O thou Lion, chief
Of Turkmans, and undaunted cavalier!

What do thy greatness and thine uprightness
Avail since thou hast willed to quit the world?
Our foes have everything for which they toiled;
The world hath ended for thee evilly.
Who is there to take vengeance for thy sake,
And who now will ensue thy precedents?
Calamity hath come upon Túrán,
And on Afrásiyáb, and all is lost.
We must behead ourselves and whelm in blood
Sword, hand, and body."
When they called to mind
Pírán's last charge to them they acted not
Upon their own wild words, for he had said
To Farshídward, when challenging Gúdarz:—
"If I am slain abide not with the host,
For earth will prove too narrow for our nobles
When I am gone, and none of wits be left
Of Wísa's race, and if the Íránians
Slay us and bring Írán our trunkless heads
Our army will ask quarter of Gúdarz;
But do not ye demean yourselves so much:
Make for the waste and ye may yet survive."
They went back to their camp, their eyes all tears V. 1250
Of blood, their bodies failing. All the host
Knew that the flock was wandering shepherdless.
All were exceeding sorrowful and wept;
They burned as though upon consuming fire.
They came before Lahhák and Farshídward
With lips that breathed forth deep, cold sighs, and said:—
"What shall we do now that our paladin,
The back-bone of our host, hath left the field?
Whom will he hearten more to gird his loins,
And set an iron helmet on his head?"
They answered: "Who hath limited God's will?
He brought it on Pírán thus to be slain

In battle wretchedly and miserably,
To be beheaded by the scimitar,
And have no winding-sheet but grimy dust,
What while his foemen hale him here and there
With head and mail and raiment drenched in blood.
What was to be hath been—Pírán hath gone,
And all his work and toil have turned to wind.
Alive he was the pillar of the host,
His soul full of affection for his troops;
He was their guardian from the enemy,
And under-prized that noble head of his.
The other world is his for good or ill,
But surely God hath set him with the just.
His care for us surviveth his departure:
He made this compact with Gúdarz, and said:—
'If I am slain upon the battlefield
Thou shalt not punish the Túránian host,
But let them have free passage to Túrán,
Not doing them a mischief in revenge.'
The Íránians will respect the covenant,
We feel no apprehension on that score.
There are three courses open, only three,
So hearken all of you, both old and young!
V. 1251 If ye will ask for quarter so resolve
Forthwith; if ye will make for home set forward
For good or evil; but if ye propose
To fight, then let your spears be dipped in blood.
Discuss we these then from all points of view,
But God's will only can prevail at last.
If ye intend to fight delay a while
Because Pírán asked succour, and the king
Hath raised an army which may come in sight
At any time, and we shall be avenged.
If ye are purposed to return to land,
And throne, the Íránians surely will not hinder.
If ye would ask for quarter from the Sháh

Ye must bestir yourselves and go at once;
Each man of you is master of his fate,
And if your hearts are set upon Írán
Be not enraged against us brethren twain,
For never will we purge our hearts of wrath,
And there hath ne'er been one of Wísa's race
Whose waist the girdle's buckle hath not galled.
Obedient to Pírán's last words we go
To journey through the desert to Túrán,
And if the Íránians occupy the road
We will contend with them while strength remaineth."
Mark what the Turkmans, hearing this, rejoined:—
"Our leader and ten noble warriors
Have been slain vilely thus. On the other side
Khusrau is seen approaching! Who dare tarry?
We have not steeds or arms or feet or wings,
We have not treasure, leader, field or fell,
We have not strength for fight or road for flight,
And have no cause to spite ourselves. If we
Retreat, and if Gúdarz and Kai Khusrau V. 1252
Come after us with elephants and troops,
Not one among us will escape with life,
Or see again his home and family.
To ask for quarter is no shame for us,
Who, great as is our host, are leaderless.
Who now will fear the monarch of Túrán?
Afrásiyáb is but a pinch of dust.
Why was he not like Kai Khusrau, who showed
What great affection to his troops he owed?"

§ 42

How Lahhák and Farshídward took the Road to Túrán

Now, when the host thus answered, those two chiefs—
Lahhák and Farshídward—arose. They knew:—

"'Tis not their time for war, the troops are right:—
A flock without a shepherd perisheth."
They bade the rest farewell and then they took
The longsome desert route, with flag in hand,
With hearts all grief and eyes all tears of blood.
They journeyed with ten noble cavaliers—
Brave warriors and ready for the fray.
Upon the road were horsemen of Írán—
An outpost-party and a gallant one.
The Turkmans charged, the outpost held its ground,
Strife rose unlooked for, earth grew tulip-like
With blood. Of those Íránians eight were slain—
Brave men and Lions on the day of battle—
While of the Turkmans none escaped with life
Except those two illustrious warriors,
Who went—a gallant pair—upon their way,
Like Lions, on their journey through the waste.
Then from the look-out cried the Íránian watch:—
"Ye nobles and ye gallant fighting men!
Two chieftains with ten noble cavaliers
Have issued from among the Turkman host;
They have engaged our outpost and have mixed
V. 1253 The earth with blood. Two Turkmans with their arms
Have ridden off, and eight of ours are slain."
Thereat Gúdarz said: "These must be Lahhák
And Farshídward, gone with their necks unbent
And hearts as yet unbroken by the fight;
If from Írán they journey to Túrán
Loss will assuredly befall our host;
Let him that seeketh honours from the Sháh
Now set upon his head a Rúman helmet,
Pursue Lahhák and Farshídward, and send
The dust up from them with his scimitar."
Not one among the Íránians volunteered,
For they were spent, their reins were galled with iron,
Save Gustaham, in fight a lion grim,

Who said: "O thou who dost deserve a throne!
On going forth to combat with the Turkmans
Thou gavest me the drums, the camp-enclosure,
And chief command. While others sought renown
I had no share. Now will I compass fame
Herein, go forth, and take them in my toils."
Gúdarz rejoiced and smiled on Gustaham;
His cheeks grew fresh, care left him and he said:—
"The sun hath given thee a happy fortune!
A Lion thou, thy prey the onager.
Go forth, God give to thee His help, and may
Three hundred like Lahhák become thy prey."

§ 43

How Gustaham pursued Lahhák and Farshídward

Then Gustaham put on his mail, farewelled
Such warriors as he saw, and hurried forth
To fight those two proud Turkmans, while the troops
Among themselves said: "Evil will befall him."
Now, like a ship at sea, a Turkman host V. 1254
Came from Afrásiyáb to aid Pírán,
But when they neared the desert of Daghwí,
And tidings came to them: "Pírán is dead!
Thus went the combat of the champions,"
They all returned lamenting to their king.
Bízhan, informed that Gustaham had gone
To fight against Lahhák and Farshídward,
Thought: "If he reach Daghwí they must not send
The dust up from him on the day of battle."
Then with heart wrung with grief for Gustaham
He went, like lion grim, to seek his grandsire,
And, seeing him, spake loudly and at large:—
"O paladin! it sorteth ill with wisdom
Thus to surrender every man of name

In thy command to wanton massacre,
And make the turning sky responsible!
Two lusty warriors of the Turkman host
Have hurried on their way like lions. Both
Are braver than Pírán or than Húmán,
And nobles of their land by native worth.
Now Gustaham hath gone to fight the two!
He must not be defeated. All our joy
Will turn to grief if from our host we lose
That lion-man."
On hearing this, Gúdarz,
Perceiving his distress, mused much and long,
Took the same view and told the warriors:—
"Whoever is in quest of name and rank,
Let him go after Gustaham with speed
To give him aid against his enemies."
None of the company returned an answer,
None cared for him and none was rested yet.
V. 1255 Said to Gúdarz Bízhan: "Except myself
None of the warriors will succour him,
For no one is aweary of his life.
I must depart myself since at his case
My heart is full of grief, my face of tears."
Gúdarz replied to him: "O lion-man,
Unused as yet to this world's heat and cold!
Dost not thou see that we are conquering?
Rush not upon this enterprise, my son!
For Gustaham will triumph and behead them.
Abide and I will send a cavalier,
Like lion grim, to help him in the fight,
And lay upon the dust his foemen's heads."
"O prudent, wise, and ardent paladin!"
Bízhan replied, "he must be helped while living,
Not when the foes are sending up his dust.
When he is slain, and all is over with him,
What profit will it be to send a horseman

To find him slaughtered and his head in blood?
So order me, who am concerned for him,
To gird my girdle tightly in this quest;
But if thou sayest: 'Go not,' I forthwith
Will cut my head off with this watered steel,
For if he dieth I will not survive;
So seek no pretext for refusing me."
Gúdarz replied: "Go after him at once
If thou hast no regard for thine own life.
Since thou art still insatiate of fight
Gird thee and stay not e'en to scratch thy head.
Good sooth! thy heart is cold toward thy sire
Though thou dost burn his liver constantly;
Thou wilt but cover thine own head with dust;
How much I dread thy passion for the fray!"
Bízhan bent, kissed the ground, and went his way.

§ 44

How Bízhan followed after Gustaham

Bízhan girt up his loins, armed him for strife, V. 1256
And put the saddle on his steed Shabrang.
News reached Gív of the doings of Bízhan,
How he had armed to fight with Farshídward.
Gív sprang up, mounted swift as smoke his Arab,
Went to Bízhan, seized on his bridle, dragged him
Aside, and said: "How often have I warned thee
In vain! Thou givest me no moment's pleasure.
Now whither wouldst thou hasten? Grieve me not
By every act. What wouldst thou have me do,
Hoar as I am? I have no son but thee,
And know no happiness when thou art sorry.
Ten days and nights hast thou been in the saddle,
And borne the vengeful sword against the foe;
Thou hast been galled by coat of mail and helm:

Wilt thou be never satiate with blood?
Since He that giveth good hath given us
The victory, we ought to rest with joy.
Why stake thy head before its time? Too much
Thou trustest to thy sword. None is successful
In this world save he seek his proper end.
Forestall not fate so fast, for even now
Its eye is on us; for thy father's sake
Abandon this; thou shouldst not vex my heart."
"O full of wisdom!" thus Bízhan replied,
"Men think not thus of thee. Hast thou forgotten
The past? Why fondly turn away from justice?
Know, father! what thou sayest is unjust.
Hast thou forgot the battle of Ládan,
V. 1257 The deeds which Gustaham and I performed,
And our companionship in weal and woe?
If in God's providence the evil day
Is imminent no caution will avert
What is decreed, and further talk is useless.
So strive not to divert me from the fight,
For I have pledged my life to this emprise."
Then Gív: "If thou art fixed it will be best
For us to fare o'er hill and dale together,
And I will give thee aid in everything."
"Now God forbid that we three warriors,"
Bízhan said, "of the chiefs of royal race
Should chase two craven Turkmans all that way!
So by our bright-souled monarch's life and head,
By that famed paladin my grandsire's life,
And by the blood of Siyáwush, return,
And let me go. I will not do thy bidding,
Because thou sayest: 'Turn away from fight.'"
Gív, hearing this, relented and bestowed
His blessing on his son, then left him, saying:—
"Go conquering and come again with joy,
Heart-easèd, having bound the hands of evil."

Bízhan made haste to follow Gustaham
Lest ill should come upon him from Túrán.
Now when Lahhák and Farshídward had passed
The river, speeding onward like the dust,
They journeyed in an hour seven leagues,
And felt in safety from the Íránian host.
They caught sight of a forest and a stream—
A shady resting-place for warriors.
Inside the wood were lions, fowl, and game,
Trees overhead with grass and stream below.
They halted there to hunt, and being thirsty
Went to the stream, but still they needed meat, V. 1258
For grief and joy stay not the appetite.
They went among the pastures, dropped much game,
Then lit a fire and, having eaten kabáb,
Went to the stream. There Farshídward kept watch,
Lahhák reposed. Bright is no warrior's day
Whene'er he hath been worsted in the fray.

§ 45

How Lahhák and Farshídward were slain by Gustaham

Now Gustaham meanwhile was drawing nigh
The spot. His charger smelt the other steeds,
Began to neigh, and hurried on apace.
The charger of Lahhák by that same token
Neighed back again as though it had been mad,
While Farshídward came rushing to Lahhák,
And roused him from sweet slumber, saying thus:—
"Bestir thee from thy pleasant sleep and slay
The head of evil fortune like a man,
Because a sage once spake this weighty saw:—
'Whenas the lion from the wolf shall flee
Let not the wolf go in pursuit, for he
Will bring upon himself calamity.'

Ho! rouse thee, for an army from Írán
Hath cut us off!"
Both mounted, left the meadow,
And scanned the plain to see what course to take.
V. 1259 They sighted Gustaham far off alone,
And, having craned their heads and recognised
The foe, spake thus together: "One approacheth.
It cannot be but Gustaham that cometh,
The banner of the brave in hand, to battle.
We need not flee unless to draw him on
Out to the open; there he shall not 'scape
Unless our evil fortune play the tyrant."
Thence turned they toward the plain with Gustaham,
The vengeful, in pursuit, who drawing nigh
Roared like a furious lion, raining arrows
Of poplar, and when Farshídward advanced
To combat smote him on the head—a sword-stroke
That mixed his brains with blood. He tumbled headlong,
And yielded up the ghost. So passed away
That famous warrior of Wísa's seed.
Whenas Lahhák beheld his brother's face,
And knew that he was then at peace from strife,
He trembled and became distraught with grief,
While all turned black to him. His ardent soul
Grew sick of life, he strung his bow, came on
With weeping eyes and shot at Gustaham.
First one shot, then the other. Not an arrow
Fell to the ground. Both cavaliers were wounded,
Then fought with scimitars, till suddenly
The advantage came to Gustaham, who twitched
His reins, charged, smote Lahhák upon the neck,
And brought upon him Doom's Day in a moment.
His head rolled under foot as 'twere a ball,
And all his battles and his warfare ended.
Such usage hath the turning sky above,

Withdrawing from its fosterlings its love!
Wouldst thou its head? A foot will offered be! V. 1260
Wouldst thou a foot? The head affronteth thee!
So hurt was Gustaham, though not unhorsed,
That thou hadst said: "The man will break in pieces!"
Bent down upon his saddle he advanced,
And, as he urged his charger, dripped with blood.
He came anear a spring, saw stream and shade,
Alighted, tied his charger to a tree,
And, having drunken largely of the water
That he had chanced upon, gave thanks to God,
But thou hadst said: "The earth hath bound him down,"
So writhed he wallowing in the grimy dust,
His form all gashes with the scimitar,
And said: "Almighty Ruler of the world!
Of all mine army and my family
Inspire affection for me in Bízhan,
Gív's son, or other famous warrior,
That he may carry me alive or dead
Hence to the host that they may know that I
Have died with glory, and I ask no more."
He moaned till morning and throughout the night
Writhed snake-like on the dust in painful plight.

§ 46

How Bízhan beheld Gustaham in the Mead

Now when the world grew radiant with the sun
Bízhan arrived and roamed the mead to find
Some trace of his lost comrade. He descried
Far off a dun steed like one ridden post.
It pranced and grazed, like leopards at their ease,
With saddle underneath and broken reins.

Bízhan descried the saddle upside down,
The stirrups and the lasso drenched with blood,
A sight whereat his wits abandoned him,
And like a roaring lion's was his cry.
Thus said he: "O my comrade kind and good!
Where hast thou fallen in the pasturage?
V. 1261 My back-bone hast thou broken, bruised my heart,
And as for dear life I have done with it.
What shall I say? Where shall I seek thee now?
What tricks hath yonder sky played off on thee?"
He followed up the horse-tracks to the spring,
And there saw Gustaham upon the mead,
His mail and helmet smirched with dust and blood,
Himself flung headlong down—a mass of wounds.
Bízhan alighted swiftly from Shabrang,
And pressed his comrade in a close embrace,
Removed the Rúman breastplate that he wore,
And took the helmet from his wounded head,
Surveyed his body in its stricken plight,
Saw that the wounds, whence matter ran, were mortal
If left undressed, and that his heart and soul
Were filled with grief and anguish. Scanning well
These wounds Bízhan lamented o'er him saying:—
"O my good comrade! thou hast gone, and I
Have striven but ill. I should have sought thee sooner,
And come upon the scene when thou wast fighting.
I might have helped thee at the time of need,
When thou wast combating with Áhriman,
But now the foe hath satisfied his lust
And done whate'er he would."
The wounded man
Was roused and breathing hard replied: "Good friend!
Grieve not for me; thy pain is worse to me
Than mine own death. Re-helm my wounded head,
And make some shift to bear me to the Sháh.
God grant that I may live to look on him,

And then I shall not fear the approach of death,
For none of us may couch save in the dust.
The man who dieth having won his will, V. 1262
And compassed all his purpose, is not dead.
Next as for these two cowards, craven foes,
Whom God hath slain through me, thou mayst perchance
Make shift to carry them upon a saddle,
Or, if not so, behead them, and convey
Their noble heads and weapons when thou goest
That men may understand about this combat;
Tell too the Sháh, the ruler of the world,
That, not in vain, I gave my head to wind,
But roughed it everywhere in quest of fame."
He pointed out those Turkmans to Bízhan,
Far in the distance, slain, and cast away;
Then faintness seized his soul. Bízhan, distraught
With grief, went to his charger, loosed the girths,
Laid, wailing bitterly, the saddle-cloth
Beneath the wounded man, tore up his shirt
For bandages, and bound the wounds with care.
Grief-gloomed of soul he hurried to a hill,
Thence spied some scattered Turkman cavaliers
Upon the desert, came down swift as lightning,
Distraught by dread that Gustaham might die,
And all at once of those fear-stricken horsemen
Saw from afar two speeding on their way.
He loosed his lasso, noosed a Turkman's neck,
Flung him, but gave him quarter for his life,
And thus obtained a helper for himself.
Thence hasting on like dust before the wind
He went toward Lahhák and Farshídward,
And found them on the ground and drenched with blood,
While at their heads their chargers grazed at ease.
Bízhan saw all and lauded Gustaham
Because he had achieved complete revenge.
He bade the Turkman, who had begged his life, V. 1263

To place those two commanders of the host
Upon a saddle, then like some fierce pard
Returned to Gustaham, raised him like wind
Upon the saddle gently with no pain,
And bade that Turkman mount upon the steed,
And clasp the wounded man about the waist.
The Turkman travelled at an easy pace,
Invoking fervent blessings on Bízhan,
Who rode in pain and grief, all soul-distraught
For Gustaham—would he avail to bring
The wounded man still living to the king?

§ 47

How Kai Khusrau built a Charnel-house for Pírán and for the other Chiefs of Túrán, and how he slew Gurwí the Son of Zira

The day was nine hours old, the sun was leaving
The vault of heaven, what time Khusrau, the world-lord,
Approached in state his army on the field.
The chiefs, the nobles, and the warriors
All went afoot to welcome him, the sages
Blessed him and said: "Hail, monarch and high priest!"
Khusrau was mounted that the troops might see him,
And in return saluted, saying thus:—
"May earth be ever peopled with the brave."
Behind the army like a mountain came
Gúdarz, such was the custom, with his comrades—
These same ten champions, who upon the field
Of fight had sent the dust up from their foe—
V. 1264 And brought the slain whose heads were hanging down,
Whose bodies, arms, and mail were smirched with blood.
The champions followed thus behind the host,
And in their turn saluted Kai Khusrau.

Gúdarz went on his way toward the Sháh,
And lighted on beholding him far off;
Then, having drawn anigh, did reverence,
And wallowed in the dust before his lord,
Exhibited the corpses of the slain,
And told him how the champions had been paired.
Gív brought Gurwí, the son of Zira, running
Before the valiant leader of Írán;
Khusrau beheld him, deeply sighed, dismounted,
And offered praises to the Almighty, saying:—
"Praise be to God, to Him who is our refuge,
And gave to us both might and victory!"
The Sháh stood up while uttering his praise,
And lifted from his head the Kaian crown.
He called down blessings from the righteous Judge
Both on the paladin and on his troops,
And said: "O famous men and fortunate!
Ye are the fire, your foes are only reeds.
Gúdarz the chieftain and his kin—those men
As fierce as fire—have given soul and body,
And ta'en the very life-breath from Túrán.
Now will I share with you my royal treasures,
And will not grudge you e'en mine own right hand."
He then surveyed the slain and, when he saw
The Turkman general, shed tears of sorrow,
Remembering Pírán's good offices;
His heart burned so that thou hadst said: "It flameth!"
With visage stained with blood-drops from his eyes
He made oration o'er that chieftain's death:—
"Ill fortune is a Dragon grim and snareth
Great lions with its breath; none may escape
Through valour, so this sharp-clawed Dragon came. V. 1265
Thou hast been troubled for me all my life,
And hast for my sake laboured strenuously.
This man deplored the blood of Siyáwush,
And in that matter gave offence to none.

So friendly was he yet became a foe,
And filled the country of Írán with fear,
For Áhriman seduced his heart and turned
His rede to other ends. Full many a time
I counselled him, but he misprized my words.
He would not leave Afrásiyáb, and now
His sovereign hath thus requited him!
We wished for him another recompence,
Prepared for him a throne and diadem,
But matters have gone further than we purposed,
And heaven hath turned above him otherwise.
Wrong took the place of love within his heart,
So that his countenance was changed toward us.
He came to fight against you with his host,
And slaughtered many of the Íránians,
Rejected all the counsels of Gúdarz,
Mine own injunctions, and my warriors' words,
Made havoc of his honest heart's affection,
Mixed up together bane and antidote,
And when he hasted from Túrán to fight
His fate was on the javelin of Gúdarz.
He gave up son and brother, crown and girdle,
Arms, men of war, and station, field and fell,
All in the quarrel of Afrásiyáb,
And fate hath come upon him suddenly."

He ordered that the body should be washed
With musk, pure camphor, and rose-water mixed
With spices, and embalmed with musk and camphor,
And clad it stainless with brocade of Rúm.
The mountain was Pírán's grave, and Khusrau
In his affection had a charnel built,
And raised its summit to the turning sky.
V. 1266 Within it there were set up princes' thrones,
Such as befitted men of high degree.
They placed the Turkman paladins thereon
With belted waists and crowns upon their heads.

Such is the world in its perfidiousness!
It raiseth oft and bringeth down no less,
So that the sage's heart must ever be,
At this world's process, in perplexity.
Khusrau then looked upon Gurwí, the son
Of Zira, cursing him as he deserved,
Looked on that loathly face wherefrom the hair
Hung down like dívs', and said: "O God! Thou knowest
The manifest and hidden. Of a truth
Káús had done amiss and grieved the Maker
In that He raised up such a dív as this
'Gainst Siyáwush. I wot not why Gurwí
Should hate that faultless one, but by His might
Who ruleth all and giveth good—the Guide—
I will have vengeance on Afrásiyáb
For Siyáwush and soon."
He bade disjoint
Gurwí with cords and fling into a stream,
First cutting off, as 'twere a sheep's, the head.
"So must I treat Afrásiyáb," he said.

§ 48

How the Túránians asked Quarter of Kai Khusrau

The Sháh abode upon the battlefield
Awhile, employed upon the host's affairs,
Bestowing kingdoms, crowns, and robes of honour
On those that had deserved them; Ispahán,
The crown of greatness, and the throne of chiefs,
Was given to Gúdarz, while those that shared V. 1267
With him the toil and glory of revenge
Had robes of honour equal to their meed.
Then from the Turkman troops still on the field,
O'er whom Pírán had held command, there came
A prudent envoy to the Sháh, and said:—

"We are the slaves and servants of the Sháh,
And take no step unless at his command.
None can escape the providence of God
E'en though he be within the Dragon's breath.
The monarch is aware what men we are,
And for what cause we girded up our loins.
The case of Siyáwush was not our fault,
But Áhriman seduced our monarch's heart.
He is a headstrong man and ill-advised,
With no respect for chiefs or fear of God,
And we have suffered from that day till now,
And washed our cheeks in heart-felt tears. At home
Our kindred is all sorrowful, our wives
And children mourn us. Not through lust of fighting,
Not for field, fell, and throne, have we come hither,
Yet evil hath befallen us herein,
And sires have lost their sons, and sons their sires.
If thou wilt give us quarter we will gird
Our loins as slaves before thee. We are all
Within the gullet of the Crocodile
In that we are at warfare with thy host;
But in our army there are many chiefs
Well worthy of the service of the Sháh.
We are in fault and he is sovereign;
Whate'er we suffer at his hands is well.
We will bring all our chiefs to him, but not
With any thought of strife or murmuring.
If in his heart he harboureth revenge
On us, use warranteth beheading foes,
While well it is if he shall pardon us:
Let him do that which seemeth good to him."

V. 1268 Whenas the Sháh, that noble man, had heard
Their lamentable speech he pardoned them,
And bade them come before him. So they came
At his desire to seek to clear themselves,
And as they laid their heads upon the ground

Their hearts were full, their eyes shed vengeful tears.
Then looking up to heaven the monarch said:—
"Almighty Judge, our Help! these are the troops
That with their heads full of revenge desired
To bring the country of Írán to dust,
That scatter everywhere the bane that biteth,
And fling therein the heads of noble chiefs;
But now the Almighty hath so dealt with them
That they lack rede and knowledge, foot and head.
To Him I stretch my hands, for He sufficeth;
I want no other helper in the world.
In this regard a wise man spake a saw,
When mounting on his saddle for the fight:—
'This charger is a shining throne to me,
The rest is left to sleepless destiny.
In this campaign a crown and throne we seek,
Or else the customary bier of teak;
Or I may fall within the leopard's claws,
Or with my brain replenish vultures' maws.'
Your evil deeds recoil upon yourselves
As every man of wisdom is aware.
I have not washed my hands in blood of yours,
Nor will I aggravate your evil plight.
Ye are in my protection, one and all,
However hostile to my throne ye be.
Whoever doth desire to stay can stay;
He shall experience neither gain nor loss;
And whosoever of you would return
To his own king, I will not hinder him,
For I have no occasion through God's strength
For more or less, for labour or for greed."
The Turkmans, having heard the Sháh's harangue,
Removed their casques and owned themselves o'ercome;
Though warrior-leopards they became like deer.
The monarch of the world bade them surrender V. 1269
Their armour, falchions, spears, and javelins.

Those haughty Turkmans piled up to the moon
Their armour for the steeds and Rúman helms,
And then they set up all around the heap
Their flags of yellow, red, and violet,
And sware great oaths: "We all through life will be
The servitors and bondslaves of the Sháh,
And charge our hearts with love for him."
Thereon
The watchful Sháh forgave them their misdeeds
Completely, and dispersed them out of hand
In various settlements throughout the land.

§ 49

How Bízhan returned with Gustaham

Thereafter from the look-out came a cry:—
"The dust of horse hath risen from the way;
I see afar three steeds, each with a corpse
Bound wretchedly upon it, and therewith
One cavalier."
The Iránian chieftains all
Turned to the road their eyes in wonder, asking:—
"Who is this warrior of Irán that cometh
So hardily across the battlefield?"
Anon Bízhan came riding up; his bow
Hung on his arm; Lahhák and Farshídward
Were flung across two steeds, all blood and dust,
While on another steed was Gustaham,
In pain and grief, borne in a Turkman's arms.
Bízhan drew nigher still. He laid his face
Upon the ground and kissed it when he saw
His monarch's head and crown and lofty throne.
Khusrau joyed at the sight of him and asked:—
"O lion-man! how went it on the field?"
Bízhan then told the tale of Gustaham,

Lahhák, and valiant Farshídward, the plight
And wounds of Gustaham, the fight between V. 1270
The cavaliers, and all things great and small.
He added: "Gustaham hath one desire,
And one not grievous for the Sháh to grant:
He hath a wish to look upon the Sháh,
And then is ready to give up the ghost."
Thereat the Sháh commanded in his kindness
That Gustaham should be produced before him.
Now Gustaham was hurt so grievously
That thou hadst said: "He barely draweth breath,"
Yet at the perfume of the king of kings
The warrior writhed and turned toward Khusrau
His eyes wherefrom he showered drops of love;
The monarch bathed his countenance in tears
Of blood, the nobles wept as they had been
Consuming in fierce fire. Khusrau was grieved
To lose a chief whose head beneath his helm
Was battle's anvil. From Húshang, Jamshíd,
And Tahmúras, the Sháh inherited
An amulet—the hope of wounded men—
And ever bare it on his arm but, since
His heart was yearning upon Gustaham,
He took the precious jewel off and bound it
Upon the warrior's arm, and stroked his wounds.
He placed by Gustaham physicians brought
From Hind, Rúm, Chín, Túrán, and from Írán
By world-wide quest for such contingencies,
Recited over him all manner of spells,
And thence departing to the place of prayer
Much communed with the Maker of the world.
Two sennights thus passed o'er the wounded man,
Who was restored to health and happiness.
They carried him on horseback to the Sháh;
The monarch of the world, on seeing him,
Said to the Íránians: "Through the grace of God V. 1271

We all are fortunate and happy now;
When we had gained the day did not our grief
For Gustaham subdue our mirthfulness?
This is in brief the All Provider's love,
And not man's knowledge or solicitude."
He called Bízhan, the son of Gív, and set
In his the hand of gallant Gustaham,
And said: "Know that good fortune is of God;
So take not any credit to thyself,
Because He ever is the Succourer,
And only He can help us in our need.
If any dead man ever came to life
The World-lord hath so dealt with Gustaham."
To Gustaham he said: "In these our days
I have not seen a helper like Bízhan.
Had he not chosen toil on thine account
Who would have seen thanksgivings such as these?"
The Sháh stayed yet a sennight at Raibad,
Bestowing drachms, dínárs, and various gifts,
While sending messengers on every side
To great men and to nobles with commands
That they should come to court equipped for war,
"For we intend to fight the king of Gang."

Now that the battles of Pírán are told,
The combatings of Kai Khusrau unfold,
And marshal, poet! in thine expert brain
The choicest words to tell the vengeance ta'en
By that impetuous Sháh—the wreak that he
Sought on Afrásiyáb laboriously.

PART VII

THE GREAT WAR OF KAI KHUSRAU WITH AFRÁSIYÁB

ARGUMENT

The poet begins with an elaborate prelude wherein he eulogizes Mahmúd and then continues his story of the reign as follows: Kai Khusrau and Afrásiyáb both resolve to carry on the war with vigour. Their preparations are described. The armies meet, fruitless parleys follow, Shída challenges Kai Khusrau to single combat and is slain. A general engagement ensues, Afrásiyáb is defeated and takes refuge in Gang-bihisht, which is stormed by Kai Khusrau. Afrásiyáb escapes and, helped by the Khán and the Faghfúr, renews the struggle, is again defeated, flees to Gang-dizh, whither he is pursued by Kai Khusrau, again escapes, becomes a fugitive, and finally takes refuge in a cave, where he is made prisoner by the hermit Húm and put to death with his brother Garsíwaz by Kai Khusrau. Kai Káús dies. Kai Khusrau falls into melancholy, persists in giving up the throne, appoints Luhrásp to be his successor, rides with his paladins into the mountains, and disappears. Those who remain with him till the end are lost in the snow. Luhrásp becomes Sháh.

NOTE

On this Part as a whole see Vol. III., p. 8.

§ 1. See Vol. I., p. 30 *seq.*

§§ 2 and 3. It will be noticed that in this part of the poem several names reappear that have been long absent from its pages, *e.g.* Ighríras and Káran. The son of Tús is also mentioned, and it is probable that the Zarásp slain by Farúd in Part I. of this reign is intended. Such names are the common property of different and often inconsistent traditions.

Afrásiyáb's son Shída is also called Pashang. We keep invari-

ably to the former name, as there are other Pashangs—the father of Afrásiyáb and the father of Minúchihr.

§ 12. Afrásiyáb's brother, whose head Kai Khusrau sends to Kai Káús, is apparently the Ighríras mentioned on p. 156. According to another tradition Afrásiyáb had slain his brother Ighríras long before for treachery.[1]

§§ 13, 31, 36, 38. In these and other sections the reader will note that there are two Gangs—Gang-bihisht, in the original Bihisht-i-Gang, and Gang-dizh—due to the existence of variants of the same legend. For Gang-dizh see Vol. II., p. 189.

Mount Ispurúz was the scene of the defeat of Kai Káús by the White Dív,[2] and therefore must be identified with some mountain of the Alburz range bordering Mázandarán, while the sea crossed by Afrásiyáb in his flight from Kai Khusrau can be no other than the Caspian, yet Kai Khusrau is described as sailing from and returning to the sea-shore of Makrán, *i.e.* Balúchistán, so that we may have here a survival of the old cosmogony (Vol. I., p. 71). The sea crossed by Afrásiyáb and Kai Khusrau is called "the water of Zirih," and this expression, like the corresponding one in the account of Kai Káús' expedition to Barbaristán, is merely equivalent to "sea."[3]

§§ 40–44. The old epic story of the feud that began with the murder of Íraj ends appropriately in Ázarbáiján. In Firdausí's version Kai Khusrau and Kai Káús, in despair of catching Afrásiyáb after his flight from Gang-dizh, go on a pilgrimage to the temple of Ázargashasp and pray that he may be delivered into their hands. In the meantime Afrásiyáb has taken refuge in a cave near lake Khanjast[4] (Urumiah) in Ázarbáiján, making it, as the poet says, his palace and his home. Here he is overheard bewailing himself and is captured by the hermit Húm, but escapes by a subterfuge and plunges into the lake. Gúdarz and Gív happen to be passing at the time, and the former is said to have recalled an old story to mind when Húm informs them of the state of affairs. They communicate with Kai Khusrau and Kai Káús, Afrásiyáb is induced to come forth from the water by a stratagem, and is put to death with his brother Garsíwaz. Most of these incidents appear in the older authorities but, as Darmesteter has pointed out,[5] not in the connexion in which they appear in the Sháhnáma. In these the story may be pieced together thus: Afrásiyáb, we are told, made his residence in Mount Bakyír.[6] We learn from the Aogemaidé—a Pahlaví discourse on death—that

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[1] See Vol. i. p. 367.
[2] See Vol. ii. p. 38 *seq.*
[3] *Id.* p. 80.
[4] Properly Chíjast. See DZA, ii. 66, *note.*
[5] DEI, ii. 225.
[6] WPT, i. 38.

this palace was an iron one, underground, a thousand times the height of a man, and with a hundred columns. In that palace he made the stars, the moon, and the sun go round, making the light of day. In that palace he did everything at his pleasure, and lived the happiest life, but with all his strength and witchcraft could not escape Astivihád (the demon of death).[1] Here too he sacrificed a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen and ten thousand lambs that he might seize the Glory that was in the sea Vouru-Kasha and belonged to the Aryan people.[2] Three times he sought to seize it in the sea Vouru-Kasha, stripping himself naked in his desire to seize that Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathustra. But the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan (Afrásiyáb) rushed out of the sea Vouru-Kasha, thinking evil thoughts: "I have not been able to conquer the Glory."[3]

We read farther how the gallant Husravah (Khusrau) offered up a sacrifice behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters. He begged a boon saying: "Grant me this, O great Ashi Vanguhi! that I may kill the Turanian murderer, Frangrasyan, behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters, to avenge the murder of my father Syávarshána (Siyáwush), a man, and of Aghraératha (Ighríras), a semi-man." The great Ashi Vanguhi ran and came to his side. The gallant Husravah, he who united the Aryan nations into one kingdom, obtained that boon.[4] So that . . . the lord Kavi Husravah prevailed over all; he put in bonds Frangrasyan and Keresavazda (Garsíwaz).[5]

Of the god Haoma (the hermit Húm of the Sháhnáma) we read that he offered sacrifice, Haoma, the enlivening, the healing, the beautiful, the lordly, with golden eyes, upon the highest height of the Haraiti Bareza. He begged . . . a boon, saying: "Grant me this boon, O good, most beneficent Drváspa! that I may bind the Turanian murderer, Frangrasyan, that I may drag him bound . . . unto king Husravah, that king Husravah may kill him, behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters, to avenge the murder of his father Syávarshána, a man, and of Aghraératha, a semi-man." The powerful Drváspa, made by Mazda, the holy Drváspa, the maintainer, granted him that boon, as he was offering up libations, giving gifts, sacrificing, and entreating that she would give him that boon.[6] Elsewhere we read: "Quick, cut off then Haoma's portion, gift of flesh for doughty Haoma! Heed lest Haoma bind

[1] DZA, i. 380.
[2] *Id.* ii. 64 and *note*.
[3] *Id.* 300.
[4] *Id.* 278.
[5] *Id.* 304.
[6] *Id.* 114.

thee fettered, as he bound the fell Turanian Frangrasyan (the murderous robber) fast in iron close-surrounded in the mid-third of this earth!"[1]

The original version of the story therefore would seem to have been that Afrásiyáb built himself an underground palace where he offered sacrifice to obtain the Glory of the Íránian race, but vainly. He then attempted three times to seize it by force and again failed. Haoma then captured him in his palace and handed him over to Husravah, who slew him. Firdausí, it will be observed, represents Afrásiyáb's attempt to seize the Glory as an attempt to escape from Húm. Haoma is of course the personification of the ancient Aryan drink-offering[2] and a god of the old nature-worship. It is one of the instances in which such divine beings have become human in the Sháhnáma. Another instance is that of Kai Khusrau himself, in whom a trace of his divine origin is to be found in his passing without death to heaven. This trait is found in the Zandavasta: "Mayest thou be freed from sickness and death, like king Husravah!"[3]

§§ 47–63. The legend of Kai Khusrau's melancholy, his expedition into the mountains, and his attainment to Heaven without having tasted death, has its parallel in the great Indian epic the Mahábhárata, where Yudhishthira, the eldest of the five Pándavas, becoming weary of the world, resolves to retire from the sovereignty and acquire merit by pilgrimage. On hearing of his intentions his four brothers—Bhima, Arjuna, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva—resolve to follow his example and accompany him. Yudhishthira appoints successors to his various kingdoms, and makes a distribution of his treasures. He then once more summons his subjects and informs them of his intentions. "The citizens and the inhabitants of the provinces, hearing the king's words, became filled with anxiety and disapproved of them. 'This should never be done'—said they unto the king. The monarch, well versed with the changes brought about by time, did not listen to their counsels. Possessed of righteous soul, he persuaded the people to sanction his views. . . . Then Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, the king of the Kurus, casting off his ornaments, wore barks of trees. Bhima and Arjuna and the twins, and Draupadi also of great fame,[4] similarly clad themselves in barks of trees. . . . The ladies, beholding the princes in that guise, wept aloud. . . . The five brothers, with

[1] MZA, iii. 245. Darmesteter translates "bien qu'il fût enveloppé d'une forteresse d'arrain." DEI, ii. 227.

[2] See Vol. i. p. 8.

[3] DZA, ii. 327.

[4] Draupadi was the joint wife of the five Pándavas.

Draupadi forming the sixth, and a dog forming the seventh, set out on their journey. . . . The citizens and the ladies of the royal household followed them for some distance. . . . The denizens of the city then returned " to their new ruler and to the new situation caused by the renunciation of the Pándavas. The seven pilgrims meanwhile had set out upon their journey. They first wandered eastward, then southward, and then westward. Lastly they faced northward and crossed the Himavat. Then they beheld before them a vast desert of sand and beyond it Mount Meru. One by one the pilgrims sank exhausted and expired, first Draupadi, then the twins, then Arjuna, and then Bhima; but Yudhishthira, who never even looked back at his fallen comrades, still pressed on and, followed by the faithful dog, who turns out to be Dharma, the god of righteousness, in disguise, entered Heaven in his mortal body, not having tasted death.[1]

On comparing this legend with that of the text it will be seen that, in spite of natural differences of detail, the resemblances are too numerous and close to be wholly accidental. In both legends two kings, after triumphing over their mortal foes in a great war, become world-weary and determine to renounce the sovereignty. In both the people protest in vain. Both kings appoint their successor, whom the people accept. Both bestow gifts and other favours on their chiefs. In both we have the lamentations of the kings' wives. Both journey into the mountains with a devoted band, the number of which is the same in both cases, and both are accompanied by a divine being, for the part of the dog in the Indian legend is indicated in the Íránian as being taken by Surúsh, the angel of Urmuzd.[2] In both the leaders pass deathless into Heaven, and in both their mortal comrades perish. One legend therefore must be derived from the other, or else, and this seems to be the better opinion, they must be referred to a common origin of great antiquity.

§ 1

In Praise of Sultán Mahmúd

God bless the Sháh, the pride of crown and throne V. 1272
And signet-ring, bless him whose treasuries groan
With his munificence, what while the fame

[1] RM, Mahápraslhánika Parva. There is a more accessible English version in the late Sir Edwin Arnold's "Indian Idylls," p. 244.

[2] *Cf.* pp. 273, 303, 308.

Of majesty is heightened by his name.
From sea to sea hosts answer to his call,
The Glory of his crown is over all;
No gold is in the mine, to men unknown,
That fortune hath not reckoned as his own;
And, God assisting him to all his ends,
He spoileth foemen to enrich his friends.
At feasts he scattereth treasure, while in fight
The Elephant and Lion feel his might,
And when he dominateth lands in war
He bringeth Doomsday with his scimitar;
But, whether jewels with his hand he fling,
Or wield a sword, he seeketh one sole thing—
That heaven at feast shall hail him as a Sea,[1]
In fight as sun-faced Lion. All agree—
Earth, water, and the heavenly Fount of light—
That such another Sháh ne'er was for fight,
For gifts and toil, for glory and renown.
Mixed he not love with war he would bring down,
When wroth, the stars. Strong is he, his array
Such that therein the wind is barred of way.
Seven hundred elephants of mighty size
Bring up his army's rear, and his allies
V. 1273 Are God and Gabriel. From all the great
He claimeth tribute, and from every state;
While, if they pay not, all is lost to them—
Their country, treasure, throne, and diadem.
Who dare break fealty with him or slight
His bidding who at feast is this world's Light,
And Mountain with the breastplate on in fight?
Abú'l Kásim! may that brave king—the cause
That freeth onager from lion's claws,
World-lord Mahmúd, who bringeth to the ground
Chiefs' heads in fight—be Sháh, the moon be crowned
By his high star, world without end, forwhy

[1] "une mer *de générosité*" (Mohl).

He is the Adornment of the radiant sky,
At feasts a Cloud bestowing bounteously,
And dowered with wisdom, justice, and renown.
May this world never lack his head and crown.
He hath host, courage, minister, and treasure,
And one to him are fight and scenes of pleasure.
O'er all the world one carpet hath been placed—
His token nevermore to be effaced—
And on it are a cushion and a seat—
For Fazl, son of Ahmad, a man replete
With justice, prudence, rede, and godly fear;
No Sháh before had such a minister.
In his hands is the peace of all the state,
For he is good and chief of all the great,
Frank-spoken, with clean hands and single heart;
To serve God and his sovereign is his part.
With this wise, upright minister for friend
My far-extending labour reached its end.
I framed this story of the days of yore,
Selected from the book of men of lore,
That it in mine old age might yield me fruit,
Give me a crown, dínárs, and high repute,
But saw no bounteous world-lord; there was none
Who added to the lustre of the throne.
I waited for a patron patiently—
One whose munificence required no key,
A Guardian of the Faith and crown, a Light V. 1274
To make the crown and ivory throne more bright,
Strong in the battles of the brave, acute
In why and wherefore, one to bring to fruit
The bough of Faith and wisdom, and confute
By mere conjecture other sages' lore,
Should think no ill and rest in God secure.
While three score years and five were passing by,
Like spring-winds o'er the desert, poverty
And toil were mine; next year like one bemused

I leaned upon a staff, my hands refused
The rein, my cheeks grew moon-like pale, my beard
Lost its black hue and camphor-like appeared,
Mine upright stature bent as age came on,
And all the lustre of mine eyes was gone.
When I was fifty-eight, and when in truth
I still felt young though I had lost my youth,
A proclamation reached mine ears at last
Whereat care aged and all my troubles pass'd.
It ran: "Ye men of name who long to find
Some trace of Farídún still left behind!
See bright-souled Farídún alive again
With earth and time for bondslaves. He hath ta'en
The world by justice and by largessings,
And is exalted o'er all other kings.
Bright are the records of his earlier day,
And may he flourish, fruit and root, for aye!"
Now since that proclamation reached mine ear
I wish not any other sound to hear;
In his name have I fashioned this my lay,
And may his end be universal sway,
For he—this lord of sword and crown and throne—
Will be mine aid now that my youth hath gone.
I ask of God almighty and most high
That I so long may 'scape calamity
That in the world-king's name I may tell o'er
These tales, omitting naught of ancient lore;
V. 1275 Then let my worthless corpse be dust, but rise
My quick soul to the mines of Paradise.
The righteous judge and bounteous lord of earth,
In whom it seeth every kind of worth,
The lord of Chín, the lord of Hindústán,
Lord of Írán and country of Túrán,
The lord of splendour and exalted aim,
Beyond the reach of calumny and blame,
At whose voice crocodiles in water crack

Their skins, and leopards on the desert-track,
Mahmúd, the world-lord, like the sun in light,
A Lion with a scimitar in fight,
From every want on earth will set me free,
And rank me high in his nobility.
For ever may his throne endure, and still
May fortune turn according to his will!
At feasts what are dínárs to him but dust?
His bounty causeth not his heart distrust.
Bold is the man that praiseth him, I wis
Such praisers do not know what praising is,
Because the world's king passeth thought. 'Tis his
As Jupiter's own diadem to be.

I have endured, O king! a slavery
That some memorial may be left of me.
The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry.
As years pass o'er the tale that I have writ
Each man possessed of wisdom reading it
Shall bless the world-lord Sháh and say: "May none
Behold unfilled by him the royal throne!"

His own achievements celebrate his name,
And all the world is witness to his fame.
For me, I cannot offer praises meet,
But I will laud the dust upon his feet.
May this age live for him alone and may
His fortune be illumed by wisdom's ray,
As merry be his heart as jocund spring,
May time no scath upon his person bring
May he be all his people's hearts' delight, V. 1276
Victorious ever, and a man of might.
So long as round the earth the heaven shall spin,
And Jupiter pursue its course therein,
May he continue in his grace and pride—

No evil eye, no want unsatisfied!
I now resume mine old-world legendry
From true traditions. As time's course I see
I need none other to admonish me.
The combatings of Kai Khusrau arise
Before me: ye must hear my witcheries,
For I shall shower pearls as I descant,
And in among the rocks my tulips plant,
Now have I got a theme long known to me,
Such that the marrow of my speech 'twill be.
O thou who lookest on a bygone age!
Joy sometimes filleth thee and sometimes rage,
And wondrous 'tis how many novel smarts
Yon turning sky reserveth for our hearts!
One's lot throughout his years is grief and fret,
And he must taste of sorrow and regret;
Another's portion is all honey, sweet,
Indulgence, luxury, and lofty seat;
Another hath to walk a treacherous way,
Whiles up, whiles down. Such fosterage we meet
From fortune, but the thorn-prick will out-stay
The blushing of its rose, and at three score
The hand should be withheld from grasping more,
While to survive to three score years and ten
'Neath heaven's vicissitudes is not for men,
Or if, worse hap! one live so many years,
Existence then is but a cause for tears.
If three score years were but a fishing seine[1]
A wise man would not seek escape in vain,
But through the turning sky or through the net
Spread by the sun and moon I cannot get.
V. 1277 A king may labour and deny himself
The gust of vengeance and delight of pelf,
Yet must he pass hence to the other land,
And leave his toils behind just as they stand.

[1] The same word in the original means a net and sixty.

Think of Sháh Kai Khusrau, for now thou hast
To treat as new the doings of the past.
He, having slain his grandsire, passed away;
The world peruseth not his grants to-day.
This Wayside Inn doth ever treat us so;
Use thine endeavours to escape its woe.

§ 2

How Kai Khusrau arrayed his Host against Afrásiyáb

The warfare of Gúdarz and of Pírán
Being ended, the victorious Sháh prepared
For war again, and chiefs with countless troops
Flocked from all sides; the sound of clarions
Arose. They pitched the camp upon the plain,
And set upon an elephant a throne
Of turquoise, and the world's face grew like Nile.
The Sháh sat throned and crowned, from plain and court
Shouts rose, no room was left to move on waste
Or sleep in city. When the noble Sháh,
Thus seated, dropped the ball within the cup,
And girt his loins, there was tarrying
Throughout the realm save at the great king's gate,
Such was his ordinance for all the kingdom.
Of those whom he had strictly charged, and sent
Out to the marches, with Luhrásp and Rustam,
The strong of hand, who could despoil the deep
Of crocodiles, and with far-famed Ashkash, V. 1278
The paladin, approven, great, and ardent,
He bade the efficient to return to court.
He oped his treasury to pay the troops,
Spake often of the spirit of his sire,
Chose envoys fluent, shrewd, and well advised,
And sent this letter in the ancient tongue
To all the chiefs and nobles: "Kai Khusrau,

The victor, seated on his elephant,
Hath dropped the ball; the land is like the Nile.
Let there be neither rest nor sleep for you,
But only vengeance on Afrásiyáb."
When all the men of leading in the realm
Had read the letter of the Sháh a shout
Ascended from the warriors of the world,
The earth began to heave as 'twere the sea,
The chieftains out of all the provinces
Marched court-ward with their troops, and when a host
Had formed war-worthy he inspected it,
And drew it up as on the field of battle.
He chose out thirty thousand cavaliers,
Who drew the sword, among those famous troops
To occupy with him the army's centre,
And bathe their hands in blood in every fight.
He further chose three persons from the host,
Great men and prudent, having forms of brass;
The three were Rustam, that great paladin,
Gúdarz, the ancient, cunning Wolf, and Tús,
The paladin, who wore the golden boots,
And had the custody of Káwa's standard.
V. 1279 On his right hand the Sháh placed Tús, with whom
Were Manúshán and well advised Khúzán—
Both kings in Párs and helmed with helms of gold.
Beyond these were Árash—a Fire in fight—
And king Gúrán—the Lustre of the host—
The one the monarch of the Khúzíans,
And fortunate in battle-time, the other
King of Kirmán, impetuous in strife—
Sabbákh, the wary monarch of Yaman,
Íraj of lion-heart—an Elephant
For bulk—who was the ruler of Kábul,
A worldlord and a man both wise and holy,
Shammákh, who was the native king of Súr,
Girt for the fray, and, greater still, Káran,

The fighting-man, victorious everywhere,
The shatterer of hosts, who ruled Kháwar,
A worldlord, wary, and imperious.
All those that held descent from Kai Kubád—
Great men of understanding and high birth—
The Sháh set on his left with Diláfrúz
To marshal them. The chiefs sprung from Gúdarz,
Who plied the sword by night despite the gloom—
Bízhan, the son of Gív, and brave Ruhhám,
Both reckoned by the Sháh among the great—
Gurgín, Mílád's son, and the troops from Rai,
All marched as bidden by the Sháh. Moreover
The scions of Zarasp, who gave new lustre
To glorious Ázargashasp, kept guard
Behind the Sháh with cloud-transfixing spears.
He gave the right wing into Rustam's charge,
Where all the troops were one in heart and body,
For all those from Zábulistán—the chiefs,
And kin of Zál—he stationed on the right,
Retaining for himself the chief command.
Then for the left wing he selected troops,
Like Sol in Aries, led by Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, Hajír, and by Farhád. V. 1280
The chiefs from Barda' and from Ardabíl,
When ranked before the ruler of the world,
Requested that Gúdarz might be their leader,
And drew up on the left. The monarch bade
To hold the way before the central host
With elephants of war with towers thereon;
The earth was like the Nile. Within the towers
He stationed archers valiant in the fray,
And thousands strong, and round each elephant
Three hundred horse—famed fighting-men—as guards.
The warriors from Baghdád who were with Zanga,
The son of Sháwarán, picked men of Karkh—
He ordered with their arbalists to take

Their place afoot before the elephants,
And had two miles of mountain fronted them
They would have pierced the rocks' hearts with their arrows;
No one was able to withstand their shots.
Behind the elephants he placed the footmen
With head-transfixing spears nine cubits long.
They held in front their bucklers of Gílán:
The blood seethed in their livers. After these
Came foot in line with breastplate-piercing shafts
And shields, then warrior-horsemen with full quivers.
Out of the army of Kháwar[1] the Sháh
Chose thirty thousand warriors and chiefs
Equipped with armour, shields, and Rúman helms,
And made that gallant horseman Faríburz
Their chief in consort with Tukhár, the king
Of Dahistán, who scorned all enemies,
And was by birth of noble Dashma's seed—
A family of puissance in those days.
Nastúh was at the side of Faríburz,
Supported by a crowd of warriors.
The great men and the war-experienced chiefs,
Brought from the desert of the Bedouins,
Were all commanded by Zahír, who used
To pluck gazelles away from lion's claws,
V. 1281 And bidden by Khusrau to join Nastúh,
Thus piling up the left wing of the Sháh.
There was a host from Barbaristán and Rúm,
Whereof the leader hight Kishwaristán.
These, thirty thousand strong in horse and foot,
Set forward likewise to the king's left wing.
There was another host from Khurásán,
Men of ambition and experience;
Their leader and their guardian in the quest
Of fame was Minúchihr, son of Árash.

[1] "de l'Occident" (Mohl).

There was a man of name too of the race
Of Gurúkhán—a king and of the seed
Of Kai Kubád: his name was King Fírúz—
A chief, the lustre both of heart and host.
There was the king of Gharcha too who used
To spring on elephants as lions do.
The Sháh assigned them posts by Minúchihr,
And made the head of all their house their captain.
Moreover from Mount Káf the mighty men—
The offspring of Jamshíd and Farídún—
Advanced in all their pride with spear and mace,
Incensed against the offspring of Zádsham.
Khusrau selected thirty thousand swordsmen—
Men of ambition and of royal seed—
And gave that force to Gív, son of Gúdarz,
In whom the marches joyed. Supporting him,
With troops in single and in double file,
Was Áwa, son of Samkunán; his warriors
Were brave and wary. To the right the Sháh
Dispatched ten thousand sworders—gallant horsemen—
And to the rear of Gív, son of Gúdarz,[1]
Ten thousand more brave troops. The swordsman Barta
Marched with his mountaineers amid that throng—
A noble band and gallant combatants—
In Gív's support. The Sháh sent thirty thousand
Picked cavaliers of battle to the left,
All warlike youths commanded by Zawára,
And next selected from among the troops V. 1282
Ten thousand well equipped, and made their head
Káran the fighting man that he might urge
His steed between the embattled hosts as champion.
To Gustaham, the son of Gazhdaham,
The Sháh said: "Be Káran the fighter's comrade,"
And bade the son of Tús to make the rounds

[1] P. has:—"And to support Gúdarz, son of Kishwád."

Throughout the host with trump and kettledrum
To stay from unjust deeds the hand of him
That did not worship God, to see that none
Among the soldiers was in want of food,
And also that no person was oppressed.
He was to ask the Sháh for what was needful,
And be in all the mouthpiece of the host.
The world was full of wains and buffalos
Sent forward with provisions by the king;
His scouts were visible on every side,
He roused the heads of sleepers from their slumbers,
Appointed watchmen's stations on the mountains,
And left behind no stragglers from the army.
To every quarter he sent spies and sought
With diligence to know how matters stood.
Caves, deserts, hills, and plains on every side
Were filled with dust raised by the troops, while rein
Was linked to rein, all necks were craned for fight,
And none was either fearful or distressed;
The Sháh took treasure with him on the march.
On this wise when he had arrayed the host
He sky-ward raised his Kaian diadem,
And friend and foe alike forbore to have
A purpose save the battles of the brave.

§ 3

How Afrásiyáb heard that Pírán was slain and that Kai Khusrau had arrayed his Host

The Turkman king reposed upon his throne
Of ivory on the further side of Jáj,
V. 1283 And of his myriads of troops meanwhile
The more part were in arms, prepared for war.
Whate'er existed on that hilly march,
Upon the trees or growing on the ground,

The troops consumed it all—both fruit and leaf.
The world was bent on death. The Turkman king
Was at Baigand, surrounded by his kindred
And his allies, for all the chiefs of Chín
And of Máchín were present there. Pavilions
And camp-enclosures occupied the world;
No room remained. Afrásiyáb, that wise,
Ambitious man, was at Kunduz and there
He feasted and reposed, selecting it
Because it had been built by Farídún,
Who had erected there a Fane of Fire
With all the Zandavasta limned thereon
In gold. The name Kunduz is ancient Persian;
Thou hast may be some knowledge of that tongue,
But now the name is altered to Baigand,
So light and fickle is this age of ours!
Afrásiyáb was sprung from Farídún,
And was unwilling to desert Kunduz,
But with his meiny camped upon the plain,
Confounding with his host the heavenly sphere.
His camp-enclosure, thronged with multitudes
Of servitors, was of brocade of Chín;
The tents within it were of leopard-skin—
A usage of the Turkman king Pashang.
The royal tent contained a throne of gold
Adorned with gems and golden ornaments;
There sat the monarch of the Turkman host
With mace in hand and diadem on head.
Outside stood many standards of the chiefs,
And at the monarch's portal were the tents
Of those whom most he honoured—brethren, sons,
And others not akin. 'Twas his desire
To reinforce Pírán, but with the dawn V. 1284
A cavalier came swift as dust with tidings
About him, and the wounded straggled in,
Withal lamenting, dust upon their heads,

Each with his own account of injuries
Inflicted by Írán upon Túrán,
Told of Pírán, Lahhák, and Farshídward,
And of the nobles on the day of battle,
How they had fared both in the van and rear,
And how they had been worsted on the field,
How also Kai Khusrau arrived one day,
And with his host filled earth from hill to hill.
"Our troops all asked for quarter," thus they said;
"The flock was frightened being shepherdless."
The monarch, when he heard it, was aghast,
His face was gloomy as his heart was dark,
He came down wailing from the ivory throne,
And cast his crown down in the magnates' presence,
A wail of anguish went up from the troops,
The nobles' cheeks were wan with misery.
They cleared the place of strangers and assembled
The monarch's kin. Afrásiyáb in anguish
Wept, rent his locks, and wailed: "Ye Eyes of mine,
My noble cavalier Rúín, Húmán,
Lahhák, and Farshídward, horsemen and Lions
Upon the battle-day! no son or brother,
No chief or leader, hath survived the fight!"
He thus lamented. Then his humour changed,
He sorrowed for the soldiers, then he sware
A mighty oath and cried in grief and anguish:—
"By God, I will have none of ivory throne,
My head shall have no commerce with the crown,
My tunic shall be mail, my throne a steed,
My crown a helmet and my tree a spear.
Henceforth I wish not feast and banqueting,
Or e'en provision for the crown itself;
V. 1285 I want but vengeance for my famous men,
My swordsmen and my men of high emprise,
On base-born Kai Khusrau, and may the seed
Of Siyáwush be lacking to the world."

While he bewailed those tidings news arrived
Of Kai Khusrau: "A host is near Jíhún,
And all the realm's face is o'erspread with troops."
In grief and wretchedness he called his powers,
Spake of Pírán at large and of the slaying
Of Farshídward, his brother, of Rúín
And other heroes of the fight, and said:—
"Ensue not slumber and repose henceforth;
Our foes have mustered and have come sharp-clawed.
This is no time for dallying and debate,
But for revenge, for bloodshed, and a struggle
For very life. Our task is love and vengeance,
This for Pírán and that on Kai Khusrau."
With tearful eyes the chieftains of Túrán
Replied: "We all are servants of the king,
And will not quit this vengeance while we live.
None hath borne children like Pírán, Rúín,
And Farshídward—the seed of Farídún.
We, great and small, are at the king's disposal,
And though the hills and dales become a sea
Of blood, we have our bodies' length of earth,
Not one of us will quit the battlefield
If He who is the moon's Lord aideth us."
Thereat the Turkman monarch's heart revived;
His humour changed; he was himself again.
He oped his treasury's door, he paid his troops,
His heart all wreak, his head vainglorious,
And gave up to his soldiers all the herds
That he possessed upon the hills and plains.
He chose him thirty thousand Turkman sworders, V. 1286
Equipped for war, and sent them to patrol
Jíhún in boats that none might cross the river
By night and make a foray unopposed.
He sent his forces out on every side,
Employing much resourceful stratagem,
But 'twas the ordinance of holy God

That that unrighteous king should be destroyed.
At night he sat in conclave with the wise,
With world-experienced, prudent archimages:
They bandied earth's affairs about among them,
And settled that the king should send his host
Across Jíhún. The king, who sought a means
To counteract the mischief of the foe,
Then parted all his army into two,
And ordered Kurákhán, his eldest son,
To come to him. For valour and for state,
For mien, for looks, for prudence and for counsel,
Thou hadst declared the son to be the sire.
The monarch gave him half of that great host—
Experienced men of name and warriors—
And sent him to Bukhárá, there to be
Behind his father like a mount of flint.
The king kept on dispatching arms and men,
Provision trains ne'er ceased. He left Baigand
And hastened to Jíhún. The army lined
The bank throughout. Above a thousand boats
Were ferrying for a week until the hills
And plains were naught but warriors. The crowd
Of elephants and troops of Lions made
The passage of the stream a busy one.
Boats covered all the water and the host
Marched toward the desert of Ámwí. The king
Brought up the rear and crossed intent on war.
He sent on all sides speedy cavaliers—
Men shrewd and ardent—and commanded them:—
V. 1287 "Survey the country both to right and left
For some spot large enough to hold the host."
Whenas the scouts returned from every side
They thus reported to the exalted king:
"The many troops engaged in this campaign
Will need supplies and grass and halting-places.
There is beside the river of Gílán

A route with fodder and encamping-grounds
Where men of vigilance may bring provisions
By water to the army. On the way
Are sands and ample room for pitching tents
With palace-like enclosures."
This refreshed
His heart. He heightened on the imperial throne,
A general was he expert in war,
And went not by the words of any teacher.
He ranged the centre and the wings thereof,
The outposts to observe the enemy,
The rear, and station for the baggage-train,
He ranged the left and right. He made a camp
In royal wise, with five score thousand swordsmen
To form the centre, making that his station
Because he took the chief command himself.
Pashang, whose hands were strong as leopard's claws,
Commanded on the left, in all the host
A peerless noble, and unequalled horseman
In any land. His sire surnamed him Shída,[1]
For he was like bright Sol, would urge his steed,
Seize, and pluck out by force, a leopard's tail;
He wont to use an iron spear and pierce
A mountain in the fight. To him the king
Committed five score thousand troops and chiefs
For that campaign. He had a younger brother—
His glorious peer, a warrior Jahn by name,
A potent prince, his father's counsellor,
Raised by his understanding o'er the throng.
His sire gave him a hundred thousand horsemen V. 1288
Equipped for battle—Turkmans of Chigil—
To guard the rear of Shída and not turn
Their heads away though stones rained from the clouds.
The king chose of his grandsons one who used

[1] *i.e.* The shining one.

To cut his collops out of lions' backs
As leader of the right wing of the host,
Which hid the sun itself in clouds of dust.
The cavaliers of Tartary, Khallukh,
And Balkh, all paladins who used the sword,
Had for their chief Afrásiyáb's fifth son—
A famous warrior eager for the fight,
One whom they used to call Gurdgír the valiant—
A man whose sword and shafts would pierce a mountain.
With him went thirty thousand warriors—
Men of the fray and armed with swords for battle.
Damúr and Jaranjás were his companions
In rendering support to noble Jahn.
Their leader was the veteran Nastúh,
Whose own superior was valiant Shída.
Of Turkman warriors thirty thousand men
Marched forth with maces and artillery,
Led by brave Ighríras who counted blood
As water. Next the king chose forty thousand
Whose chief was elephantine Garsíwaz—
A leader of ambition midst that folk,
The chief of nobles, and the army's stay;
The exalted king entrusted to his charge
V. 1289 The elephants. He next chose from the troops
Ten thousand men insatiate of fight,
And bade them place themselves with lips afoam
Between the lines upon the battlefield
To charge the foe dispersedly and break
The hearts and backs of the Íránians.
The rear was toward the east. At night they barred
The road with elephants. Afrásiyáb,
The world-illuming monarch, kept before
His soldiers' eyes Nímrúz as Cynosure.

§ 4

How Kai Khusrau had Tidings that Afrásiyáb advanced to fight with him

Now when Khusrau heard from his watchful spies
About the Turkmans and Afrásiyáb:—
"He hath conveyed such hosts across Jíhún
That neither sands nor rocks are visible!"
He called his warriors and declared to them
What he had heard, chose from among his troops
The fittest of the mighty of Írán,
Men that had tasted this world's salts and sours,
To succour Gustaham, son of Naudar,
At Balkh, and bade Ashkash to lead to Zam
A host with treasure, elephants, and drachms
That none might take him in the rear and frustrate
The purpose of the Lions of Írán;
He ordered next his warriors to horse,
Struck up the tymbals and led on the host,
But marched with counsel, prudence, and no haste,
For that in warfare leadeth to repentance.
The Sháh, when he had reached the waste, inspected
The bearing and equipment of his men.
The army's route was toward Kházm, where sands
And plains were fit for strife, with Dahistán
To left, the stream to right, the sands between,
Afrásiyáb in front. The Sháh in person,
With Rustam, Tús, Gúdarz, Gív, and a staff
Of noble warriors, went round the field
To view the approaches and the pathless waste;
Then, having heard about his grandsire's force, V. 1290
He made his dispositions craftily,
And, having not expected such a host,
So many elephants and men of war,
He strengthened his position with a fosse,

And spread his scouts about on every side.
He filled the fosse with water when night came
Upon the side toward Afrásiyáb,
And scattered caltrops all about the plain
So that the foemen should not traverse it.
When Sol was shining out of Aries,
And gracing all the surface of the world,
The Turkman general reviewed his host,
Struck up the tymbals and arrayed his ranks.
The world was filled with din of trump and troops,
The warriors put on their iron helms.
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth's face is iron, and air
Empanoplied with spears!"
Three days and nights
The hosts abode thus and none stirred a lip.
The cavalry were mounted on both sides,
The footmen stood in front. Thou wouldst have said:—
"Earth is an iron mountain, heaven is mailed."
Before the two kings the astrologers,
Much musing and with tables on their breasts,
Sought out the secret purposes of heaven
With astrolabes to find the favoured side,
But heaven looked on with a spectator's eye,
And left the gazers in perplexity.

§ 5

How Shída came before his Father Afrásiyáb

Upon the fourth day when the strain was great
The valiant Shída came before his sire,
And said to him: "O famed throughout the world,
And most exalted of all potentates!
No monarch under heaven hath Grace like thine,
And neither sun nor moon opposeth thee;
An iron mount would run as 'twere a river

If it should hear the name Afrásiyáb.
Earth is not able to sustain thy host, V. 1291
Or yon resplendent sun thy casque. Of all
The kings none fronteth thee save Kai Khusrau,
Thy kinsman but a base-born miscreant.
Thou didst hold Siyáwush as son, didst bear
A father's pains and love for him, beteeming
No noxious blast from heaven to visit him.
Thou didst distaste him when assured that he
Aimed at thy crown, thy throne, and diadem,
And if the king of earth had spared his life
The crown and signet both would have been his.
The man that now hath come to fight with thee
Shall not have long of this world. Father-like
Thou didst encourage this black reprobate,
Forbearing to consign him to the dust;
Thou didst support him till he spread his wings,
Fit through thy favour for the throne of gold,
And bird-like flew Íránward from Túrán;
Thou wouldst have said: 'He never saw his grandsire.'
Look at Pírán's own deeds of kindliness
Toward that faithless and unworthy man;
Yet he forgot Pírán's love and fulfilled
His heart with vengeance and his head with strife,
And when he caught Pírán as he desired
He put that kindly paladin to death.
Now hath he issued from Írán with troops
To make a fierce attack upon his grandsire.
He seeketh not dínárs or diadem,
Not treasures, horses, scimitars, or soldiers,
But aimeth at the lives of his own kindred,
And that is all the burden of his talk.
My father is a king, a most wise monarch,
And will bear witness that my words are true.
What need have armies for astrologers?
The brave seek honour with their scimitars.

The horsemen on the right are all for battle,
V. 1292 And, if the king permitteth, I will leave
The foe no cavaliers, but pin their helmets
Upon their heads with shafts in spite of fosse
And reservoir."

Afrásiyáb replied:—

"Be not impetuous. What thou say'st is true,
And never should one listen save to truth;
Yet, as thou know'st, the warrior Pírán
In this world trod the path of excellence;
There was no fraud or falsehood in his heart,
He sought for nothing but the good and right,
He was an elephant in strength in battle,
He had a sea-like heart and sunny face:
Húmán his brother was a warrior-leopard,
So was the brave Lahhák, so Farshídward.
A hundred thousand Turkman cavaliers,
Ambitious men accoutred for the fight,
Departed hence all seething for the fray,
Though I in secret sorrowed and bewailed.
They perished on the battlefield; the ground
Whereon they lay was puddled with their gore.
The marches of Túrán are broken-hearted
With sorrow, all men dream of dead Pírán,
And no one speaketh of Afrásiyáb;
So let us tarry till our men of name,
Our great men of the host, our cavaliers,
Have gazed awhile upon the Íránians,
And have not hearts impassioned, grieved, and sore.
The Íránians too will see this mighty host
With all its treasures, thrones, and diadems.
It is not good for us to fight in force;
Defeat will come and we shall grasp the wind,
But warriors will I send dispersedly,
And fill the wastes with our foes' blood."

Then Shída:—

"Sire! fight not thus. First of our warriors
Am I—a brazen-bodied cavalier—
And have seen none who in the battle-day
Could scatter wind-borne dust upon my steed.
I passion for a combat with Khusrau V. 1293
Because he is the new king of the world,
And if he shall encounter me, as I
Doubt not, withal he shall not scape my clutch,
The Íránians shall be broken—heart and back—
And all their projects marred, while if another
Come forth I soon will lay his head in dust."
The king replied: "O inexperienced one!
How should the king of kings encounter thee?
If he would fight I am his opposite,
'Tis mine to trample on his name and person,
And if we meet thus on the field both hosts
Will rest from strife."
"Experienced one," said Shída,
"Inured to this world's heat and cold! thou hast
Five sons before thee still. We will not suffer
These thoughts of fight. No worshipper of God,
Nor army even, could approve that thou
Shouldst go in person to confront Khusrau."

§ 6

How Afrásiyáb sent an Embassage to Kai Khusrau

Then unto Shída said Afrásiyáb:—
"Imperious son! ne'er be mishap thy lot.
Though thou wouldst fight with Kai Khusrau thyself
Take not this present matter in ill part:
Go forth and be the Maker thine ally,
And may thy foemen's heads be overturned.
Convey a message unto Kai Khusrau
For me and say: 'The world is changed indeed!

The grandson waging war upon his grandsire
Must have a head all guile and wickedness.
Was it the Maker's aim to fill the world
With fight and feud? When Siyáwush was slain
The fault was his for heeding not advisers;
V. 1294 But if the blame was mine what had Pírán,
What had Rúín, Lahhák, and Farshídward,
Done that they should be bound to horses' backs,
Blood-boltered, and like maddened elephants?
Now if thou say'st: "Thou art a miscreant,
A villain of the seed of Áhriman,"
Behold thou art descended from my seed,
And castest an aspersion on thyself.
Leave fighting to Gúdarz and Kai Káús,
And let them come against me with their troops.
I have not spoken thus as fearing thee,
Or as grown recreant in mine old age.
My troops are as the sand upon the shore,
Brave warriors and Lions all prepared
At my command upon the day of battle
To make Mount Gang an ocean, O my son!
Still I am fearful of the Omnipotent,
Of bloodshed, and calamities to come,
For many an innocent and noble head
Will be dissevered on this battlefield.
If thou renouncest not this strife with me,
Good sooth, thine own disgrace will come of it;
But if thou wilt agree with me by oath,
And keep it, I will point thee out a way
Whereby thy troops and treasure may be saved:
When thou shalt have forgotten Siyáwush,
And made another Siyáwush of me,
Then Jahn and valiant Shída, who in battle
Turn Mount Gang to a sea, shall be thy brothers,
And I will bid the Turkmans to withdraw
From all tracts that thou claimest for Irán,

And such ancestral treasures as I have—
Dínárs, crowns, horses, thrones, and battle-gear,
Left to me by my father's sire Zádsham,
Crowns for grandees, thrones, coronets, and all
That thou requirest to supply thy troops—
Will I dispatch just as they are to thee.
My son shall be thy paladin, his sire
Thy kinsman; then both hosts shall rest from strife, V. 1295
And this our fight shall issue in a feast:
But now if Áhriman shall so pervert
Thy mind that thou wilt don thy winding-sheet,
Wilt make thine only object war and bloodshed,
My good advice not rooming in thy brain,
Come forth in presence of thy host, and I
Will likewise come forth from my station here;
Let us encounter while our troops repose.
If I shall perish all the world is thine,
My soldiers are thy slaves, my sons thy kin,
While if I slay thee I will injure none
Among thy folk, thy soldiers shall have quarter,
And be my chiefs and comrades. Furthermore
If thou wilt not come forth but art unwilling
To struggle with the veteran Crocodile,
Then Shída shall oppose thee girt for fight,
So be no laggard when he challengeth.
The sire is old; his substitute is young—
A youth of prudence and of ardent soul.
He will contend with thee upon the field,
And bring a lion's heart and leopard's claws.
Then shall we see whom fortune favoureth,
And whom it crowneth with a crown of love;
While if thou willest not to fight with him,
Preferring action of another sort,
Wait that the troops may rest them for the night.
Then when the mountains don their golden crowns,
And when the dark night, drawing back its skirt,

Shall hide its head beneath a veil of hair,
Let us make choice of warriors from the host—
Men of exalted rank with massive maces—
Make earth the colour of brocade with blood,
And give our foes their bodies' length of earth.
The second day at cock-crow let us bind
The kettledrums upon the elephants,
Bring forth a reinforcement of the chiefs,
And make blood run like water down the streams.
V. 1296 The third day we will bring forth both the hosts,
In mass like mountains, for revenge and strife,
And find out who is loved and who rejected
By heaven above.' If he refuse to hear
My counsel given, challenge him thyself
To single combat in some distant spot
Beyond the sight of either of our hosts."
Then Shída chose him of the wise men four
Experienced much in this world's heat and cold,
Did reverence, and went forth. The father's heart
Was full, his eyelids overflowed with tears.
A thousand of the troops escorted Shída—
Men of discretion well equipped for fight—
And presently the Íránian scouts descried
The flag and lances of the prince of Túr.
Anon the Turkmans that were in the van—
Young cavaliers and inexperienced—
Fell on the Íránian outposts and shed blood
In Shída's absence and against his wishes.
There were some wounded on the Íránian side,
And still the conflict was continuing,
When Shída came himself upon the spot,
And saw the Íránian outpost-guards. His heart
Was sorely grieved, he called his warriors back,
And said to the Íránians: "Dispatch
A horseman in due form to Kai Khusrau
To say: 'An ardent spirit, Shída hight,

Hath brought a message from the king of Chín—
The father of the mother of the Sháh.'"
A horseman galloped from the Íránian outpost,
Approached Khusrau in haste, and said to him:—
"An envoy from the monarch of Túrán—
A noble hero with a sable flag,
Who saith: 'My name is Shída'—doth demand
Permission to discharge his embassage."
The Sháh's heart filled with shame, and as he wept
Hot tears he said: "This is my mother's brother,
My peer in height and valour."
Looking round V. 1297
He saw none but Káran of Káwa's race,
And said: "Go thou to Shída with good cheer,
Greet him from us and hear the embassage."
Whenas Káran approached the company
He caught sight of the waving sable flag,
Came up to Shída and gave greeting, adding
That of the Sháh and of the Íránians.
The young man's answer was in honied tones,
For he was shrewd of heart and bright of mind,
Delivering what Afrásiyáb had said
Concerning peace and feast and war and strife,
And when Káran had heard the goodly words
He came and told the monarch of Írán,
For wisdom and that message were well paired.[1]
When Kai Khusrau heard this he called to mind
Old times and, laughing at his grandsire's action,
His machinations and diplomacy,
Exclaimed: "Afrásiyáb repenteth crossing
The stream, and though dry-eyed hath much to say;
But my heart is fulfilled with ancient griefs.
May be he striveth to affect my mind,

[1] V. has a fresh heading here; but, as it occurs again in its proper place later on, the arrangement of the text as given in C., which makes no break here, has been adopted.

And fright me with the greatness of his host,
Unwitting that high heaven turneth not
As we desire when evil days are toward.
Mine only course is to encounter him
With vengeful heart upon the battlefield,
And, when I should be striving, dally not."
The wise men and the captains of the host
All spake out, saying: "This must never be:
Afrásiyáb is wise and veteran,
And never dreameth but of stratagems;
He knoweth naught but sorcery, black arts,
Deceit, malignity, and wickedness.
V. 1298 Now he hath chosen Shída from the host
Because he saw therein the key to loose
The bonds of bale. He challengeth the Sháh
To fight that he may fill our day with dust.
Adventure not thyself against his rage,
Or weary of Írán and of the crown.
Engage not rashly in a fight with him,
And let us not be left in grief and anguish.
If Shída now shall perish by thy hand
Their host will merely lose one man of name,
But if thou perishest in some lone spot
The darksome dust will go up from Írán,
And none among us will be left alive:
Írán will perish—city, field, and fell.
We have none other of the Kaian race
To gird himself to execute revenge.
Thy grandsire is an old experienced man
Of high repute in both Túrán and Chín,
Who offereth excuses for ill done,
And will not fight unless he be compelled;
He will, he saith, transfer the steeds, the treasure,
And drachms which Túr erst hoarded for Zádsham,
Besides the golden throne, the princes' crowns,
The golden girdles, and the massive maces,

To thee, if so he may avert this trouble.
He will abandon too all lands which thou
Lay'st claim to as belonging to Írán;
Let us withdraw glad and victorious,
Dismissing bygones from our memory."
So spake both old and young, save famous Rustam,
Who wished revenge not peace in that he grieved
For Siyáwush. The monarch bit his lip,
And turned a troubled look toward the speakers;
Anon he said: "'Tis not for us to quit
This battlefield and march back to Írán.
Where now are all the counsels and the oaths V. 1299
Whereby we pledged ourselves to Kai Káús?
What while Afrásiyáb is on the throne
He will not cease to devastate Írán.
How can we look upon Káús, and how
Excuse ourselves before him? Ye have heard
Of what befell illustrious Íraj
From Túr all for the sake of crown and state;
And how Afrásiyáb dealt with Naudar
In murderous haste; and further how he slew
The noble Siyáwush, though innocent,
And still because of treasure, throne, and crown.
A crafty Turkman out of yonder host
Hath formally approached and challenged me
To single combat. Why are ye so pale?
I marvel at it thus affecting you
While making me still keener after vengeance.
I never thought: 'The Íránians will unbind
The girdle of revenge.' I have not seen
One of Írán o'erthrown so that the rest
Should be so anxious to avoid the fight
For mere words spoken by Afrásiyáb."
The Íránians, sorry for their fault, excused
Themselves and said to him: "We are but slaves
And speak as love dictateth. High renown

Is all the object of the king of kings,
The noble outcome of his enterprises:
Let not the worldlord, the supreme, reproach us
Since no Íránian cavalier, they say,
Is able to contend against this man.
The troops are shouting on the battlefield
That none can do this brave deed save their Sháh,
Who, as the archmages' king, will not consent
That we shall be disgraced for evermore."

V. 1300 Khusrau replied: "Know, counselling archmages!
That Shída on the day of battle holdeth
His father as no man. Afrásiyáb
Made armour for his son by magic arts
Perversely, darkly, and malignantly.
The arms which ye possess are not sufficient
To pierce that breastplate and that helm of steel.
The charger is of demon pedigree
With lion's action and the speed of wind.
A man that is not dowered with Grace from God
Would lose both head and feet in fighting Shída;
Besides he cometh not to fight with you,
For that would shame his Grace and birth. The scions
Of Farídún and of Kubád are twain
As warriors, but one in heart and habit,
And I will burn his father's gloomy soul
As he burnt Kai Káús for Siyáwush."
Those lion-horsemen of Írán 'gan call
Down blessings on their monarch, one and all.

§ 7

How Kai Khusrau sent an Answer to Afrásiyáb

Khusrau then bade Káran, his faithful liege,
To go back with this answer from the Sháh:—

"'Our controversy hath grown long and stubborn
Till matters now have reached a pass indeed!
A man of honour and a warrior
Is not in war a laggard. I demand not
Thy treasures or the country of Túrán,
For none abideth in this Wayside Inn.
Now mark to whom the Lord of sun and moon
Shall give success upon this battlefield,
For by the Maker's might, the Omnipotent,
And by the diadem of Kai Káús,
Who cherished me, I grant you no more time
Than roses can withstand the autumnal blast.
We need not wealth acquired by tyranny
And wrong, for heart and fortune ever smile V. 1301
On one that hath the warm support of God.
Thy land, thy treasures, and thy host are mine,
So are thy throne, thy cities, and thy crown.
Now Shída armed, with troops, in warlike wise,
Hath come to us and challenged us to fight.
Him will I entertain at break of day,
And he shall view my sword that streweth heads.
I see none in the Íránian host to wheel
With him upon the battlefield, and therefore
'Tis plain and scimitar for me and Shída
Until I bring on him the Day of Doom.
If I shall prove the victor in the fight
I will not rest upon my victory;
We will set champions shouting on both sides,
The plain shall shine and savour with their blood;
And afterward will we lead forth our hosts
In mass, as they were mountains, unto battle.'
When thou hast spoken thus, to Shída add:—
'O full of wisdom and aspiring chief!
Thou hast come here alone within the net,
Not come in quest of fame, or to deliver
Thy father's message, but by adverse fate:

The Worldlord hath impelled thee from the host,
And here will be thy shroud and sepulchre;
Harm will befall thee for that harmless head,
Which they struck off as though it were a sheep's;
Thy sire will weep o'er thee as bitterly
As Kai Káús is weeping for his son.'"

Káran went from the presence of the Sháh
In haste and, drawing near the sable flag,
Told all the message of Khusrau to Shída
With frankness, not concealing anything,
And he, with heart like roast before the fire,
Went to his father and reported all.
The monarch gloomed, grew sad, and heaved a sigh.
The dream which he had dreamed in days of yore,
And had preserved a secret of his own,[1]
V. 1302 Now turned his head and filled his heart with fear:
He knew that his decline was close at hand.
Then Shída said: "To-morrow on this field
The ants shall find no way between the fallen."

The monarch answered: "Take no thought, my son!
Of fight for three days hence, because my heart
Is, as thou mayst say, broken by this war;
I am in case to pluck it from my body."

"O monarch of the Turkmans and of Chín!"
The son replied, "fret not thy heart so much,
For when bright Sol shall raise its glittering standard,
And light the visage of the violet sky,
Upon the field shall meet Khusrau and I,
And from him will I make the dark dust fly."

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 232.

§ 8

How Kai Khusrau fought with Shída the Son of Afrásiyáb

Whenas the azure Veil grew bright, and when
The world was like a topaz, Shída mounted
His battle-steed. Youth's vapours filled his head
With strife. He set upon his shining breast
A breastplate and a royal helm of iron
Upon his head. A Turkman warrior bare
His standard. Shída went forth like a leopard.
Now when he drew anear the Íránian host
One of the nobles went and told the Sháh:—
"A cavalier hath come between the lines
With shouts and gestures and with sword in hand,
A noble bent on fight, who biddeth us
Inform the Sháh that Shída hath arrived."
The monarch laughed, called for his coat of mail,
And set aloft the flag of majesty.
He put a Rúman helmet on his head,
And gave Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, his flag,
But all his soldiers were distressed, and wept
As though they were consuming in fierce fire.
They cried: "O king! let not the iron gall
Thy sacred form; the wonted place for Sháhs V. 1303
Was on the throne. May he 'gainst whom thou girdest
Thy loins for fight be laid in darksome dust,
His purposes and efforts be confounded."
The monarch, armed with girdle, mace, and helmet,
Dispatched a message to the army thus:—
"Let no man quit his post on left or right,
Upon the centre or upon the wings;
Let none attempt to bring on fight or skirmish,
But hearken to Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz.
By noontide ye shall see which will be worsted:
If Shída then shall prove the conqueror

Look for instructions for the fight to Rustam,
Be all of you obedient to his word,
And keep in trouble near your remedy,
For troops beneath the eye of such a man
May face with calmness all the sleights of warfare.
Let not your hearts be straitened; first and last
War's wont is this—at whiles a rise or fall,
At whiles rejoicing and at whiles dismay."
He urged his charger on—night-hued Bihzád,
Who rolled the wind before him as he sped.
Khusrau was armed with breastplate, helm, and lance,
His steed's hoofs sent the dust up to the clouds,
While Shída, seeing him between the lines,
Heaved from his breast a deep drawn chilly sigh,
And said: "Thou art the son of Siyáwush,
A man of prudence, wise, and self-controlled,
The grandson of the monarch of Túrán,
Who grazeth with his helm the orbèd moon;
But thou art not what one experienced,
A man whose food is wisdom, would expect,
For hadst thou brains thou wouldst not go about
To fight against thy mother's brother thus.
If thou desirest fight avoid the host,
And choose thy ground in some sequestered spot
Where no Íránian or Túránian
May look on us: we need no help from any."
The Sháh replied: "O Lion ravening
V. 1304 In fight! I am indeed the heart-seared son
Of blameless Siyáwush, whom thy king slew,
And I have come for vengeance to this plain,
Not for the sake of throne and signet-ring.
Since thou hast moved this matter with thy sire,
And challenged me of all the host to battle,
I may not send a meaner opposite.
So now do thou select a battleground
That shall be far removed from both the hosts."

They made this compact: "None shall fight in aid
From either side, and for our standard-bearers
Day shall not darken with calamity."
The twain departed from the hosts afar,
Like merrymakers going to a feast,
And reached a barren spot and waterless,
Untrod by lion and pard, a waste within
The marches of Khárazm and fit for fight;
The soaring eagle flew not over it;
Part was hard, arid earth and part mirage.
There those two warriors like ravening wolves
Made for themselves an ample battlefield.
The cavaliers, as lions full of rage
Leap from the covert on a hunting-day,
Wheeled with their mighty lances round and round
Till, when the shining sun had passed its height,
There were no heads remaining to their spears,
And bridle and horse-armour reeked with sweat.
They then renewed the battle vehemently
With Rúman mace and trenchant scimitar
Until the air was darkened by the dust;
Howbeit neither wearied of the combat.
When Shída saw the valour and the might
Of Kai Khusrau the tears fell on his cheeks:
He felt: "This Grace hath been bestowed by God,
And I have reason to bewail myself."
His steed moreover was distressed by thirst;
The man's own strength was failing. In his straits
He thought: "If I say thus to Kai Khusrau:— V. 1305
'Come let us try a wrestling-bout afoot,
And make ourselves run down with blood and sweat,'
He will not for his honour's sake dismount;
His person as a Sháh would be disgraced;
Yet if I 'scape not by this artifice
Good sooth I am within the Dragon's breath!"
He said: "All warriors fight with sword and lance,

And wheel about, but let us fight, O Sháh!
Afoot and stretch our hands out lion-like."
Khusrau, the ruler of the world, perceived
That which was passing in his foeman's mind,
And thought thus: "If this Lion strong of hand,
This scion of Pashang and Farídún,
Shall once be rested he will scatter heads,
And cause full many a lion-heart to wail,
While if I shall contend with him afoot
It may go hard with the Íránians."
Then said Ruhhám: "O wearer of the crown!
Disgrace not thus thy birth. If Kai Khusrau
Must fight afoot in person to what end
Are all these cavaliers upon the field?
If any must set foot upon the ground
Let me who am descended from Kishwád,
But thou art the exalted king of earth."
The Sháh replied: "O loving paladin
And cavalier! brave Shída will not fight
With thee, he is the grandson of Pashang,
Nor hast thou prowess to contend with him:
The Turkmans have not such another chief.
'Tis no disgrace for me to go to battle
Afoot, so let us strive like pards together."
Upon the other side the interpreter
Said thus to Shída: "Flee the foeman's danger.
V. 1306 Thou hast no other course but to withdraw
Because thou canst not stand against Khusrau.
To flee before the enemy in time
Is better than to do oneself despite."
Then Shída: "But the voices of mankind
Will not be hushed. Since first I girt myself
I have maintained my head sun-high, but never
Beheld a warrior of such strength, such Grace,
And mastery on any field, yet still
A grave is better for me than retreat

When once I am engaged in fight; moreover,
Though we may tread upon a dragon's eyes,
We cannot 'scape the process of the heavens.
If death is to befall me by his hand
'Twill not be let by friend or enemy.
I recognise this might and manliness;
This noble warrior hath the Grace divine,
Still I may be the better man afoot,
And as we struggle make him stream with blood."
Then spake the monarch of the world to Shída:—
"O famous offspring of a noble race!
Of all the men of Kaian seed not one
In sooth hath e'er assayed to fight afoot,
But notwithstanding if thou wishest I
Hold it a wish that I shall ne'er deny."

§ 9

How Shída was slain by Khusrau

The Sháh dismounted from his night-hued steed,
Removed his royal helmet and, entrusting
The noble charger to Ruhhám, advanced
As 'twere Ázargashasp. When Shída saw
From far Khusrau approaching him on foot
That warlike Crocodile dismounted likewise,
And there upon the plain the champions closed
Like elephants, and puddled earth with blood.
When Shída saw the stature of the Sháh,
The breast, the Grace divine, and mastery,
He sought some shift whereby he might escape;
Such is the purchase of a shifty heart!
Khusrau, when ware of this, though not expressed V. 1307
In words, reached out, strong in the strength of Him
By whom the world was made—the Omnipotent—
And, as a lion putteth forth its paws

Upon an onager and flingeth it,
Clutched with left hand the neck, with right the back
Of Shída, raised him, dashed him to the ground,
And brake his legs and back-bone like a reed.
Then, drawing forth his trenchant blade, Khusrau
Clave Shída's heart in twain and, having shivered
His breastplate and thrown dust upon his helmet,
Said to Ruhhám: "This matchless miscreant,
Brave but unstable, was my mother's brother;
Entreat him kindly now that he is slain,
And fashion him a royal sepulchre;
Anoint his head with precious gums, rose-water,
And musk, his body with pure camphor; place
A golden torque about his neck, a casque
With ambergris therein upon his head."
The interpreter of Shída looking forth
Beheld the body of the famous prince,
Which they had raised blood-boltered from the sands
To carry toward the army of Khusrau.
The interpreter drew near and cried aloud:—
"O thou illustrious and just-dealing king!
I was no more than Shída's feeble slave,
No warrior, cavalier, or paladin:
O Sháh! forgive me in thy clemency,
And may thy spirit be the joy of heaven."
"Tell my grandfather," thus the Sháh replied,
"Before the troops what thou hast seen me do."
The nobles' hearts and eyes were on the road,
Awaiting Shída's coming from the field.
A cavalier sped o'er the yielding sand,
Bare-headed, weeping scalding tears of blood,
And told Afrásiyáb, who in despair
Plucked out his locks all camphor-white and scattered
V. 1308 Dust on his head. His paladins drew nigh,
And all who saw the Turkman monarch's face
Rent hearts and garments for him; such a wail

Of lamentation went up from the troops
That sun and moon were moved to pity them.
Then said Afrásiyáb in his distress:—
"Henceforth I seek not quiet or repose,
And be ye my companions in my sorrow;
Our sword's point shall not see the sheath, and I
Will ne'er know joy again. Bind we our skirts
Together,[1] leave Írán no field or fell.
Account him not a man but dív or beast,
Whose heart shall not be pierced by agony;
Let shamefast tears be never in those eyes
That tears of hot blood fill not at our woe
For that moon-faced and warlike cavalier—
That Cypress-tree upon the streamlet's lip."
Afrásiyáb wept tears of blood for grief
That leeches cannot cure. The men of name
All loosed their tongues before the king and answered:—
"May God, the just Judge, make this light for thee,
And fill thy foemen's hearts with sore dismay;
Not one of us will tarry day or night
In this our grief and our revenge for Shída,
But raise the war-cry in our soldiers' hearts,
And scatter heads upon the battlefield.
Khusrau, who hath not left an ill undone,
Now addeth feud to feud."
The warriors
Were broken-hearted, grief possessed the king,
The field was filled with stir and clamouring.

§ 10

How the Battle was joined between the Hosts

When Sol was rising in the Sign of Taurus,
And when the lark was singing o'er the plain,

[1] *Cf.* p. 85 and *note.*

A sound of kettledrums arose in camp,
A din of tymbals and of clarions,
V. 1309 As Jahn led forth ten thousand valiant swordsmen
Equipped for war. Khusrau, beholding them,
Commanded, and Káran of Káwa's race
Led like a mountain from the central host
Ten thousand veterans, while Gustaham,
Son of Naudar, rushed with his battle-flag
Like dust-cloud to the fray; the world grew dim
With horsemen's dust, troops filled the earth and banners
The air. Khusrau was instant in the centre,
Afrásiyáb was active on the field,
Till heaven dusked and warriors' vision failed;
Then when the brave Káran had routed Jahn,
And when the moon set o'er the mountain-skirt,
The warriors came back from the field. Khusrau
Exulted over the Íránians
Because they had prevailed, yet they prepared
All night for war and neither slept nor feasted.
When Sol arose in Cancer, and the world
Was full of hostile sounds and purposes,
The armies of both realms arrayed themselves,
And every lip was foaming for the fight.
Khusrau, attended by one faithful liege,
Withdrew behind the rear, and there dismounted
To proffer much thanksgiving to the Maker.
He laid his face upon the tawny dust,
And spake thus: "O Thou justly dealing Judge!
If, as Thou know'st, I have experienced wrongs
And borne them patiently for many a day,
V. 1310 Requite the doer of the wrong with blood,
And be the Guide of him that was oppressed."
Thence with grieved heart, and head full of revenge
Against the offspring of Zádsham, he came
With shoutings to the centre of the host,
And set his glorious helm upon his head.

The battle-cry arose, the din of horn,
Of brazen trumpet and of kettledrum.
The opposing forces came on mountain-like,
Troop after troop astir—a sea-like host.
Jahn and Afrásiyáb were at the centre.
As those two hosts advanced thou wouldst have said:—
"The valleys and the desert are afoot."
The sun was darkened by the armies' dust,
While at the flashing spear-heads, eagle's plumes,
The din of trumpets, shouting warriors,
And heroes' maces on the battlefield,
The crocodile in water and the pard
On land, the iron and the rocks and mountains,
Dissolved with fear. Earth heaved and air was full
Of shouts; the ears of savage lions split;
Thou wouldst have said: "The world is Áhriman's!
'Tis naught but enemies from sleeve to skirt!"
While everywhere lay slaughtered, heap on heap,
The warriors of Irán and of Túrán.
The sands were naught but blood, heads, hands, and feet;
Earth's heart was shaken; underneath the hoofs
The fields and fells seemed linen stiff with gore.
Anon the warriors of Afrásiyáb
Advanced like ships upon the sea, attacking
The archers' towers—defensive citadels—
Borne by the elephants before the centre.
Amid a rain of arrows from the towers
There rose the clamours of the battlefield,
As spearmen and the elephants came onward
With many a warrior from the central host.
Afrásiyáb two miles away descried
That vast array and towered elephants,
And with his own huge elephants and troops
Advanced; the world grew dark, no light was left.
He shouted: "O ye famous men of war! V. 1311
Why do ye cramp yourselves and crowd about

The elephants? The fight extendeth miles.
Draw from the centre and the towers, spread wide
To right and left."
He ordered Jahn, no novice,
To quit his post with mighty men and lead
Ten thousand cavaliers and veteran,
All lancers dight for combat, toward the left,
And thither sped that lion-warrior.
When Kai Khusrau perceived that Turkman battle,
And how it hid the sun, he turned toward
His own chiefs—heroes of the fray—and bade them
Shine on the left like Sol in Aries.
They set off with ten thousand noble troops,
Mailed and with ox-head maces. Next he bade
Shammákh of Súr: "Among our men of name
Select ten thousand youthful combatants,
Unsheathe your swords between the embattled lines,
And stoop your heads upon your saddle-bows."
The hosts so grappled that thou wouldst have said:—
"They are one mass!" From both sides rose a crash,
Blood ran down from the fight in streams; they led
The elephants with towers aside; the world
Became like Nile. When both to right and left
Dust rose, that refuge of the host—the worldlord—
Called for his armour and advanced with Rustam
With shouts and fury from the centre. Trump
And tymbal sounded. On one hand was Tús,
V. 1312 The chief, with Káwa's flag. The paladins,
That wore the golden boots, all left their stations
With smarting hearts and formed the Sháh's left wing,
While battle-loving Rustam and Zawára,
His brother, set their faces toward the right.
The veteran Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
With many noble chiefs, supported Rustam,
As did Zarasp and prudent Manúshán.
The din of war rose from the scene of strife.

None will behold a fight like that. The sand
Was strewn with killed and wounded—those whose day
Was done. Men saw not how to cross the field
For slain. The waste was as Jíhún with blood,
One man lay headless and another headlong.
The cries of horse and rider rose above
The tymbals' din. "The mountains' hearts are split,"
Thou wouldst have said, "and earth is fledged with horsemen."
Here heads lay trunkless, there were headless trunks,
While massive maces clashed. The sun was fain
To flee before the flash of trenchant swords
And falchions. Thou hadst said: "A murky cloud
Hath risen raining blood upon the field."
Fartús was slain upon the Turkman left
By Faríburz, the son of Sháh Káús,
While on the right Kuhílá, who himself
Was equal to a hundred elephants,
Fell by the hand of Minúchihr. With noon
Came storm and cloud. The world-illuming sun
Was veiled, earth darkened and the eyes of men
Were troubled. As the sun began to sink
The Turkman monarch's heart was moved by terror
As cavaliers from every kingdom, march,
Domain, and principality, pressed on,
While with the various mail and diverse flags
The world was yellow, red, and violet.
When Garsíwaz behind the king saw this
He brought his troops up; to the right he sent V. 1313
A noble band—men one in soul and body—
Another to the left, and spread his chiefs
On all sides—forty thousand cavaliers,
And chosen mighty men, that drew the sword.
He hastened to Afrásiyáb who, seeing
His brother's face, took courage and advanced.
Rose war-din, air was veiled with feathered shafts.

When darkness came in rearward of the sun,
And day was almost night, false Garsíwaz,
That miscreant,[1] hurried to his brother, saying:—
"Who of our warriors still desireth fight?
The earth is full of blood, the air of dust.
Withdraw the army since the night hath come,
Bestir thee, for the troops will wail anon,
And soon thou wilt be fighting while they flee!
Do not thyself such wrong."
The king was wroth,
And would not hear a word, but urged his steed
Forth from the host; he rushed upon the field,
And slew some nobles of the Íránians.
Khusrau perceived this, went out in support,
And both kings of both realms, thus bent on battle,
Fared ill-attended by their cavaliers.
Howbeit Garsíwaz and Jahn allowed not
Afrásiyáb to challenge Kai Khusrau;
They seized their monarch's reins, turned round his steed,
And hurried toward the desert of Ámwí.
On his withdrawal Ustukílá came
Like smoke to offer battle to the Sháh.
King Ílá too rushed forward like a leopard,
And Burzúyalá eminent in fight.
The bodies of those three were rocks of flint,
They were all fierce and ruthless warriors.
V. 1314 The Sháh, perceiving them, urged from the throng
His charger, came upon them mountain-like,
Smote with his lance the valiant Ustukílá,
Unseated him and cast him on the earth.
King Ílá rushed before the line and struck
Khusrau upon the girdle with a spear,
Which failed to pierce his breastplate or affray

[1] From the Íránian standpoint, because he had brought about the death of Siyáwush. See Vol. ii. p. 292 *seq.*

His glorious heart. He saw his foeman's pluck
And strength, unsheathed forthwith his trenchant sword,
And clave the spear asunder with a blow,
Which Burzúyalá seeing, and withal
The monarch's courage, might, and mastery,
Made off amid the gloom; thou wouldst have said:—
"He burst his skin." The Turkmans, when they saw
The prowess of the Sháh, fled one and all.
As for Afrásiyáb himself, the plight,
So bare and hopeless, was as death to him,
And when the Turkman horse were ware thereof
They charged no more. When they returned in shame
Afrásiyáb commanded them to shout:—
"This lion-courage cometh of the night,
Which causeth our retreat but, though the wind
Sought thee to-day and gave a glimpse of joy,
Expect us with our banner, our heart's lustre,
When daylight cometh back; then will we turn
The surface of the desert to a sea,
And smash the bright sun into Pleiades."
Thereat the several monarchs of these two
Contending hosts each to his camp withdrew.

§ 11

How Afrásiyáb fled

When half dark night had passed, and heaven half turned
Above the hills,[1] the Turkman leader packed
His baggage, gave out helms and mail to all
His troops, and bade ten thousand Turkman horse V 1315
On barded chargers to be outpost-guards.
He spake thus to the host: "When I have passed
The river follow me, troop after troop,

[1] Reading with P.

Leave day and night unreckoned."

From Ámwí

He crossed Jíhún that night with all his host,
While all the country, road and waste alike,
Was naught but empty tents and tent-enclosures.
When dawn brake forth upon the mountain-tops
The outposts saw no soldiers on the plain,
And brought the joyful tidings to Khusrau:—
"The Sháh hath no occasion for more strife:
We see the tent-enclosures and the tents,
But not a horseman of the foe remaineth."

Khusrau forthwith fell prostrate on the ground
While giving praises to the All Just and Holy,
And saying: "O Thou glorious and almighty,
The Worldlord, the Provider, and the Judge,
Who gavest me Grace, strength, and diadem,
And now hast blinded my foes' hearts and souls!
Oh! banish this oppressor from our world,
And burden him with terror all his years."

Whenas the sun took up its golden shield,
And night assumed its hair of turquoise hue,
The world's lord sat upon the ivory throne,
And donned the crown that brighteneth the heart.
The army praised him: "May he live for ever,
This Sháh who is so worthy of the state."

The soldiers lacked no booty; it was there,
Left by the army of Afrásiyáb,
But all the people said: "We have been tricked;
He hath departed with host, trump, and drum;
The famous monarch hath escaped unhurt
At night-time from the clutches of the free!"

The shrewd Sháh said: "Chiefs of the Íránian host!
'Tis good whene'er the Sháh's foe hath been slain,
And good when he retreateth in confusion.
Since God, the Arbiter, hath given us Grace,
Crown, majesty, and kingship over kings,

Give ye thanksgiving everywhere to Him V. 1316
With benedictions offered day and night,
Because He maketh luckless whom He will,
And setteth up the worthless on the throne;
We cannot question or advise or move
Therein, for no slave can withstand His word.
Here shall I tarry for five days; the sixth
Is sacred to Urmuzd, the light of earth;
Upon the seventh we will march; the foe
Provoketh me and I desire revenge."
Five days they searched for their Íránian slain,
And having washed the dust off gave them all,
As they deserved, a worthy burial.

§ 12

How Kai Khusrau announced his Victory to Káús

Khusrau then bade a scribe to come to him,
Supplied with paper, musk, and spicery.
They wrote a letter from the battlefield,
Couched in befitting terms, to Sháh Káús.
The scribe began it with the praise of God,
Who is the Guide, and Object of all praise,
And then Khusrau dictated: "May the power
Of my great sovereign, fearful for my life
As though he were my sire, last like the hills,
And be his foes' hearts stricken. From Írán
I reached the sandy desert of Farab,
And fought three mighty battles in three nights.
The horsemen of Afrásiyáb were more
Than sages dream of. I have sent the king
Three hundred of our noblest foemen's heads—
That of the brother of Afrásiyáb,
His son, his honoured nobles, and his kin—
Together with two hundred men of name

In bonds, and each a hundred lions' match.
We fought upon the desert of Khárazm.
In that great conflict heaven blessed our efforts,
Afrásiyáb hath fled and we have crossed
The river in pursuit, and wait the issue."
They sealed the letter with a seal of musk,
V. 1317 And after, as he marched across the waste,
"Be blessings on this battlefield," he cried,
"And be each year to prosperous stars allied."

§ 13

How Afrásiyáb went to Gang-bihisht[1]

Now when Afrásiyáb had fled the field
He crossed the river like a rushing wind;
His own troops joined the troops of Kurákhán,
And told their tale. How bitterly their monarch
Wept, with those still surviving of his race,
For his illustrious son, for his great men,
His kinsmen and allies! There rose a wail
Of anguish and thou wouldst have said: "The clouds
Are drawing tears of blood from lions' eyes."
He lingered in Bukhárá for a while,
And wished his Lions to renew the struggle.
He called to him the great and haughty chiefs
Of those who still survived but, when they came,
The advisers of the army loosed their tongues,
And said, for they were left without resource
By that campaign: "The great men of our host
Have passed away; our hearts are wounded for them.
In sooth of every hundred there survive
Not twenty! Those departed claim our tears.
Now for a while we have renounced our treasures,
Our children, and our kin, and fought beyond

[1] Gang-dizh in the original. See p. 136.

Jíhún as we were bidden by the king,
And what unwisdom brought on us thou knowest,
For thou art king and we perform thy hests.
If now the monarch will be well advised
He will withdraw the army hence to Chách,
And, if suggestions may be made to him,
Cross the Gulzaryún and wait a while
At Gang-bihisht, because it is a place V. 1318
As fit for recreation as for fight."
No other plan was mooted, all agreed.
They marched to the Gulzaryún, with eyes
Wet and full hearts; there spent the Turkman king
Three days, recruiting with his hawks and cheetahs,
Thence on to Gang-bihisht where, though he had
But short repose, he thought it Paradise;
To him its soil was musk, its bricks were gold;
There he was happy, laughing in his sleep,
Thou hadst said: "Safety is his bedfellow."
He summoned countless troops from every side,
The great men, haughty chiefs, and potentates,
While he was drinking wine among the bowers
And roses with companions, harp, and rebeck.
He sent his spies abroad to every quarter,
And revelled with his chieftains day and night,
Awaiting what time's course should bring to light.

§ 14

How Khusrau crossed the Jíhún

As soon as Kai Khusrau had passed the river
He banished banqueting, repose, and sleep,
And, when he had transported all his troops
Across, he sent this proclamation forth:—
"Let no man be in terror at our coming,
But offer prayer for us to holy God."

He gave great largess to the mendicants,
Especially to those who welcomed him.
V. 1319 He thence departed to the march of Sughd,
And saw a novel world—the home of owls.
Upon that country too he lavished treasure
In eagerness for its prosperity,
And, whereso'er he halted, cavaliers
Came seeking quarter. Tidings reached Khusrau
About the doings of Afrásiyáb
And of his army: "Kákula is with him
With reinforcements like huge lions loose.
He is by race from Túr, revengeful, injured,
And seeketh all occasions for a fight.
Afrásiyáb hath sent some troops to Chách,
For he would seek the Íránian throne and crown,
And many with Tawurg toward the desert,
Where all are hostile to the Sháh, to hold
The road against the Íránians."
Kai Khusrau
Was not perturbed, for wisdom ruled his thoughts.
The troops from Barda' and from Ardabíl
He ordered to approach by companies,
To march before him, and return the number
Of leaders, frontier-chiefs, and archimages.
They marched; their general was Gustaham,
A man who never blenched where Lions fought.
Khusrau next bade the army of Nímrúz
To march with Rustam, burner up of chiefs,
On fiery camels and to lead their chargers;
Then, changing from their camels to their steeds,
To make a joint and sudden night-attack
Upon the foe. So both these crown-adorners
Marched forth, one to the desert, one toward Chách.
The Sháh continued for a month in Sughd—
A district well affected to himself—
Gave to his troops their pay and rested them,

And sought occasion both for fight and fame.
He gathered all the warriors skilled in leaguers
To aid him and dismayed the evil-doers.
Thence proudly, girdle-girt, and dight for battle V. 1320
He led a host from Sughd and from Kashán;
The world was lost in wonderment at him,
And tidings reached the Turkmans: "Kai Khusrau,
The aspiring Sháh, hath come in quest of vengeance."
Then all of them took refuge in their holds;
The world was full of bruit and turbulence.
Anon the Sháh harangued his host and said:—
"In that our task is different to-day,
As for the Turkmans who submit themselves,
And in their hearts repent of making war,
Fight not against them, and shed not their blood.
Lead none the way to evil, but if any,
Whose vengeful heart remaineth recusant,
Shall seek to strive against you with a host,
Then bloodshed, harrying, and combating
In any quarter are permitted you."
A shout rose from the army of Írán,
And all obeyed the orders of the Sháh;
The warriors went up against the holds,
Against all holds held by ambitious chiefs,
And razed the walls. No dwelling-place was left,
No slaves or cattle, nothing good or bad.
He traversed in this way a hundred leagues,
Depopulating stronghold, hill, and plain.
He marched to the Gulzaryún, explored
The land with guides, and saw a world like gardens
In spring, the dales, wastes, hills, and earth all fair,
The mountains stocked with game, the plains with trees—
A world for favoured folk. He sent out scouts V. 1321
And spies to learn whate'er was left to know.
They pitched the youthful monarch's camp-enclosure

Beside a stream. The worldlord took his seat
Upon the golden throne with his famed lieges,
And held at night a feast till day. The dead
Rose from the dust!

Upon the other side
Afrásiyáb at Gang, by day and night,
Spake with his wise, experienced, prescient nobles,
And said: "Now that the foe hath reached our couch
How is it possible to rest at Gang?"

They answered: "Since the enemy is nigh
We see no course except another battle:
It is not well to yield with such a host."

With this they left the presence, and all night
Prepared their forces for the coming fight.

§ 15

How Kai Khusrau fought with Afrásiyáb the second Time

At cock-crow, when the dawn began to break
And when the tymbal's din rose from the court,
An army marched out to the waste from Gang,
And cramped the very ants and gnats for room.
Approaching the Gulzaryún the host
Made earth like Mount Bístún. The army marched
Three days and nights. The world was full of turmoil
And din of war. The column stretched seven leagues,
And soldiers were more plentiful than ants
Or locusts. On the fourth day they drew up
In line. From stream to sun the flash of arms
Ascended. Jahn, son of Afrásiyáb,
Whose spears o'ershot the sun, was on the right.
Afrásiyáb took station at the centre
With chieftains, sages, and proud cavaliers.
Kubard, the lion-warrior, held the left
With cavaliers brave and experienced.

Revengeful Garsíwaz was in the rear V. 1322
To guard the army from the enemy.
Full in the centre on the other side
Khusrau supported like a hill his host.
With him were Tús, son of Naudar, Gúdarz,
And Manúshán, high born Khúzán, Gurgín,
Son of Mílád, the lion Gustaham,
Hajír and brave Shídúsh. Upon the right
Was Faríburz, son of Káús. The troops
Were one in soul and body. On the left
Was Minúchihr, who held his own in battle.
Gív, offspring of Gúdarz, the guard and stay
Of every march, was in the rear. The plain
Became a sea, the earth an iron hill
Of horseshoe-nails, the hoofs were tulip-hued.
A cloud of black dust gathered overhead,
The hearts of flints split at the tymbals' din,
Earth heaved like murky clouds; thou wouldst have said:—
"It will not bear the hosts!" The air resembled
An ebon robe, the drumming frayed the stars.
The field was naught but heads, brains, hands, and feet:
Good sooth, no room remained. The chargers trampled
On lifeless heads and all the waste was filled
With trunkless heads and hands and feet. The wise
Were not in evidence and both hosts owned:—
"If on this field of anguish and revenge
The troops continue thus a further while
No horsemen will survive, and in good sooth
The sky itself will fall!" At all the crashing
Of ax on helmet souls farewelled their bodies.
When Kai Khusrau observed the battle's stress,
The world grown straitened to his heart, he went
Apart and prayed to God to do him right:—
"O Thou beyond the ken of saints," he said,

"The Lord of this world and the King of kings!
V. 1323 If I had never been a man oppressed,
And tried like iron in the crucible,
I would not ask to be victorious,
Or urge my cause upon the righteous Judge."
He spake and laid his face upon the ground;
His bitter lamentations filled the world.
At once there came a furious blast, which snapped
The green boughs, from the battlefield raised dust
And blew it in the Turkmans' eyes and faces.
Afrásiyáb, apprised that any one
Had turned his back on fight, beheaded him,
And made the dust and sand his winding-sheet.
Thus was it till the heaven and earth grew dark,
And many Turkmans had been taken captive.
Night came and donned its musk-black garniture,
Preventing fight. Then both the kings recalled
Their hosts, for heaven and earth alike were dark.
The mountain-skirt down to the river-bank
Was naught but troops in breastplate, mail, and helm,
Who set the watch-fires blazing round about,
While outpost-guards went forth on every side.
Afrásiyáb took order for the fight,
But tarried till the fountain of the sun
Should rise, light up the faces of the hills,
And make earth like a ring of Badakhshán;[1]
Then would he bring his noblest cavaliers
To strive for glory on the battlefield;
Howbeit God appointed differently,
And everything must yield to His decree.

[1] *I.e.* like rubies.

§ 16

How Afrásiyáb took Refuge in Gang-bihisht

When night was dark, dark as a negro's face,
One sent by Gustaham, son of Naudar,
Came to Khusrau and said: "Long live the Sháh!
We have returned in triumph joyfully.
We made an unexpected night-assault
Upon the foe, who had no mounted outposts; V. 1324
Not one of them had wit enough for that.
As soon as they were roused from sleep they drew
Their massive maces and their scimitars,
And when the day dawned none but Kurákhán
With certain of the soldiery was left.
The field is covered with their headless trunks,
Earth is their couch and dust their coverlet."
A cameleer moreover with good news
Of Rustam came about the dawn, and said:—
"We gat intelligence upon the waste,
And thereupon we hasted. Rustam held
Upon his way alike by day and night,
Insisting on the march with all dispatch.
We reached the place by daylight as the sun,
The lustre of the world, rose in the sky;
Then matchless Rustam strung his bow and set,
When he was near, the helmet on his head,
And all the plain or ever he had thumbed
A shaft was freed from Turkman combating.
Now he hath marched for vengeance to Túrán,
And tidings verily will reach the Sháh."
A shout of joy ascended from the host,
Whereat the Turkman leader pricked his ears,
And called his faithful followers to horse.
A cavalier moreover came in haste,
With lamentation to Afrásiyáb,

And said thus: "Kurákhán hath left our troops,
And now is nigh at hand with sixty men;
There is a host too marching on Túrán,
Exhausting all the water in the streams."
The monarch thus addressed his counsellors:
"A fearful struggle now confronteth us;
If Rustam layeth hand upon our throne
We shall be lost indeed! But at this present
He thinketh that we have not heard of him,
And are in grievous travail with Khusrau,
So let us fall like fire on him by night,
And make the plain as 'twere Jíhún with blood."
V. 1325 The warriors and prudent counsellors
Agreed thereto. The monarch left his baggage,
And led his army from the plain like fire.
Anon an outpost from the waste reported
That heaven was gloomy with the dust of troops;
He saw that all the Turkmans had withdrawn,
And brought these tidings to the king of men:—
"The plain is full enough of huts and tents,
But there is not a Turkman left inside."
Khusrau knew why the prince of Chín had gone
Precipitately from the battlefield,
That he had tidings as to Gustaham,
And Rustam, and that that had made him speed.
Khusrau sent off in haste to say to Rustam:—
"Afrásiyáb hath turned away from us,
And surely hasteth to contend with thee.
Array the host and be upon thy guard,
Keep to thy shaft and quiver night and day."
The monarch's messenger was one who skilled
To cross that pathless tract. Arrived he found
The lion-hearted Rustam girt for fight,
The troops with maces shouldered and their ears
All strained; he thereupon declared to Rustam
The message purposed to secure his safety.

Revengeful Kai Khusrau upon his side
Abode in quiet free from bruit of war,
He gave his soldiers all the Turkmans' tents,
Enclosures, thrones, and crowns. He sought the slain
Íránians, washed away the blood and mire,
And gave them sepulture befitting princes.
Then, passing from the dust and blood of battle,
He packed the baggage, called the troops to horse,
And with all speed pursued the Turkman king.
Whenas Afrásiyáb was near the city[1]
He thought thus: "Rustam hath had sleep enough,
I will surprise him in a night-attack,
And make the dust fly from his soldiers' hearts."
But in the gloom he noticed outpost-guards,
Heard how the chargers neighed upon the plain,
And wondering at Rustam's work marched off, V. 1326
Reflecting that his troops had been defeated,
And had to struggle for dear life; that Rustam,
The deft of hand, was in the front, the Sháh
Behind with all his warlike cavaliers.
Afrásiyáb called any that were near,
Discoursed at large in his anxiety,
And questioned them: "What seemeth good to you?"
A chief replied: "The treasure of the king
Is all at Gang-bihisht. What profiteth
A toilsome march like this? Gang is eight leagues
In length and four in breadth; men, women, children,
And troops are there; thou wilt have wealth, the foe
Will still toil on. No eagles soar above
Its battlements, none dreameth of such heights!
There are provisions, palace, treasure, crown,
And majesty, command, and throne and host.
The country round about is called Bihisht,[2]

[1] "sa ville *de Gangue*" (Mohl). [2] *i.e.* Paradise.

Where all is pleasure, peace, and happiness.
On all sides there are fountain-heads and pools
An arrow's carry in their length and breadth;
And sages have been brought from Hind and Rúm
To make that fertile land a paradise,
While from the battlements the eye beholdeth
All that is on the plain for twenty leagues.
Is fighting all thy business in this world,
Where every man is but a sojourner?"

Whenas Afrásiyáb had heard these words
They pleased him and, relying on his fortune,
He entered Gang-bihisht exultingly
With all his arms and implements of war.
He went about the city and beheld
Not e'en a hand-breadth of waste ground therein;
There was a palace lifted to the sky,
Built by himself—a king whose word was law.
Alighting there he held an audience,
And gave out money for his soldiers' pay.
V. 1327 He sent a band of troops to every gate,
And put each quarter in a chieftain's charge,
While sentinels all round the battlements
Held watch and ward alike by day and night.

The king, upon whose right hand were installed
Both priests and nobles, bade a scribe be called.

§ 17

The Letter of Afrásiyáb to the Faghfúr of Chín

They wrote to the Faghfúr of Chín a letter,
And, after paying countless compliments,
Thus said Afrásiyáb: "Revolving time
Affordeth naught to me excepting war.
Him whom I should have slain I tendered dearly,
And now through him my life is one of hardship.

If the Faghfúr of Chín would come himself
'Twere well, my soul is protestant of friendship;
But if he cannot still let him dispatch
A host to march with us against the foe."
The messenger arrived in Chín by night;
The great Faghfúr received him graciously,
And decked for him a pleasant residence.
Afrásiyáb for his own part at Gang
Abandoned quiet, banqueting, and sleep,
Arranged his catapults upon the walls,
And fitted up the towers to stand a siege.
He bade magicians[1] bring up mighty stones
Upon the walls, he summoned many experts
From Rúm, and stationed troops upon the ramparts.
A prelate shrewd of heart[2] set up thereon
Ballistas, catapults, and arbalists,
And shields of wolf-hide. All the towers were filled
With coats of mail and helms. He kept a troop
Of smiths at work to fashion claws of steel
On every side and bind them to long spears
To grapple any that adventured nigh,
Or, if not that, to make him shun the hold.
In all his dealings he was just; he gave V. 1328
His troops their pay and well entreated them.
He gave moreover helms and scimitars,
Mail for the chargers, shields from Chín, with bows
And arrows to his men past reckoning,
Especially to all the warriors;
When that was done he and his faithful lords
Reposed. A hundred harpers fair of face
Met daily in his halls to make him mirth,
And day and night while holding festival
He called for native Turkman songs and wine.
Each day he threw a treasure to the winds,
And recked not of the morrow. So away,

[1] "mécaniciens" (Mohl). [2] *Cf.* Vol. i. pp. 373. 378.

Since fate is fixed, with sadness and be gay!
He lived two sennights thus exempt from sorrow,
But who can tell who will rejoice to-morrow?

§ 18

How Kai Khusrau arrived before Gang-bihisht[1]

Three sennights passed, Khusrau arrived at Gang,
And, listening to the sound of flute and harp,
Laughed and went round the circuit of the hold,
Astonied at the inconstancy of fortune.
He was amazed at seeing such a place—
A heart-alluring heaven—standing there,
And said: "The builder of these walls built not
As one expectant of calamity,
Yet now the murderer of Siyáwush
Hath fled for refuge to these walls from us!"
He said to Rustam: "Mark, O paladin!
Discerningly the bounties and the triumphs
In fight accorded us by God, the Worldlord!
This wicked man pre-eminent in ill,
Rage, folly, and deceit, hath made this hold
His refuge, here obtained a rest from fortune,
And, worst of villains, groweth worse with age.
V. 1329 If I would thank God for His mercies here
I must not sleep all night; success and power
Both come from Him who fashioned sun and moon."
There was a mountain on one side the city,
Preventing all attack, upon another
A river ran, one to rejoice man's soul.
They pitched the camp-enclosure on the plain,
The paladins took station round the hold.
The host extended over seven leagues,
And earth saluted the Íránians.

[1] Gang-dizh in the original.

The camp-enclosure on the right was Rustam's,
Who asked the Sháh for troops, while Faríburz,
Son of Káús, and Tús, with trumpets, drums,
And heart-illuming standard, marched and pitched
Upon the left, and, thirdly, Gív took station.
Night came; from every quarter shouts arose;
Earth was all strife and stir, its heart unseated
By din of trumpet, kettledrum, and fife.
Whenas the sun had cleared the sky of rust,
And rent in twain heaven's sable stole, the Sháh
Went round the host upon his night-hued steed,
And spake to elephantine Rustam thus:—
"O thou illustrious leader of the host!
Afrásiyáb, I hope, will have no longer
The world to look on even in his dreams,
But whether I shall take him dead or living
He shall behold the sword-point of God's slave.
Methinketh that a host will come to him
From every side, so mighty is his sway;
They fear him and will succour him through fear,
Not of their own wills and for vengeance-sake;
So ere he call up forces let us seize
The roads, moreover raze the castle-ramparts,
And sink their dust and stones in yonder river.
The day of stress is over for the troops,
A day of ease succeedeth one of toil;
No army feareth vengeance or attack
From foes withdrawn for shelter to their walls.
The city, where Afrásiyáb is now V. 1330.
Heart-broken, shall become a brake of thorns.
As we recall the words of Kai Káús
We are reminded of our righteous cause,
He said: 'Time shall not clothe in rust and dust
The boughs and trunk of this revenge of ours.
'Twill be an evergreen, and not a heart
Will shrink from dying in this royal feud,

But sire to son for three score centuries
Will hand it on and, when the sire shall pass,
The feud shall stay, the son take up the woe.'"
The mighty men called praises down on him,
They hailed him as the monarch of pure Faith,
And said: "Thou shalt avenge thy father thus;
Be ever happy and victorious."

§ 19

How Jahn came to Kai Khusrau with an Embassage from Afrásiyáb

The next day when the sun rose o'er the hills,
And set its golden lantern in the sky,
There went up from the hold a mighty shout,
Which caused Khusrau to ponder. Thereupon
The portal of the hold was opened wide,
And then the mystery was unveiled, for Jahn
Came with ten cavaliers, all men of wisdom,
Estate, and knowledge, to the royal entry,
And there alighted with the other nobles.
The chamberlain went in before the Sháh,
And said: "'Tis Jahn with ten more cavaliers."
The king of kings sat on the ivory throne,
And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,
While Manúshán, the warrior, went forth,
And brought wise Jahn to audience. At his coming
The face of Kai Khusrau was tear-bedimmed.
The valiant Jahn, lost in astonishment,
Removed his royal helm and drawing nigh
V. 1331 Did reverence, and said: "O famous king!
Be goodness aye thy partner through the world,
Be prosperous in our land, and may the hearts
And eyes of all thy foes be rooted out.
Live ever happily and serving God,

Thou that erst stretched thy hands upon our soil!
Blest was thy sojourn, happy is thy coming,
Kind hath been all thine intercourse with us.
I bring a message from Afrásiyáb,
Provided that the Sháh will bear with me."
Thereat Khusrau bade bring a golden stool.
They set it 'neath that prudent man who took
His seat, recalled the message of his sire,
And thus addressed the Sháh: "Afrásiyáb
Is sitting with his eyes fulfilled with tears.
I first convey this greeting to the Sháh,
Sent by the heart-seared monarch of Túrán:—
'Praise be to God, our Refuge, that a son
Of ours should have attained such eminence.
The Sháh upon the father's side is sprung
From Kai Kubád, upon the mother's side
From Túr: thy head is higher than earth's kings
Because thou comest of this noble stock.
The swiftly flying eagles in the clouds,
And in the streams the lusty crocodiles,
Are guardians of thy throne, and in thy fortune
The beasts rejoice; earth's great men with their crowns
And coronets are thine inferiors.
I marvel that the curst Dív never willeth
Me aught but harm. Why went my heart astray
From sense of right and loving-kindliness
So that my hand slew noble Siyáwush,
The son of Kai Káús, and for no fault?
My heart is sore thereat; I sit apart V. 1332
In anguish taking neither sleep nor food.
I slew him not; it was the wicked Dív,
Who ravished from my heart the fear of God;
His time had come and that was mine excuse,
I was illuded. Both a sage and king
Art thou, approving men of holiness;
Mark then how many cities and how great,

With gardens, spaces, halls, and palaces,
Have been destroyed in vengeance and the plea
Hath been Afrásiyáb and Siyáwush!
Mark too the fights of cavaliers, as huge
As elephants and strong as crocodiles,
Whose heads are trunkless and whose only shrouds
Are lions' maws; the desert hath no hostel
Remaining, every city here is ruined.
Till Doom's Day nothing will be told of us
Save that we fought with trenchant scimitars,
The Maker of the world will be displeased,
And we shall writhe in anguish at the last.
If thou seek'st fight thy heart assuredly
Will never have a moment's peace from feuds.
Observe time's changes and no other teacher,
For though thy heart be full, thy head all vengeance,
We have the hold while thou art on the plain.
I speak of Gang; it is my paradise,
Its seed-time and its harvest are mine own;
Here are my hoards, my host, my crown, and signet;
It is a place for sowing and for feasting,
A place for Lions on the day of battle.
The summer-warmth is past, the rose and tulip
No longer bloom, cold, wintry days confront us
When hands are frozen to the hafts of spears.
Well know I how the clouds will lour above,
And rivers be firm ground. From every side
Troops at my call will come; thou canst not strive
V. 1333 Against the sun and moon. If thou supposest
That time will render unto thee the fruits
Of war, then heaven will belie thy thoughts,
And others eat the produce of thy toils.
If now thou sayest: "I will take the Turkmans
Of Chín, will dash the heaven upon the earth
And pierce this people with the scimitar,"
Shall I become a captive in thy hands?

Presume it not, for this shall never be;
None will erase a man indelible.
The grandson am I of Zádsham the king,
Descended from Jamshíd and Farídún,
My knowledge and my Grace are both from God,
And I possess a pinion like Surúsh.
When destiny oppresseth me my heart
Requireth not a teacher; I will go
At slumber-time, as God commandeth me,
Like stars before the sun, cross the Kímák,
And yield thee realm and crown. Then shall Gang-dizh
Be thine abode, both land and troops shall lose me;
But when the day of vengeance shall arrive
I will array, hoar-headed as I am,
This host, will come to execute revenge
On thee, and everywhere restore my Faith;
But if thou wilt put vengeance from thy thoughts,
And charm the realm with loving-kindliness,
I will unlock my hoard of girdles, crowns,
Gold, jewels, and dínárs—whatever Túr,
The son of Farídún, took from Íraj.
Them take and never think again of vengeance.
If thou wilt have Chín and Machín, 'tis well,
Seize all according to thy heart's desire.
Before thee are Makrán and Khurásán;
Take less or more and I am satisfied.
By that same route which Kai Káús hath traversed
I will dispatch thee what thou wilt of troops,
I will enrich thy whole host and bestow
On thee the golden throne and diadem.
I will be thy support in every war, V. 1334
And hail thee king in presence of all folk.
Say what thou wouldest have—all thy desire—
And by the past and future judge thine end;
But if thou shalt reject this rede of mine,
And wilt wage war upon thy mother's father,

Array thy host as soon as Jahn hath gone,
Fit as a pard am I for fighting on.'"

§ 201

How Kai Khusrau made Answer to Jahn

At this the Sháh looked smilingly on Jahn,
And answered him: "O thou that seekest fame!
We have heard all thy words from end to end.
First for the blessing that thou gavest me,
So be it on my signet, crown, and throne;
Then for the greeting of Afrásiyáb,
Whose eyes by thine account are full of tears,
Let that too be upon my throne and crown:
May they be happy and victorious.
And further that thou gavest praise to God
Is pleasing to the Sháh, His worshipper—
The happiest of the monarchs of the earth,
The most approven, glad, and conquering.
God hath bestowed on me what thou hast said;
May wisdom still accompany each grace.
Fair words are thine at will; but thou art not
Pure-hearted or a worshipper of God,
For wise men's deeds are better than their words.
The glorious Farídún did not become
A star; his head is in the dark earth still,
Yet say'st thou: 'I am higher than the sky.'
In such wise hast thou purged thy face from shame.
Thy heart is given up to sorceries,
And words are but a trinket on thy tongue.
A glozing tongue and lying heart reflect
No lustre on a sage; so never call
My murdered father monarch of the world
Now that the bones of Siyáwush have perished.
V. 1335 Moreover from her bower thou haled'st down

My mother to the street, thou hadst become
So full of vengeance, and didst kindle fire
Upon my head while I was yet unborn,
And everybody present at thy court
Cried shame upon that wayward soul of thine,
For no one of the kings, the warriors,
And mighty men e'er did such deeds as haling
A woman out before the folk, consigning
A great dame to the executioners,
A daughter to be scourged until she cast
Her babe. The wise Pírán, when he arrived,
Beheld what he had never seen or heard
Before. It was God's ordinance that I
Should be exalted over all the folk;
He saved me from thy bale and mischief, fate
Had secrets for me; soon as I was born
Thou didst commit me to the shepherds' charge
As 'twere a worthless brat, a meal for lions.
So fared I while the days passed o'er my head
Until Pírán conveyed me from the waste,
And brought me to thy presence; I was fit,
As thou didst see, for throne and crown, and thou
Wouldst have beheaded me like Siyáwush,
And left my body naked of a shroud,
Had not all-holy God restrained my lips,
And left me standing dazed before the court.
Thou thoughtest that I had not heart or wit,
And didst not execute thy foul design.
Reflect on Siyáwush and his just acts;
What was the evil that thou sawest in him?
Thou wast his chosen refuge in the world;
He acted as befitteth men of name;
He came, for thee resigning throne and crown,
And hailed thee only in the world as king,
Put trust in thee and quitted his own folk
Lest thou shouldst say that he had broken faith;

But when thou saw'st his breast and girdlestead,
His greatness, might, and mien, thine evil nature
Was roused, thou didst o'erthrow that holy man,
And like a sheep behead a prince so dear!
Thou from the time of Minúchihr till now
Hast been but miscreant and malevolent.
Our troubles had their origin with Túr,
Who bathed his hands in ill against his sire,
And so it goeth on from son to son
Against all kingly usage, law, and Faith.
Thou didst strike off the head of king Naudar,
A man of royal birth and lineage,
And slay thy brother, righteous Ighríras,
Who lived for honour; thou hast ever been
A villain, vile, and led by Áhriman.
Thy crimes, if one should count them, would surpass
The revolutions of the sky in number.
Thou hast sent down thy roots to Hell, and thou
Wilt not declare thyself of human birth.
'The loathly Dív,' thou hast gone on to urge,
'Inclined toward Hell my heart and ways.' Záhhák
Put forth, so did Jamshíd, that very plea,
In moments of despair, and said: 'Iblís
Misled our hearts and severed us from good.'
'Twas their ill nature and their teacher's promptings
That gave them no surcease of evil fortune,
For when one is averse from what is right
Then fraud and falsehood ruin everything.
Moreover at the battle of Pashan
How many troops were slaughtered by Pírán!
The blood of those descended from Gúdarz
Turned earth to mire and loss was piled on loss;
E'en now thou didst come forth with myriads
Of Turkman cavaliers in war-array,
Didst lead thy host for battle to Ámwí,
And Shída came forth as mine opposite;

Thou sentest him that so he might behead me,
And thou thereafter mightst lay waste my realm,
But God, the Lord of earth, was mine ally,
The fortunes of my foes were overthrown.
And now thou say'st: 'Thy throne illumineth
My heart, thy fortunes make me glad.' Consider;
Can I recall thine acts and think it true?
Henceforth till Doomsday I have naught to say
To thee save with the trenchant scimitar,
And I will strive against thee in the strength
Of treasure, host, fair fortune, and the courses
Of sun and moon, will make my prayer to God,
And ask no guide but Him. The world perchance
May then be purged from evil men while I
Will gird myself with justice and with bounty;
With them will I regenerate the world,
And haply clear the garden of ill weeds.
Tell to my grandsire all my words and seek
No pretext to avoid so great a strife."
He gave to Jahn a crown of emeralds,
A pair of earrings, and a golden torque,
Who thereupon departed to his sire,
And told him everything. Afrásiyáb
Raged at that answer; grief and haste possessed him;
He gave the troops a largess from his hoards,
And furnished maces, helmets, casques, and swords.

§ 21

How Kai Khusrau fought with Afrásiyáb and took Gang-bihisht[1]

All night until the sun rose in the sky,
And made the mountains like white elephants' backs,
Afrásiyáb was ordering the host:

[1] Gang-dizh in the original.

What Turkman cavalier took any sleep?
Whenas the din of tymbals rose from Gang,
While earth grew iron, heaven ebony,
V. 1338 The famous Sháh—magnanimous Khusrau—
Bestrode his steed at dawn, rode round the hold,
And noted places open to attack.
He ordered Rustam to assail one side
With forces like a mountain, Gustaham,
Son of Naudar, to occupy another,
And wise Gúdarz the third, while he himself,
Who prospered everywhere, attacked the fourth
With tymbals, elephants, and cavalry;
Thus he disposed his forces and, resuming
His seat upon the throne, required the troops
To excavate entrenchments round the fortress.
Then all who had experience in sieges
From Rúm, from Chín, and Hind, with veteran chiefs
From every quarter, rode around the place,
Like couriers, devising plans to take it.
The monarch made a trench two spears in depth,
And stationed guards that none might make a sally
By night and slay his troops ere they could draw.
Around were ranged two hundred arbalists,
And, when a foe's head showed above the ramparts,
Those engines showered like hail thereon; behind
Were Rúman troops engaged in working them.
The Sháh then bade that elephants should draw
Shores to the hold. He undermined the walls
And shored them up; upon the wooden props
He smeared black naphtha, such was his device,
V. 1339 Whereby the walls were stayed and overthrown.
When all had been prepared the king of earth
Drew near the Maker of the world in prayer,
Writhed in his quest of vengeance like a serpent
Upon the dust, and praised the Almighty, saying:—
"Thine is it to abase and to exalt;

In every strait we look to Thee for succour.
If Thou perceivest that my cause is just
Make not my foot to slip, hurl from the throne
This sorcerer-king, and give me joy and fortune."
When he had prayed he raised his head, arrayed
His shining breast in armour, girt his loins,
Sprang up, and rushed as swift as smoke to battle,
Commanding onslaught on each gate in force.
They set the wood and naphtha all ablaze,
And hurled stones on the heads of the besieged.
Then twanged the arbalists while in the smoke
The sun's bright visage gloomed, the scorpions,
The catapults, and flying dust turned heaven
To azure dimness, earth to indigo.
Chiefs shouted, trumpeted the elephants,
Flashed swords and massive maces. From the showers
Of arrows and troops' dust thou wouldst have said :—
"The sun and moon contend!" The world was hidden
To clearest eyes so viewless grew the sky!
The woodwork, covered with black naphtha, blazed, V. 1340
And burned like firewood, for God willed it so.
The walls, thou wouldst have said, came headlong down
From their foundations like a mount in motion.
With them fell many a Turkman, like a lion,
Surrendered to ill fortune, when its head
All unawares is taken in the toils.
The Íránians' war-cry rose victoriously;
They made with warlike Rustam for the breach.
Afrásiyáb, on hearing that the ramparts
Were shattered, rushed to Jahn and Garsíwaz,
Like dust, and shouted: "What are walls to you?
The army's hold must be the scimitar.
Now for your country and your children's sake,
For treasure and for kin, bind ye your skirts
Together,[1] leave no foeman anywhere."

[1] *Cf.* p. 85, and *note.*

Then mountain-like the Turkman troops advanced
In rank toward the breach; they closed like lions,
And both sides raised a shout, but in the strife
The Turkman horsemen shook like willow-trees,
And gave up land and country in despair.
The Sháh bade Rustam bring up to the breach
The spear-armed footmen followed by two bands
Of archers eager for the fray on foot,
And armed moreover both with sword and shield,
With mounted warriors as their support
Where'er the stress of battle proved severe.
The horsemen and the footmen on both sides
Came onward like a mountain to the fight,
And warlike Rustam, like a mighty lion,
Led forward all his forces to the breach.
V. 1341 He mounted on the walls like flying dust,
Struck the black flag and set up on the rampart
The ensign of the Sháh, the violet ensign
Charged with a lion, while the Íránians
Hailed with a shout the triumph of Khusrau.
A multitude of Turkman troops were slain,
The fortunes of the foe were overthrown,
And Rustam at the crisis of the fight
Gat in his grasp brave Jahn and Garsíwaz,
Those two supporters of the Turkman throne,
The glorious son and brother of the king,
Such was the evil fate that fell on them!
The Íránian troops on entering the city—
An army full of vengeance and heart-seared—
Gave up themselves to pillaging and slaughter,
While shrieks arose and lamentable cries;
The women and the children wailed aloud,
And left their dwellings to the conquerors.
What multitudes of women and of babes
Were lost beneath the feet of elephants!
The people fled like wind and none took thought

Of country more. In woeful plight all eyes
Wept blood. The Turkman warriors' fortunes fell.
The treasuries were given up to spoil,
The women and the children captive borne,
Their souls by heaven, their flesh by arrows, torn!

§ 22

How Afrásiyáb fled from Gang-bihisht[1]

Afrásiyáb departed to his palace,
With full heart, weeping; having gained the roofs
He looked upon the city. There he saw
The more part of his warriors slain, the rest
Withdrawing from the battle. There arose
Cries from the cavaliers, shouts from the leaders,
Din from the drummers on the elephants,
Which trod from sight all that they saw alive.
The place was full of smoke and shrieks for succour, V. 1342
And all was conflagration, sack, and storm.
One side rejoiced, the other was in woe,
And in this Wayside Inn 'tis ever so.
Afrásiyáb, beholding matters thus,
Such terror and defeat, no Jahn, no brother,
No land, no throne, no realm, no gems, no treasure,
Cried out in very earnest, seared and sore:—
"How wantonly heaven's vault hath dealt with us!
Mine eyes have looked upon a day when death
And slaughter seemed to me of small account!"
He came down woeful from the palace-roof,
Farewelled his throne of sovereignty, and said:—
"When shall I ever look on thee again
Upon a day of pleasure, ease, and joy?"
He thence departed dazed, and disappeared;
His wits and counsel flew away like birds.

[1] Gang in the original.

Now when he built the palace in the hold
He made a secret passage underground,
And not a soldier of the army wotted
That there was such a by-way underneath
The castle. He made choice of ten score chiefs,
And vanished by that secret souterrain.
Emerging he betook him to the waste,
While all his kingdom wondered after him,
None knowing where he was because he vanished
So suddenly. Khusrau approached the palace,
Trod down his foe's star, and assumed the throne
Amid the paladins with golden helms.
They made abundant quest, but failed to trace
That chief of nobles; then the Sháh inquired
Of Jahn and Garsíwaz about their king:—
"How did he go and whither hath he gone?
He vanished hence; where hath he taken shelter?"
They answered fully and Khusrau gave ear,
But not a trace showed of Afrásiyáb.
V. 1343 The conquering Sháh said to the Íránians:—
"Now that my foe hath vanished from the throne
His name and purpose matter not a jot;
'Tis one to us be he alive or not."

§ 23

How Kai Khusrau gave Quarter to the Family of Afrásiyáb

Khusrau then chose out sages from the host—
Chiefs veteran and practised in affairs—
And said thus: "Hail! May ye be filled with justice.
The portal of this ill-starred Turkman's hoards
Intrust I unto you. Be diligent.
The sun from yon high heaven must not pierce
The palace of Afrásiyáb, nor would I
That thence his women's voices reach the street."

He sent out keepers for the herds that were
At large about the hold and, being kingly,
Harmed not the kindred of Afrásiyáb.
The troops marked this and clamoured: "Kai Khusrau
Hath entered in such wise that thou wouldst say:—
'Tis to the portal of a host!' No thought
Of sire beheaded by the sword unjustly,
Of mother haled down naked by the hair
From throne and high place by Afrásiyáb,
Occurreth to his mind! This harmless Sháh
Was shepherd-reared and suckled by a sheep.
Why doth he not in sharp-clawed leopards' wise
Awake the Day of Doom in this man's home,
Bring to the ground his halls and palaces,
And make a bonfire of his kith and kin?"
The Sháh, apprised of all the Íránians' words,
Sent and convoked the sages, spake at large,
And said to them: "We must display not harshness,
Or praise heads void of wits. We must be just
In vengeance, and in passion think of fame,
For fame is our memorial in the world V. 1344
Since life continueth not, and this same sky
Which turneth over us may play the tyrant."
He ordered: "Bring the women forth unseen,
Those that are royal, have been always veiled,
And never left the bower for the street."
Now when the Íránians were ware of this
They hurried full of vengeance to the palace.
The warriors thought: "Khusrau will slay these women,"
So wished to bear them off with ignominy,
And were prepared to pillage and to slaughter.
Then from the palace rose this wail: "Thou knowest,
Most just, wise Sháh! that we are powerless,
And no fit objects of contempt and insult."
The chiefest of the ladies with her daughters,

Came wailing to the Sháh; each daughter had
A hundred slaves with ruby crowns before her,
Their jewelry was like the shining sun;
The raiment that they wore was cloth of gold.
All carried golden goblets in their hands,
Their hearts were awe-struck at the king of kings;
The dames were all musk, rubies, gold, and gems,
And hung their heads down in their shamefastness;
They carried cups and censers, and the fuel
Was ambergris and undried aloe-wood.
Thou hadst said: "Saturn out of highest heaven
Is showering constellations on the earth."
The chiefest lady drew anear the throne,
Invoking fervent blessings on the Sháh,
While all her delicately nurtured daughters
In like wise offered up their supplications.
Oh! pity those fall'n in their day of stress
From all self-pleasing and luxuriousness!
V. 1345 The ladies mid their anguish praised Khusrau :—
"O man of royal birth and blesséd steps!
How well it were had not thy heart been grieved
And vengeful with Túrán! Then thou hadst come
To feast and mirth, the accredited of kings;
Thou hadst been lord and master of this land,
And crossed thy feet upon the royal throne;
Then Siyáwush would never have been slain
In wantonness, but sun and moon decreed it,
And base Afrásiyáb hath acted so
That he will never dream of thy forgiveness.
I gave him counsels but without avail;
He rashly turned his head from mine advice.
I call upon my Maker to bear witness
That blood hath fallen in showers from mine eyes,
While here upon the earth thy kinsman Jahn,
Galled by thy fetters, will bear testimony
How in my palace both my heart and soul

Were full of grief because of Siyáwush,
And that Afrásiyáb, thine enemy,
Heard much advice, but nothing profited,
Until his days have ended as we see,
All his dominions being overthrown,
His crown and girdle given up to spoil,
His day obscured, himself flung headlong down.
His present life is even worse than death,
And fate hath burst the skin upon his body.
Now look on us as being innocent,
And treat us with a kingly clemency.
We are dependent wholly on Khusrau,
And hear no name but his. So let him not,
For wrongs done by Afrásiyáb the warlock,
Act hastily to those, who did no wrong,
With bloodshed, outrage, and indignity,
Or lightly persecute those not in fault;
Unworthy 'tis for monarchs to behead
The innocent. Thou hast another home,
For none may tarry in this Wayside Inn,
So act as God requireth at thy hands,
And hold in awe the Day of Reckoning."

Khusrau, on hearing this, was greatly moved V. 1346
For those fair ladies in their fallen fortunes;
His cheeks glowed like a lamp at their distress
And anguish, and the sages' hearts were troubled,
For all of them remembered child and wife,
And all the captains and the valiant chiefs
Invoked much blessing on the Sháh and said:—
"Now for the Maker's sake let not the Sháh,
That man of name, exact revenge on them."

The prudent Kai Khusrau made answer thus:—
"In spite of all that hath displeasured me
I will not cause a like distress to any,
However much my heart desireth vengeance,
And, though aggrieved am I when I recall

How that great monarch wronged my noble mother,
Yet will I bring the like on no one's head."
The master of the world, the holy-born,
Then sent the ladies home, first saying to them:—
"Be at your ease; hear what I say in person:—
No miscreant that breaketh faith am I;
Henceforward ye have naught to fear from me,
And none shall entertain the wish to harm you,
Or otherwise his own life shall be brief.
Now in your palaces at ease abide,
Your souls and bodies unto God confide."

§ 24

How Kai Khusrau exhorted the Íránians

Khusrau addressed the Íránians: "Conquering fortune
Hath given us the kingdom, crown, and throne;
The whole realm of Túrán, which we have captured,
Shall, like Írán, be yours to dwell therein.
Put ye away all vengeance from your hearts,
And charm the land with loving-kindliness,
For in their hearts the people fear us greatly,
And all the dust is turned to mire with bloodshed.
V. 1347 I give to you the treasures of Túrán,
And look not even for your gratitude.
Be strenuous and be instant in well-doing,
And where ye found it winter make it spring.
My soldiers shall be satisfied anon
With treasures and dínárs, but let us keep
Our hands from bloodshed, not behead the guiltless;
It sorteth not with manhood to be moved
To anger lightly or to strike the fallen.
Avert your faces from the women—all
That veil themselves when going forth abroad;
Respect too others' wealth since for its sake

Friends are made foes; the Maker disapproveth
Of those that seek to harm the innocent,
And all that would assist my policy
Must not lay waste the land which now is mine.
Besides men call a prince who layeth waste
A peopled land unjust and sinister."
The Sháh commanded then his troops to open
The treasures of the army of Túrán,
Save great Afrásiyáb's own privy hoards,
Which he reserved, but gave his men the rest—
The treasures and the weapons, thrones and crowns.
The scattered countless host of Turkmans flocked
From all sides to the Sháh, who gave them quarter,
Made much of them, and ordered their affairs
With all dispatch. He gave the chiefs their portion
Of Turkman lands, a city to each noble,
But in each province those that were rebellious
Received no quarter at his warriors' hands.
The country of Túrán was overcome,
And, when the letters to the chiefs arrived,
From every quarter messengers set forth
To carry to the Sháh the offerings
And letters of the potentates who now
Were one and all the servants of Khusrau.

§ 25

How Kai Khusrau wrote a Letter with the News of his Victory to Kai Káús

Khusrau then called and charged a trusty scribe.
First in the letter he gave praise to God V. 1348
That He had purged the earth of wickedness,
Had overthrown the chief of sorcerers,
And waked the fortune that had slumbered so—
God, Source of might, of knowledge, and of justice,

And everywhere the Joy of the oppressed—
Then: "By the fortune of Sháh Kai Káús,
The great, the experienced, the benevolent,
This Gang that was Afrásiyáb's was stormed,
The head of his good fortune fell on sleep.
In sooth upon a single battlefield
Full forty thousand of his warlike chiefs,
Illustrious men who wielded massive maces,
Fell in their ranks by the Gulzaryún,
And afterward there came a hurricane,
Which rent the trees asunder, root and bough,
And drowned a multitude that still opposed us.
Afrásiyáb escaped to Gang-bihisht,
A place of arms completely garrisoned,
And of a truth in the ensuing siege
There perished thirty thousand warriors.
The tyrant showed himself to be a man,
But was not helped by wisdom or by fortune.
His troops are scattered over all his realm,
And he himself hath vanished from the world.
Hereafter I will send the Sháh reports
Whenever further glory shall be mine."
He sealed the letter with his golden signet,
And, having gladly sent it to Káús,
Disposed himself for mirth with fairy-faced ones
To bring him wine. 'Twas thus till spring, the world
Became a paradise of hue and scent,
The plain resembled painted silk, the sky
A leopard's back; the onager and deer
Roamed o'er the waste, and time passed blithely on
V. 1349 With hawk and cheetah in pursuit of game,
With musky wine and Idols of Taráz.
The cattle like so many onagers
Spread far and wide; their necks grew full of strength
Like lions' and their ears and heads like stags'.

Khusrau moreover sent forth those that spied
Upon the world's affairs to every side.

§ 26

How Kai Khusrau had Tidings of the Coming of Afrásiyáb with the Host of the Faghfúr

Then tidings came from Chín and from Khutan
How that Afrásiyáb was with that folk:—
"His cause is taken up by the Faghfúr,
And clamour filleth all the land of Chín
Whence troops extend to the Gulzaryún;
The Khán of Chín himself is in command.
None knoweth how much wealth, how many slaves,
And steeds with harness, the Faghfúr hath sent
Afrásiyáb. A host acclaimeth him,
And he hath all the treasures of Pírán—
Enough dínárs to load six thousand camels—
And as he bare them from Khutan an army
Flocked round him."
All that had been given quarter
Thereat revolted from the Íránians,
And girded up their loins to take revenge.
Now when Afrásiyáb came from Khutan
He brought with him an army-shattering host;
"Earth," thou hadst said, "will not sustain them all,
The stars will not avail to reckon them!"
In dudgeon, with this warlike host, he set
His face from Chín to go against Khusrau,
Who, when he heard, sent scouts out on the road,
And bade Gúdarz and lion-bold Farhád:—
"Abide ye here, be just and politic,
And let your scouts be out both night and day."
Then said he to Gúdarz: "This host is thine, V. 1350
Thou art its refuge both by day and night.

Hang every Turkman, whom thou shalt perceive
To be in favour of our enemies
In aught, forthwith alive upon the gibbet,
Head downward, feet aloft; forbear to vex
The inoffensive. Watch o'er host and treasure."
Drums sounded from the monarch's tent-enclosure,
There was a blare of gong and clarion.
An army such that it embroiled the sun
Marched forth from Gang. When he had left the city
The Sháh arrayed his men against the foe.
Two leagues divided host from host. Khusrau
Convoked his noble chiefs, and said: "To-night
Let matters rest, yet be not lax or slothful."
The scouts, distributed upon the waste,
Went all night long their rounds about the host.
He stayed one week preparing for the strife,
And on the eighth day, when the scouts fell in
Reporting to him that a host had come,
He had his troops arrayed in such a fashion
That sun and moon grew eager for the fray.
Afrásiyáb beheld this, ranked his powers
To face the enemy, and told his sages:—
"This battlefield is sleep and feast to me;
I would have welcomed it at sleeping-time,
And had provoked it had it not been offered.
Long have I been a fugitive, and now
My heart and head are full of strife and vengeance.
If Kai Khusrau's Grace, or mine own new fortune,
Constraineth me I know not, but I purpose
To fight with him come triumph, death, or sorrow."
The sages of his kin and alien
Replied: "What need for host and combating,
If kings must fight in person? All of Chín
V. 1351 And native Turkmans, of thy race as well
As alien, acknowledge thee. Oh! may
Our souls and bodies be a ransom for thee!

Our loyalty hath never wavered yet;
If hundreds perish, thousands shall come on:
Hold not thyself so cheap. We are thy lieges,
And live but in the glory of thy crown."
Then from the army there arose a shout,
And earth and time grew full of strife and stir;
Stars shone through tawny dust, and to the eye
Sol's yellow face was lapis-lazuli.

§ 27

The Message of Afrásiyáb to Kai Khusrau

The Turkman chief selected from the host
Two veterans and sent the Sháh a message:—
"Thou hast destroyed a multitude of troops.
In truth between Írán and Gang, O king!
There are a thousand leagues of hill and plain,
Of sandy wastes and hard, and our two armies
Have been like ants and locusts while the soils
From Gang and Chín until thou reach Írán,
Are like an ocean with the blood of feud;
So that if holy God drew from the dust
To some abyss the blood of all the slain
'Twould make a Red Sea that would drown both hosts!
If thou wilt have my treasure or my troops,
The country of Túrán, the throne and crown,
I will resign them to thee and be gone,
But yield my life up only to the sword.
Attempt not that; I am thy mother's sire,
Descended from the warlock Farídún,
And if thy heart is troubled to avenge
Thy father, and thou hast no reverence left
For me, the fault was all with Siyáwush
In that he filled my heart with grief and care;
Besides the stars which circle over us

Are both our shelter and our bane at whiles.
V. 1352 Now sixty years have passed above my head
Since I went out with chiefs upon the plain,
While thou art young, Sháh of Írán, in fight
The Lions' Claws; so choose a battlefield
Remote, not on thy lieges' skirts, and we
Will wheel in combat far from either host.
If I fall by thy hand thy hook will serve
To draw forth crocodiles from waterways,
But strive not with my kindred and allies;
Refrain thyself, seethe not with such revenge;
And if thou shalt be slaughtered by my hand,
As God shall help me, I will suffer not
One of that folk of thine to feel a pang,
Or look upon the darksome dust of battle."

Khusrau, when he had listened to the message,
Said to the son of Zál, the son of Sám:—
"This evil Turkman, who beguileth men,
Discerneth not between the ups and downs,
And talketh so of battle that perchance
He fain would lie in Shída's sepulchre!
'Tis no disgrace for me to fight with one,
Whose ancestor was Farídún, and sire
Pashang."

But Rustam answered him: "O Sháh!
Have not the flame of battle in thy heart:
'Tis a dishonour for the Sháh to combat
Although a Leopard be thine opposite.
As for his saying: 'Fight not with my host,
Nor yet against my family and realm,'
Thine army stretcheth out from sea to sea,
And never will consent. If thou wouldst make
A treaty with thy grandsire in God's sight
'Tis needful that his heart be free from guile.
Now let a general attack be made
In force; speak not of things that cannot aid."

§ 28

How the Íránians and Túránians fought

Khusrau, on hearing ancient Rustam's words,
Approved thereof and answered thus the envoy:—
"So this malignant man would fight with me! V. 1353
He gave with guileful tongue and heart intent
On wrong a greater pledge to Siyáwush.
Go hence, and say thus to that evil-doer:—
'Speak not henceforth in such a strain as this:
Chiefs get no glory out of knavery;
Thy mind is strangely warped, thy heart deceitful.
If thou art set on fight, and fight alone,
There are antagonists besides myself;
There are the matchless Rustam and brave Gív,
Who both are eager to contend with Lions;
Besides if monarchs are to challenge monarchs
What need is there for army and for mellay?
Henceforth I will not fight with thee myself,
But thou shalt see a day of gloom and straitness.'"
The messenger withdrew, returned like wind,
And advertised his lord of what had passed,
Who in his dudgeon made no haste to battle,
But when the Sháh moved forward to the attack
The other army was obliged to stir;
One host was eager, one had fain delayed,
While earth was all in motion like the sea.
Such were the showers of shafts that thou hadst said:—
"The clouds rain hail from mighty lions' maws!"
From dawn until the sun grew dim the earth
Was soaked with blood beneath the warriors' feet.
When night was closing in the hosts withdrew
Because the horsemen's sight was failing them,
And, when the king of kings returned to camp
In all his glory, pomp, and circumstance,

He said to Tús: "Afrásiyáb to-day
Did not engage in battle willingly.
Methinketh he will make a night-attack
To free his heart of long-enduring griefs."
He bade a trench be dug across the road,
Whereby the army of Túrán would come,
And issued orders: "Let none kindle fires,
And let no jingling camel-bells be heard."
Then from the host Khusrau chose cavaliers
Of valour, putting them in Rustam's charge,
V. 1354 And chose moreover from the Íránians
Another force of men girt up for war,
Committing them to Tús the general
With orders to set forward toward the hills,
While matchless Rustam's way was toward the plain.
The Sháh bade: "Let them march with all dispatch
To left and right still keeping on the level,
One toward the plain the other toward the heights,
And not make use of outposts, lamps, or torches;
So if it chanceth that Afrásiyáb
Shall fall upon us at the time of sleep,
Our warriors may take his in the rear
To cut him off from help. Our troops will be
Behind him and the ditch in front, and then
The Sháh with all his elephants and men."

§ 29

How Afrásiyáb made a Night-attack upon Kai Khusrau and was defeated

The Turkman leader, when the night closed in,
Made ready with his soldiers to attack,
And, having summoned all his veterans,
Spake of the past at large: "This knave accursed
Hath triumphed greatly o'er his grandsire's troops:

Now yonder host no doubt are fast asleep,
And scattered widely over hill and plain;
So let us put misgiving from our hearts,
And make an onslaught on the foe at dawn,
For if we overcome them not to-night
We shall be humbled to the very dust.
Unless good fortune shall regain its lustre
Resource is wind, and manhood but a lie."
They all agreed thereto and, having risen,
Made preparations for the night-attack.
Afrásiyáb chose fifty thousand men
Among the host, all veteran warriors
And fit for combating. Spies went on first—
Experienced men and lovers of the fray.
Their chief approached the encampment of Khusrau V. 1355
Where he perceived no challenge of the watch,
And everything appeared to him at rest—
No scouts, no watch-fires, not a breath of wind,
No thought about Túrán in any heart.
On seeing this he turned, went back in haste,
And said: "Not one is wakeful! All of them
Are dead asleep! Thou wouldst have said: 'These men
Have drunk all day!' No outposts are in sight,
And only brambles stand up on the plain!"
Afrásiyáb heard this, was cheered of heart,
Sent his host forward, mounted on his steed,
And girt him with his warriors to attack.
They came on, like the waters of the sea,
Apace but silently, without display,
No trumpet-call, no shout; but when they neared
The camp-enclosure rose the clarion's blare,
Rose roll of tymbal from the saddle-backs,
The sable standard was unfurled, and those
That were the foremost of the assailant band
Urged on their steeds and raised the battle-cry;
But many cavaliers fell down the fosse,

While others turned away their heads from fight.
On this side Rustam came up from the plain,
And dimmed the heaven with his horsemen's dust;
On that side Gív, son of Gúdarz, and Tús
Came on; in front the drums and trumpets sounded,
The king of kings with Káwa's flag was there;
The air was violet with horsemen's sabres,
The cry was "give" and "take" and "bind" and "slay,"
The steeds were jaded and their riders dazed;
Two seas of blood were heaving and their waves
Gave earth the hue of tulips, while the host
Of steel-clad army-breakers made the mountains
Shake to their centres. On that Day of Doom
Those who would flee found no way to escape;
Among a hundred chiefs not ten were left;
The slain themselves blocked in the fugitives.
V. 1356 Whenas accounts came from that battlefield
The leader of Túrán was so distressed
That all his troops lamented, wept, and burned
At that great anguish of their monarch's heart,
Who spake thus: "Verily a sage himself
Escapeth not the process of the sky!
But since the foe is fainer for our lives
Than for our wealth we can but strive once more,
And either give our bodies to be slain,
Or set the crown of kingship on our heads."
From both the camp-enclosures shouts arose,
The world was filled with blare of clarions.
The troops marched, shouldering double-headed darts
And scimitars, in lines three leagues in length.
That field was like the sea. Bright sun and moon
Shone not. The hosts came onward, rank on rank,
As in the ocean wave pursueth wave.
Thou wouldst have said: "The vales and hills are full
Of blood. The sun hath left the turning sky."

Heaven's face was smeared with pitch and no one tendered
His person. Then arose a mighty blast—
A storm whose like is not in memory.
It raised the dust, it blew against the heads
And eyes of the Túránians and bore off
Their helms. Afrásiyáb was all astound.
The desert was all brains and blood, the rocks
Were red as jujubes to their very cores!
The Turkman cavaliers, who in their days
Of ease thought lightly of a leopard-hunt,
Declined to battle with the turning sky
What time the blast uplifted man and horse.
Khusrau, on seeing this and that the hearts
And fortunes of the Íránians were joyous,
With Rustam, Gív, son of Gúdarz, and Tús,
Advanced the tymbals from the army's centre,
And battle-shouts arose. Upon one hand
Was Rustam, on the other hand the Sháh.
The dust hung in the air as 'twere a cloud, V. 1357
And what a cloud! One raining shafts and swords!
On every side were mountain-heaps of slain
With springs of blood within them from both hosts.
The air was like a robe of indigo,
The earth appeared to be a sea of gore,
And heaven was like an eagle's wing with arrows.
Afrásiyáb looked on with glooming heart,
Descried the waving flag of violet,
And showed his flag no longer at the centre,
But left his host embattled, and himself
Retreated with his chiefs and men of name.
He took with him a thousand of his kin,
And choicest of his troops—all fit for fight—
And, taking to the pathless waste, preserved
His life from foemen by his body's toil.
The Sháh sought for his grandsire in the host,

Advancing to the centre with all haste,
But, though he urged his charger to the utmost,
He found no traces of Afrásiyáb,
Whose soldiers, when they looked toward the centre
And missed the sable flag, laid down their arms
And asked for quarter. Kai Khusrau received them
With graciousness, gave them a separate camp,
Then bade his men set up the golden throne,
And deck the tents with broidery of Chín,
Brought forth the wine and summoned minstrelsy,
Inviting many captains of the host.
He made a feast which lasted till the dawn,
A feast which made the dead rise from their graves.
Whenas the sun's hand showed upon the sky,
And wounded with its nails the dark night's face,
The Íránian monarch bathed his head and body,
And with the Zandavasta sought a spot
Where he was hidden from the Íránians' eyes,
And where wild creatures could not hear his voice.
From break of day till in the Dome of Teak
The moon assumed her heart-illuming crown,
V. 1358 He offered praises to the Omnipotent
For that glad turn of fortune, rubbing oft
His visage in the dust and pouring down
Two rivers from his eyes upon his cheeks.
Thence he departed to his crown and throne
With stately step, glad-hearted, fortunate.
All who had fallen of the Íránians,
Alive or dead, they carried off the field,
But left with scorn the bodies of the foe.
They turned the whole field into charnel-houses,
And, when they had disposed of all the slain,
The Sháh bestowed the booty on his men,
And thence toward Gang-bihisht he made his way
With troops at all points ready for the fray.

§ 30

How the Faghfúr[1] *of Chín sent an Envoy to Kai Khusrau*

Now when the tidings reached Máchín and Chín
About the Turkmans and the Íránian king,
The Khán and the Faghfúr both writhed with anguish;
Each was concerned about his mighty throne,
Repented of the aid that he had furnished,
And diligently sought a remedy.
Said the Faghfúr: "Now will Afrásiyáb
Hereafter never even dream of greatness,
And therefore doubtless we shall suffer loss
Through having sent the treasure and the troops.
Repentance is the one resource for us
Since this is matter to destroy our realms."
He called to him a faithful messenger,
And gave him full instructions. What was fitting
Among his hoards—dínárs and uncut gems—
He sent with his excuses to the Sháh.
The messengers departed on their journey;
Those mighty men of Chín made no delay,
And in one sennight they arrived at Gang.
The conqueror received them graciously, V. 1359
And seated them according to their rank,
Accepted that which they had brought with them—
The rarities, the purses, and the slaves—
And thus addressed the envoy: "Say to him:—
'Accord us not an empty reverence,
Afrásiyáb must never visit thee
E'en in thy dreams at night.'"
The envoy left
Like wind and told the words to the Faghfúr,
Who, when he heard them, sent Afrásiyáb

[1] The Khán in the original, but the context seems to require the Faghfúr.

A messenger by night to say to him:—
"Avoid the frontiers of Khutan and Chín,
And grieve for all the evil done by thee.
All those who quit the path and go astray
Encounter tribulation on their way."

§ 31

How Afrásiyáb crossed the Sea

Afrásiyáb, when he had heard the message,
Repenting of his deeds of yore, betook him
Across the pathless desert, and resigned
The style of monarch to preserve his life;
But, seeing that his days were spent in pain,
Distress, and toil he made all haste to reach
Mount Ispurúz, and both by day and night
Avoided foes. His provand everywhere
Was game. Thus fared he till he reached the sea,
His loins all galled with travail, belt, and buckle.
Now when he reached that deep, whereto he saw
No middle and no end, he bade the shipman
Prepare a ship to carry him across.
The old Salt said: "Great monarch of Khutan
And Chín! although my years are seventy-eight
I ne'er saw ship cross hither."
Said the mighty
Afrásiyáb: "Oh! well is he that dieth
V. 1360 By water, not by foeman's scimitar!
The world accepteth him as one not slain."
He issued his commands to all the captains
To launch sufficient vessels and set sail
Toward Gang-dizh away from good and evil.
Arriving there he ate and slept in peace,
And rested from the fortunes of the war.
"We will be happy here," 'twas thus he spake,

"And not concern ourselves about the past;
When my dim star hath brightened I will cross
The sea, take vengeance on my foes, and make
My policy and institutions flourish."
When Kai Khusrau was made aware thereof—
The new departure of that ancient man—
He spake to Rustam thus: "Afrásiyáb
Hath crossed o'er to Gang-dizh, and thus made good
His words to me: 'High heaven is with us.'
His crossing turneth all our toils to wind.
Ne'er will I hold a parley with my grandsire
Save with the sword, ne'er hold this feud outworn,
But in the might of God, the Conqueror,
Gird me to take revenge for Siyáwush,
Will cover all Makrán and Chín with troops,
And traverse the Kímák. When both Máchín
And Chín are mine I shall not ask Makrán
For aid, but bear, if heaven will favour us,
The host across the sea. Although the task
Prove long I yet may take that man of blood.
Ye have endured much travail, and have passed
O'er field and fell and cultivated tracts,
And yet to lay this travail on ourselves
Is better than to give our foes the world.
Our fame shall last until the Day of Doom
For conquest and for foemen put to flight."
Thereat the paladins were sorely downcast,
Sighs were upon their lips, frowns on their brows.
"The sea is rough," they said; "with all these troops V. 1361
The business with fair winds would take six months!
Who knoweth which of us will 'scape the waters?
Afrásiyáb hath brought ill on the host:
On land we have to fight, and when at sea
Are in the gullet of the crocodile!"
Each had his plan, and after much debate
Thus Rustam spake: "Ye world-experienced,

Ye puissant princes, and ye veteran chiefs!
The toils that we have borne must not be fruitless,
Or made sport for the wind of indolence;
Moreover this victorious Sháh should gain
The fruit of his good star. We never halted,
Unless to fight, between Írán and Gang.
The Sháh would eat the fruit of all his toil;
For this he came, for this he will march on."
Whenas the army heard the words of Rustam
They framed their answer in an altered tone.
The mighty men, the men of wisdom, rose
With tongues prepared to answer pleasantly,
And said: "We all are servants of the Sháh,
And he that hath our service hath our love.
Thine is it to command on land and sea;
We all of us are slaves and bound to thee."

§ 32

How Kai Khusrau sent the Prisoners and Treasure to Káús with a Letter

The Sháh rejoiced thereat, made much of them,
And seated them, each as his rank deserved,
Then oped the portal of his grandsire's hoards,
Unmindful of the bonds of love and kindred.
They put upon a thousand lusty camels
Loads of brocade, of jewels, and dínárs.
There were ten thousand oxen drawing wagons
With implements of war, and camels laden
With drachms past counting from the treasury.
When night had come he issued orders, saying:—
"Bear the kinswomen of Afrásiyáb,
V. 1362 And household, whether they be slaves or daughters,
In litters from the palace by the road
Down to the royal park, and furthermore

A hundred famous and illustrious chiefs,
Each one of them renowned for gallantry,
And all the kindred of Afrásiyáb,
Whose eyes are filled with tears of grief for him,
Such men as Jahn and noble Garsíwaz,
In litters with their feet made fast in bonds,
Besides a thousand hostages from Chín
And Turkistán as pledges for those states."

The Sháh then chose him from the Íránians
Ten thousand men. He put them in Gív's charge,
And said: "O thou whose steps are fortunate!
Go with this company to Kai Káús."

He ordered next a scribe to come prepared
With paper, musk, and spicery, to write
A letter with rose-water, musk, and ink
About the matter of Afrásiyáb.
The scribe, whenas his pen was wet with musk
And ink, praised first of all the righteous Judge:—
"He is the Upholder and the Finisher,
He is the Artificer of earth and time,
The Maker of the ant and elephant,
Of trifling mote and of the dark blue sea,
The Lord of that which is and that which is not,
To whose supremacy all things submit.
The sky will not turn harshly o'er the man
Whom He hath fed with loving-kindliness.
His blessings be upon the king of earth,
The Maker of the warp and woof of peace.
I reached this fortress which Afrásiyáb
Kept for his season of repose and ease.
Within it were his throne and coronet,
His greatness, diadem, his crown, and host.
'Twas forty days before the ramparts fell,
And we could reach the enemy; but Gív
Will give the Sháh the full particulars
Of all that chanced upon the battlefield.

When in God's presence thou shalt ope thy lips
Give thanks on my behalf both day and night.
I will lead on the army to Máchín
And Chín, and thence will march upon Makrán,
And after with the aid of holy God
Will cross the sea."
Forthwith Gív left the presence
With many troops and gallant warriors.
The journey passed like wind; he neared Káús,
Who, when he heard of that auspicious offspring
Of paladins, sent many troops to meet him;
The nobles too set forward on the way.
When gallant Gív was coming to the Sháh
That warrior-band looked like a plain of lions.
Gív, entering the presence, kissed the ground
Before the state. Káús, on seeing him,
Arose with smiles and stroked him on the face,
Asked touching king and host, and how they fared
Beneath the circling sun and shining moon.
The gallant Gív told all that he had seen,
About the great king and the warriors,
In words whereat the ancient Sháh grew young,
Then gave the letter to a scribe to read,
Who read it to the monarch of Írán,
And filled the whole assembly with amaze.
Then Sháh Káús descended from his throne,
Took from his head the Kaian coronet,
And, wallowing upon the darksome dust,
Returned thanksgiving to all holy God,
And thence departed to his dwelling-place,
Escorted by his loyal paladins.
Gív told what he had seen and what Khusrau
Had said. Káús brought wine and summoned minstrels,
Inviting the brave princes of Írán,
And spent in converse all the livelong night;

Thus did the hours of darkness fleet away
Until with lights the guests went from the presence,
And made for home with glad and merry hearts.
Now when the sun shot from its radiant orb
Its arrows and night turned its gathered reins,
There rose a din of tymbals at the court,
The warriors went in to audience.
The ruler of the world then summoned Gív,
Placed him upon the famed, imperial throne,
And ordered that the spoils should be brought forth,
The haughty and illustrious warriors,
Together with the guiltless womenfolk—
The unseen victims of Afrásiyáb—
With Jahn and Garsíwaz—the man of guile,
Who had tripped up the feet of Siyáwush.
Káús, beholding wicked Garsíwaz,
Cursed him as he deserved. They brought both him
And Jahn in gyves before the lofty throne,
With all the prisoners and hostages.
The Sháh dealt with them after their deserts,
Put one in ward, another into bonds;
One was all hope, another in distress.
Káús beheld with eyelids full of tears
The daughters of the great Afrásiyáb,
And made the royal bower their dwelling-place,
With handmaids to attend them. All the spoils
Of every kind, dínárs and uncut gems,
He gave to the Íránians that they
Might call down blessings on the king of earth.
He made the captives over to his chiefs,
Retaining neither great nor small himself.
They then prepared a residence for Jahn,
Providing food, attendants, and a guard.
There was a gloomy dungeon in a hold,
Repulsive, with a charnel-house hard by,
And this became the lot of Garsíwaz:

Such are time's changes! Blest are they that rule
With open hands and hearts devout and pure,
V. 1365 Who reckon that the world will not endure,
And never haunt the portal of the fool;
But he whose wits are small and lusts[1] debased
Is by a leech among the madmen placed.
Whenas the Sháh had made an end of these
He cleared the hall of every stranger there,
And then the scribe prepared himself to write,
And made his pen's point like a diamond.
They wrote a letter to the provinces,
To all the men of name and all the chiefs:
It ran: "Túrán and Chín are now the Sháh's,
The sheep and leopard water at one cistern."
He made a gift of money to the poor,
And to his own attendants and his kin.
Before his portal for two sennights' space
Men saw no passage through the crowds that sought
For largess. The third week Káús reposed
In Grace upon the throne of majesty,
While mid the sound of flute and song the cup
Was welcomed. From the goblet of the Sháh
Rose for a sennight waves of ruddy wine.
When New Moon came he made a gift to Gív—
A gift of gold plate set with turquoises,
Of golden chargers and of turquoise goblets,
Of golden girdles and of silver harness,
Of female slaves with torques and earrings on,
Of bracelets and of crowns of jewel-work,
Of raiment also, thrones, and carpetings,
Of bright stuffs, perfumes, and embroidery.
The monarch sent for Gív; they seated him
Upon a golden throne and then presented
The gifts before him. After that was done
Gív with his face caressed the royal throne.

[1] Reading with C and P.

§ 33

The Answer of Sháh Káús to the Letter of Khusrau

A scribe with paper, musk, and spicery
Approached Káús, and wrote: "I am rejoiced
And well content with this God-given fortune
In that my son hath proved victorious, V. 1366
And worthy of the greatness, crown, and throne.
That bad man, who oppressed and used the world
To no end but for war and harrying,
Is now a fugitive therein through thee,
And no one uttereth his name aloud.
He was a man of bloodshed all his years,
Unstable, passionate, and evil-natured;
'Twas he who struck the neck of crowned Naudar—
That living monument of Sháhs of old.
He is a fratricide, a miscreant,
A regicide, malicious, vile, insensate.
Let him not set his foot within Túrán,
Makrán, or by the sea of Chín. Perchance
The world may be delivered from the villain.
Now if the upright Judge, the only God,
Guide thee to cleanse the earth of bad men's troublings,
And of fools' pratings and performances,
Be joyful in the justice of the Maker,
And be a new foundation for the world.
If I shall see thee come again in joy,
While grief shall fill the bosoms of our foes,
Thenceforth will I devote my days to prayer
To holy God, from whom are hope and fear,
That thou mayst be victorious and glad.
May thy head flourish, justice fill thy heart,
Be the Creator of the world thy Guide,
Thy seat upon the throne for evermore."
They sealed the letter with the Sháh's own signet,

And Gív went from the palace to return;
He loitered not in going to Khusrau
At Gang-bihisht, did reverence and delivered
The letter and the message of Káús.
The Sháh was joyful at his grandsire's words,
Called minstrelsy and boon-companions,
Exulting as a victor for three days.
The fourth day, when the World-illuminer shone,
He gave out helm and mail to all the troops,
Gave as it is the wont of Sháhs to give.
V. 1367 With Gustaham, son of Naudar, he left
A world—a noble host of warriors—
Then quitted favoured Gang-bihisht for Chín,
And won a fresh world with the scimitar.
He battled both by day and darksome night;
He was a watch by night, a scout by day,
And thus it was until in tears, with dust
Upon his head, he reached his father's city.
He went about the garth of Siyáwush,
Went where the bason overflowed with blood,[1]
And said: "If now the Judge, the only God,
Will but vouchsafe to guide me on the way,
Then by this self-same token will I shed
Afrásiyáb's own blood like water here!"
He left the spot, departing to his throne,
And communed with the holy Judge alone.

§ 34

The Embassage of Kai Khusrau to the Faghfúr of Chín and the King of Makrán

Khusrau chose envoys good at parleying,
And sent some to the Khán, to the Faghfúr,
And to the ruler of Makrán, to say:—

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 321.

"If ye will choose the right, perform my hest,
And in your hearts repent of your ill deeds,
Dispatch provisions on before my troops,
For ye must needs behold me on my march,
But him that turneth from these words of mine,
Or faileth to present himself before me,
Will I behead with trenchant scimitar,
And on his palace bring the Day of Doom."
These envoys went to all the provinces,
Wherever there was any famous chief,
And grieved were the Faghfúr and Khán of Chín,
Grieved too the potentates of all those climes,
But gave warm greetings to the messengers
In dulcet voices and with honied words;
They said: "We all are servants to the Sháh,
And only tread the earth to do his will.
We will survey the passes where the road
Is bad for troops, provision barren places, V. 1368
And furnish all the aidance in our power."
Those that were wise said: "If he pass us by,
And leave us scathless, we will give the poor
No little largess both of food and money."
Each gave large presents to the messengers,
Who came back to the court content and glad;
But when the noble envoy reached Makrán,
Approached the throne, delivered up the letter,
And gave the oral message that he bore,
He found the heart all other of that king,
Who thoughtlessly misprized the messenger,
To his folk's grief, and answered: "Tell the Sháh:—
'Assume not o'er us novel powers. The age
Is 'neath my fortune, and my crown and throne
Illume the earth, and when the bright sun shineth,
Such is its love, it shineth first on us.
Moreover I have knowledge and much wealth,
With greatness, manliness, and might of hand.

If any asketh leave to pass 'tis well,
Because the earth is every creature's realm.
If thou wilt pass I will not bar the way:
Do thou no damage with thy troops in passing;
But if thou enter cities with thy host
Thou hast no portion in this sovereignty.
I will not suffer thee to cross our soil,
Or even to set foot upon our marches,
Nor will I let thee come off conqueror,
However much thy good stars favour thee."
Now when the Sháh heard such an answer given
He moved forth from his quarters with the troops,
And took the way that leadeth through Khutan—
A world-lord followed by a famous host.
Then the Faghfúr and Khán of Chín came forth
To meet the Sháh with blessings and excuses,
Came with their chiefs to meet him on his way,
When he was still three stages short of Chín.
V. 1369 The route was cleared as bare as any hand,
The dales and plains were like a dwelling-place,
The road was well supplied with clothes and victuals,
With halting-places, feasts, and carpetings;
And when the troops were drawing near a city
The folk put decorations everywhere.
They fastened up brocade upon the walls,
And sifted musk and spicery o'erhead.
Then the Faghfúr, when confidence returned,
Went first to lead the way toward the palace,
Thus saying: "We are subjects of the Sháh—
If we are worthy even to be subjects.[1]
May thy good fortune civilize the world,
And may thy friends' hearts be rejoiced in thee.
Unworthy though my halls be of the Sháh
I hold them not inferior to the road."
Illustrious Khusrau went to the palace,

[1] Reading with P.

And took his seat upon the famous state,
While the Faghfúr presented unto him
A hundred thousand coins—dínárs of Chín—
And stood there in the presence of Khusrau,
Together with the prudent frontier-chiefs.
In Chín Khusrau continued for three months
With all the nobles of the Íránian host;
Each morning the Faghfúr attended him,
And made the Sháh new gifts continually,
Who in the fourth month marched from Chín like wind
Upon Makrán; but Rustam stayed behind.

§ 35

How Kai Khusrau fought with the King of Makrán and how the King of Makrán was slain

Khusrau departed and when near Makrán
Chose one of much experience from the host,
And sent him to the monarch with these words:—
"May kings and wisdom be companions.
Consider from what regions we have come:
We are not drunk and dozing o'er our purpose.
My fortune and my crown illume the world;
My throne is based on chieftains' heads. Prepare
A road and provand for my host; let plenty
Adorn my throne for no one fareth well V. 1370
When rations fail, and save I furnish them
The troops will combat and will make the world
Strait to their foes; but if thou wilt not hear me
Thou shalt wade through the blood of multitudes,
And make a desolation of Makrán
If thou attack the Lions unprovoked."
The envoy came and did his embassage,
But no advice or justice found a place

In that king's heart. His foolish head was angered;
He raged and there was mischief in his thoughts.
He concentrated all his scattered troops,
Prepared a battlefield upon the plain,
And bade the messenger: "Go get thee hence!
Return to that malicious man and say:—
'By change from days of darkness thou hast grown
Thus prosperous and world-illumining,
Yet, when thou comest, shalt behold our might,
And learn what men and warriors really are.'"

Whenas the envoy of the Sháh had gone
The whole state of Makrán was filled with clamour,
The land from mount to mount and all the marches
Were occupied by troops. The monarch brought
Two hundred elephants of war. "No room,"
Thou wouldst have said, "remaineth on the earth!"
While at the chargers' neighs and soldiers' shouts
The moon strayed from its pathway in the sky.
The scouts approached the Sháh and said to him:—
"Makrán is darkened with the dust of troops,
The realm is full of flags and elephants;
The Sháh can see them now two miles away."

The monarch bade his troops draw up in line,
And take their maces and their swords in hand,
While from Makrán a scout came on the plain,
And all the livelong night went round the host.
Upon the Íránian side Tukhár kept watch,
Who thought a fight a small thing. Those two met—
A noble Lion and fierce Elephant.
V. 1371 Tukhár struck with his falchion, clave his foe
In twain, and filled Makrán's king's heart with fear.
The two hosts in the ordering of their ranks
Made heaven viewless with the clouds of dust,
They drew toward each other mountain-like,
And closed; the leader Tús came from the centre,
While din of trump and tymbal filled the world,

With Káwa's flag before him, while behind
Were warriors with their golden boots. The air
Was full of arrows, earth of elephants;
The world was heaving like the dark blue sea.
The monarch of Makrán at the army's centre
Died smitten by a double-headed dart.
One asked: "Shall we cut off his head, O Sháh!"
Who answered: "We will treat him with respect.
Who cutteth off kings' heads unless he be
A villain of the seed of Áhriman?
Prepare a charnel-house, musk, and rose-water—
A sleeping-chamber worthy of a king—
And, seeing that the wound is through his mail,
By that same token strip ye not the body,
But veil his visage with brocade of Chín,
For he hath died the death that heroes die."
Now of that host there were ten thousand slain
Of cavaliers and warriors wielding swords;
Of prisoners there were seven and fifty score,
And the survivors' heads were filled with anguish.
The Íránians carried off the camp-enclosure,
The spoil, the elephants, and splendid throne,
And all the nobles of Írán grew rich,
While many had a crown and throne besides.
Anon the warriors, lovers of the fray,
Proceeded to the pillage of Makrán;
The wail of women rose from town and waste,
The land was full of cries; the Íránians fired V. 1372
The holds and towns, dashed heaven upon earth,
Transfixing many with their archery,
And making women and young children captives.
As soon as the Sháh's wrath had been appeased
He ordered that his army should withdraw,
And also that Ashkash, the shrewd of wit,
Should cease from pillage, strife, and harrying,
And suffer nobody to do an outrage,

Or treat the wretched with severity.
Then all the upright people of the state
Approached to plead their cause before the Sháh,
Thus saying: "We are innocent and helpless,
And aye oppressed by tyrants. It would be
Well worthy of the Sháh to pardon us
If he shall recognise our innocence."
A proclamation went forth from head-quarters:—
"Ye paladins whose counsel prospereth!
If through injustice, pillage, strife, or tumult,
Henceforth an outcry riseth anywhere,
Then will I cut in two the outragers
That have no fear of God before their eyes."
The worldlord tarried one year in Makrán,
And requisitioned great ships everywhere;
Then when the spring arrived and earth grew green,
When tulips filled the hills and grass the waste,
When steeds could pasture, hunters go afield,
And gardens were adorned by flowers and fruit-trees,
He bade his faithful liege Ashkash remain
To govern leniently and uprightly
Withal, maintaining justice unimpaired,
And marched out from the country to the desert,
Light-heartedly accepting all the toils.
'Twas holy God's decree that in the waste
They should not look on dust. The firmament
Was full of cloud, the earth of springing corn,
The world of tulips and of fenugreek.
V. 1373 Provision-trains went on before the host
In wagons drawn along by buffalos.
The waste gave herbage, room to camp was there,
Earth was all moisture, and all clouds the air.

§ 36

How Kai Khusrau crossed the Sea

The warriors, when Khusrau had reached the sea,
Put off their mail; the Sháh had taken with him
The mariners from Chín and from Makrán,
And made those preparations on the shore
That men are wont to make before a voyage;
He bade prepare provisions for a year
To last till he should reach the other side.
The prosperous Sháh, the seeker of God's way,
Withdrew in all his glory from the strand,
And, in the fervent importunity
Of pleading with the Maker of the world,
Besought of the Almighty and most High
To bear him scathless to dry land again.
He said: "Almighty Ruler of the world,
Who knowest both the secret and the open!
Thou art the Warden both of land and sea,
The Lord of heaven and the Pleiades,
The Guardian of my life and of my host,
The Guardian of my treasure, throne, and crown."
The sea was rough and all hearts were distressed,
Yet for six months the vessels were their couch.
The seventh month, when half the year had passed,
The north wind blew against them, and the sails
Were ta'en aback; the vessels moved stern-foremost.
They wandered from their proper course and reached
A place which sailors call "The Lion's Mouth,"
Yet God so ordered it that wind and storm
Dealt gently with the fortune of the Sháh.
The soldiers on the voyage pointed out V. 1374
To Kai Khusrau in great astonishment
How lions fought with oxen in the waves;
They sighted men with hair like lassos, men

Completely covered, as sheep are, with wool!
There was a troop with heads like buffalos,
Their hands behind their backs and feet in front!
There was a fish that had a leopard's head,
A crocodile that had an onager's,
A lamb a hog's! The water teemed with them!
The Íránians showed each other those strange sights,
And called upon the Maker of the world,
Till by the mercy of the Lord of heaven
The wind abated and the storm was hushed.
In seven months the voyage was completed,
They were not visited again by storms.

Khusrau on landing saw a spacious plain,
Then came before the Maker of the world,
And chafed his face upon the dusty ground.
He drew his ships and boats up from the sea,
And tarried not, there was no time to lose.
Before him were the desert, plain, and sands,
The shifting sands o'er which he passed unhurt.
The cities there resembled those of Chín;
The tongue was like that spoken in Makrán:
He rested in those cities and required
A great provision from them for his host.
The Sháh committed all that land to Gív,
And said to him: "Partake of fortune's fruits.
Treat even evil-doers leniently,
For wealth and goods are worthless to my heart.
Henceforward hold I no man of account,
But worship God who is the Succourer."

He chose out from the host a man of name,
Acquainted with the language of the folk,
To take a message to their kings, it ran:—
"Whoever seeketh peace and satisfaction,
Let him attend this court in merry guise,
With jocund heart, rich gifts, and right good will;
V. 1375 But he that shall transgress mine ordinance

Shall bear the penalty of his ill counsels."
Whenas the messenger had come to them
He gave the message of the king of kings,
And every one replied: "We are his subjects
If we are worthy even to be such."
No chief refused; they, old and young alike,
Came to the audience of the Sháh with gifts,
The marchlord and the monarch equally.
Khusrau, on seeing this, received them well,
And raised their necks until they reached the sun,
Then sought intelligence about Gang-dizh,
The throne of power, and Afrásiyáb.
The spokesman of the company replied:—
"No seas or mountains are before thee here,
And, reckoning all roads, both good and bad,
Hence unto Gang is but a hundred leagues.
No life is left in that unrighteous king,
But few of his unrighteous men remain,
And ever since he came across the sea
He and his followers have been at Gang."
The Sháh was glad at that intelligence,
And thought the labour light. He gave the chiefs
A robe of honour each, called for their steeds,
And then dismissed them homeward while he went
Toward Gang-dizh with all his armament.

§ 37

How Kai Khusrau reached Gang-dizh[1]

He drew the army up, gave rations out,
And, mindful of the Giver of all good,
Proclaimed: "Whoe'er ensueth wickedness
Shall writhe beneath the chastisement of God.
Ye must not so conduct you in this city

[1] Gang in the original.

That e'en an ant shall be a sufferer."[1]

V. 1376 Whenas the worldlord looked upon Gang-dizh
His cheeks were veiled by tears. Then from his steed
Alighting and with head upon the ground
He praised the Maker, saying: "O righteous Judge!
A slave am I whose heart is filled with awe
And reverence. Thou hast given me strength and rule,
Grace, army, courage, fortune, feet, and wings,
That I might see my father's city-walls
Arising from the ground. 'Twas Siyáwush
Who raised these battlements from their foundations
By Grace of holy God, and when a tyrant
Stretched forth a hand against him wickedly
His murder wounded all men to the heart."
The troops with one consent wept o'er those ramparts,
Wept for the blood of blameless Siyáwush,
Who perished by his adversary's hand—
An act which sowed the world with seeds of feud.
Now when these tidings reached Afrásiyáb:—
"The world-subduing Sháh hath crossed the sea,"
He kept what he had heard concealed till night,
And then without a word to any one,
And leaving all his veterans behind,
Fled unattended, full of wretchedness.
When Kai Khusrau had entered into Gang
His head was troubled and his heart was full.
He saw a pleasance that rejoiced all hearts,
With meadows like the lamps of Paradise;
Each corner had its fount and rosary,
The ground was hyacinths, each bough a perch
For nightingales. All said: "Behold a place
Where we could live in happiness till death!"
The wary king thereafter gave command
To seek the leader of the Turkman host.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 201, and *note*.

They searched the gardens, plains, and palaces,
Employing guides to point them out the way.
The searchers roamed about like maniacs,
If haply they might find a trace of him,
And in the prosecution of the quest
They captured no small number of his folk,
And slew full many who were innocent,
But of the unjust king they found no trace.
Khusrau abode a whole year at Gang-dizh,
With minstrels and with revellers; the world
Resembled heart-enthralling Paradise, V. 1377
All gardens, rosaries, and pleasances.
The Sháh's affection would not let him leave;
He tarried there victorious and glad.
The paladins of the Íránian host
Appeared one day before him and said thus:—
"Grant that the Sháh's heart be at perfect rest,
And not a thought be turned toward Írán,
Still in good sooth our foe Afrásiyáb
Hath left this shore and gone across the sea,
And Sháh Káús upon the throne is old
Without an army, treasure, Grace, and power;
So if Afrásiyáb shall reach Írán,
Full of revenge, who will watch o'er the land?
Should he recover throne and diadem,
Then all our travail will produce no fruit."
The Sháh replied: "The counsel that ye give
Is mated to advantage."
He convoked
The chief men of the place, spake much to them
Of travail past, and him that was the fittest—
The first in honour and most capable—
The Sháh presented with a robe of honour,
Intending to make Gang a marchlord's castle,
And said to him: "Abide here in all joy,
But never careless of the enemy."

He then distributed what wealth there was,
Distributed both steeds and hoarded treasures,
Enriching all the townsfolk with their shares;
What armlets, thrones, and coronets were theirs!

§ 38

How Kai Khusrau returned from Gang-dizh to Siyáwushgird

Now at the hour when chanticleer awaketh
The tymbals sounded in the palace-court,
Whereat the army eager to depart
Turned toward the desert. All the local chiefs,
Wherever there was any mighty man,
v. 1378 Went forth to furnish victuals for the way,
Such as were worthy of the Sháh and host.
Along the route whereby the army marched
The valleys and the plains were like bázárs;
No man could venture to withhold his hand
Upon the mountains, wastes, or camping-grounds.
The great men, who with gifts and offerings
Kept coming to give welcome to the Sháh,
Upon beholding such a glorious monarch
Approached in crowds to do him reverence,
While he excused them from attending him
Upon the march and gave them robes of honour.
Gív came forth with an army and with all
The leaders of that land to give him welcome.
The prudent Sháh received Gív graciously,
With honours such as Siyáwush had paid,
And, lighting when he reached the sea, inspected
The sails, and stayed two sennights on the shore
In talk with Gív of all that he had seen,
And said: "Whoe'er hath viewed not Gang hath naught
To make him wish to tarry on the earth."

The Sháh then bade his men to load the ships
And, sending first two boats, launched after them
A thousand vessels. He bade all that skilled
In seamanship, and showed a dauntless heart
Upon the depths of ocean, to set sail.
They crossed the sea, the voyage of a year,
In seven months; so speeding was the breeze
That Sháh and army made their way across,
And not a sleeve was turned by hostile winds.
Whenas the leader reached dry land once more,
And disembarking looked upon the plain,
He came and chafed his face upon the dust,
Invoking holy God. He lavished food
And raiment on the mariners and steersmen, V. 1379
And ordered robes of honour and dínárs
For those that had endured the toil aboard;
Then took the desert-route while all men marvelled.
Ashkash on hearing brought a host to meet him,
And lighting from his charger kissed the ground,
And did obeisance. They bedecked Makrán
Throughout, and summoned minstrelsy, the harp
Was heard in all the ways and wastes, and thou
Hadst said: "The harp is warp, the air is woof."
They decked the walls with hangings of brocade,
And scattered drachms and sweetmeats underfoot.
The magnates of Makrán—both men of name
And mighty warriors—appeared before
The conquering Sháh with gifts and offerings.
Ashkash presented all the land's best products.
The Sháh approved all that Ashkash had done
As ruler of Makrán, and chose a chief,
Bestowing on him many gifts and blessings.
When with the noble chieftains of Írán
Khusrau had left Makrán and drawn toward Chín,
Came Rustam, son of Zál, the son of Sám,
To meet him with a glad, contented host.

That noble cavalier, when Kai Khusrau
Appeared afar, beheld the parasol,
Alighted from his steed, and did obeisance.
The noble Sháh clasped Rustam to his breast,
Told of the wonders seen by him at sea,
And how Afrásiyáb, the sorcerer,
Had disappeared. He stayed as Rustam's guest
One sennight and then left Máchin and Chín,
Bestowing them on the Faghfúr and Khán,
Who ofttimes blessed him. Many a gift and counsel
He gave them and released their hearts from care,
V. 1380 Then took his way toward Siyáwushgird
Upon the Ard of month Sapandármad.
His eyes and heart were full on entering
His father's city. When he reached the spot
Where Garsíwaz, the man of evil mark,
Gurwí, the accursed, and executioners
Had shamefully beheaded Siyáwush,
He poured that dark dust on his head and rent
His face and breast while Rustam rubbed his face
In that dust too and cursed Gurwí's soul black.
Then Kai Khusrau exclaimed: "Thou, O my lord!
Hast left me here as thy memorial;
I have forgone no jot of vengeance for thee,
And will ensue it while the world endureth.
I made the throne quit of Afrásiyáb,
And I will seek no rest or sleep henceforth
In hope that I may get him in my clutches,
And make the world both black and strait to him."
Next turning to his father's treasure-hoard,
As he had been instructed by his mother,
He opened it and furnished forth supplies.
He stayed two weeks with gladness in that city,
And gave two hundred purses of dínárs
To Rustam and abundant gifts to Gív.
Now Gustaham, son of Naudar, on hearing:—

"The Sháh is visiting his father's city,"
Set forth to meet him with a mighty escort
Of chieftains and of warriors of Írán,
And, seeing in the distance the Sháh's head
And crown, alighted and fared far afoot,
While all the host acclaimed the earth's just king,
Who ordered Gustaham to mount his steed,
And thus they went rejoicing, hand in hand,
To Gang-bihisht. The troops received high honour.
Their loyalty was like a fruitful tree
In constant bearing. Sháh and cavalier
Were busy at the banquet and the chase,
While all the Turkmans of exalted rank
Had every favour that they could desire.
By day-time and by night-time equally V. 1381
Khusrau sought tidings of Afrásiyáb,
But nobody could show a trace of him;
There was no mention of him in the world.
One night the Sháh, when he had bathed himself,
Went with the scriptures of the Zandavasta
Apart, and all night wept and laid his head
Upon the ground before the Maker, saying:—
"This feeble slave of Thine hath evermore
Some trouble in possession of his soul.
The world—its mountains, deserts, wastes, and waters—
Will I thresh out to find Afrásiyáb
Because he walketh not Thy way, O Judge!
Contemning every one on earth as vile.
Thou knowest that he is neither just nor true,
A shedder of much blood of guiltless heads.
Oh! that the righteous Judge, the only God,
Would guide me to that doer of ill deeds,
For though I am but an unworthy slave
I am the Maker's worshipper. I hear
No fame or rumour of Afrásiyáb
On earth: I see him not but Thou seest all.

If Thou art pleased with him, O righteous Judge!
Divert my thoughts from any further strife,
Quench in my heart the fire of my revenge,
And make my purposes conform with Thine."
Then from the place of prayer he sought his throne,
A noble youth and of unsleeping fortune.
At Gang-bihisht he lived a restful life
For one whole year exempt from war and strife.

§ 39

How Kai Khusrau returned from Túrán to the Land of Írán

When he had tarried long at Gang-bihisht,
And yearned to look again on Kai Káús,
He put the country from the sea of Chín
Up to Kibchák in charge of Gustaham,
Son of Naudar, gave him a countless host,
And said to him: "Be ware of heart and glad.
Stretch forth thy hand o'er Chín and o'er Makrán,
Dispatching letters unto all the folk,
And seeking tidings of Afrásiyáb;
It may be that the world is rid of him."
V. 1382 Whatever was of value in the land—
Such as dínárs and precious stones uncut,
Musk, camphor, golden trappings for the steeds,
Slave-boys and horses, thrones and necklaces,
Brocade of Chín and carpeting, and all
The produce of the country of Makrán—
The monarch drave before him on the way,
In wagons drawn by forty thousand oxen,
While all men said: "None ever saw such wealth,
Nor hath there been such wealth as this before!"
The army was so great that day and night
The troops were passing over hill and vale,
And they who reached a station saw no break

In those behind them. Thus Khusrau reached Chách,
And hung the crown above the ivory throne;
Then as he tarried one week more in Sughd
Khúzán and Talímán appeared before him;
He marched thence to Bukhárá while the earth
Was hidden by his troops. In rest and feasting
One week was spent, the next, lamenting sore
Past times, he donned new raiment and approached
The Fane of Fire built with its towers by Túr,
The son of Farídún. He showered gold
And silver on the archmages and flung jewels
In numbers on the Fire. Then, fain to go,
The happy Sháh went with contented heart,
And crossing the Jíhún arrived at Balkh,
Experienced in this world's salts and sours;
Then, after he had tarried there a week,
Pursued his march, and left in every city
A noble of exalted rank with troops.
The people decorated way and waste
Where'er the Sháh was passing with his host.
As he neared Tálikán and the Marvrúd V. 1383
The world was full of sounds of flute and harp,
The people decorated all their cities,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy;
They poured down drachms and saffron from above,
Musk and dínárs were strewn from end to end.
Thence by the road to Nisháṕúr the Sháh
Conveyed the treasure, troops, and elephants.
On all the mendicants within the city,
And all that lived by toil, he lavished drachms;
Two score and fifteen purses were expended.
He went thence on the road to Dámaghán,
And all the way he scattered drachms and gold.
The monarch rested for a sennight there,
Inspecting horses, elephants, and troops,
And at the week's end went to Rai by roads

Filled everywhere with minstrel, harp, and wine.
For two weeks he did justice and gave gifts,
And with the third departed to Baghdád,
Dispatching camel-posts from Rai to go
To Kai Káús at Párs to let him know.

§ 40

How Kai Khusrau returned to his Grandsire

The heart of Sháh Káús revived thereat,
And thou hadst said: "He is another man!"
He set up in the halls his golden throne,
And decked his palace with the gauds of Chín.
They decorated all the towns and ways,
The streets, bázárs, and quarters of the city,
And all the nobles went to meet Khusrau,
The great men and the chieftains of Írán.
They put up cupolas on way and waste;
The world seemed all brocade of gold. The folk
Mixed musk and gems, and from the cupolas
Poured them upon the heads of those below.
When Kai Káús with his illustrious chiefs
Had come outside the city the young Sháh
Beheld his grandsire while a long way off,
V. 1384 And gave his steed the spur. The two embraced
With many a kiss upon the face and head,
And both of them shed tears of bitterness
For having lived disconsolate so long,
While Kai Káús applauded that young Sháh,
So favoured by the stars and fortunate,
And said: "Ne'er may the world, the crown of greatness,
And throne of nobles be deprived of thee,
Because the sun hath seen not such a Sháh,
Such steeds, such mail or such a throne and helm,

Among the mighty none hath borne such toils,
Or viewed so much earth's sights and mysteries.
If Siyáwush could quit the charnel-house
He would desire the Grace that now is thine;
Since he is gone be thou the world's delight
And be thy foes uprooted, heart and soul!"

Khusrau replied: "All was by thy good fortune.
Thine Offshoot fruited, and the grass would grow
From flint for any grandson born to thee."

His grandsire kissed him, teeth and lips, exclaiming:—
"May I be with thee ever, day and night."

Khusrau brought rubies, gold, and emeralds,
And showered them upon the old Sháh's head
In such a manner that the jewelled throne
Had all its feet concealed with offerings.
Káús commanded: "Call the company,
And spread the board within another hall."

The potent chiefs being seated with the Sháh
Within a rosary bedecked with gold,
Khusrau recounted all that he had seen—
Things seen and heard by none before that time.
His talk was of the sea and of Gang-dizh,
Which filled the lips of all the chiefs with sighs
For that delightful city, plain, and upland,
With meadow-lands and pleasances like lamps.
Káús was lost in wonderment at him,
And, estimating what he had achieved,
Said thus to him: "A young Sháh's youthful words V. 1385
Make month and day both young. None in the world
Hath ever looked upon a Sháh like thee,
No ear hath heard these tales. Come let us pledge
This youthful star and drink to Kai Khusrau."

He decked that rosary of golden work,
Brought wine and revellers with ruby lips,
And for a week a wave of wine o'erflowed
The goblet in the halls of Kai Káús.

The Sháh, the eighth day, oped his treasury,
And made a recompense for toils achieved.
For those great men that were with him in fight,
In feast and joy and grief, there was prepared
A robe of honour suited to their ranks,
And that the choicest in the treasury.
Then all departed, each to his own province,
Each noble followed by his famous troops.
The monarch dealt next with the common soldiers,
And from the treasury gave them one year's pay.
The grandsire and the atheling next sat
In conclave with the counsellors, and thus
Khusrau addressed Káús the Sháh, and said:—
"Of whom shall we seek guidance save of God?
We crossed the desert, spent a year at sea,
And journeyed seared of heart o'er mountain-ranges,
But nowhere on the mountain, sea, or desert
Saw any traces of Afrásiyáb.
If he shall suddenly arrive at Gang,
And gather troops, toils will confront us still,
Although the righteous Judge be on our side."
The grandsire, giving an old man's advice,
Replied: "We two will mount our steeds and seek
In haste the temple of Ázargashasp,
Will bathe our heads and bodies, hands and feet,
As well becometh worshippers of God,
And to the almighty Maker of the world,
In this our trouble, proffer muttered praise.[1]
Then, as we stand in presence of the Fire,
It may be holy God will be our Guide,
V. 1386 And He that showeth justice show the way,
To where Afrásiyáb is lying hidden."
This counsel they agreed to act upon,
Not swerving either of them from the path,
And, mounting swift as wind upon two chargers,

[1] See Vol. i. p. 80, *s.v.* Zamzam.

Sped to the temple of Ázargashasp,
In white robes, with hearts filled by hope and fear.
Whenas they looked upon the Fire they wept,
As though they were consuming in fierce flames,
Before the Master of the sun and moon;
They called upon the Maker of the world,
And showered jewels on the archimages.
Khusrau, while bathing still his face in tears,
Let fall dínárs upon the Zandavasta,
And thus they passed a sennight in God's presence;
But think not that they used in days of yore
To worship fire, 'twas but their cynosure.
Tears from the eyes of worshippers might pour,
Yet, though thou ponder long, when thought is done,
All holy God is still the needful One.
Thus at Ázar Ábádagán the two
Remained one whole month with their retinue.

§ 41

How Afrásiyáb was captured by Húm of the Race of Farídún

Now thus it came to pass: Afrásiyáb
Roamed to and fro foodless and slumberless,
His soul on thorns, his body but a curse,
Through constant terror of calamity.
He sought for some spot somewhere in the world
Where he might have repose of mind with health,
And found a cavern near Barda', a cavern
Upon a mountain-top concealed from men.
He saw no room for hawks to fly o'erhead,
No lion's trace, or boar's haunt, underneath.
'Twas far from cities and with water near:
Call it the cavern of Afrásiyáb.
The king in his despair took to the mountain

As being such an unfrequented spot,
V. 1387 Conveyed food thither, fearing for his life,
And made the cave his palace and his home,
Wherein he sojourned for a certain time
With full heart and repenting of his deeds.
Whene'er a monarch is athirst for gore
His tenure of the throne is well-nigh o'er,
So when this king, this master of the state,
This lord of earth, well-starred and fortunate,
Shed blood then enemies grew manifest!
The king that never saw kings' blood is blest.
Now in those days there lived a holy man,
One of the seed of Farídún, the teacher,
A devotee of Kaian Grace and mien,
One who was girded with a royal girdle,
And used the mountain as his place of worship
As being far from pleasures and from men.
The name of that illustrious one was Húm,
A man of prayer who shunned society.
A cavern that was on the mountain-height
Far from the throng was very near to him.
It happened that one day he climbed the mountain
That he might worship God, the righteous Judge,
And as he prayed upon the top before
The all-sustaining Ruler of the world,
And worshipped, vestured in his woollen robe,
A wailing from the cavern reached his ears:—
V. 1388 "Alas! O prince! O famous sovereign!
O mighty man exalted o'er the nobles,
Whom Chín, Túrán, and all the world obeyed,
Whose stipulations ran in every place!
Yet now thy portion is a cavern here!
Where are thy mighty men and men of war?
Where are thy treasure and thy manliness,
Thy valour, courage, and sagacity?
Where are thy majesty, thy throne, and crown?

Where are thy country and thy mighty host
Now that thou dwellest in this narrow cavern,
A fugitive within this rocky hold?"
Húm as he listened to the Turkman dirge
Forwent his prayers and, going from the spot,
Said thus: "This lamentation in the night
Must be the utterance of Afrásiyáb!"
Whenas he felt assured thereof at heart
He sought the entrance of the gloomy cave,
Discerned the cavern which Afrásiyáb
Had made his place of slumber and repose,
And then advancing like a savage lion
Put off the woollen garment round his loins,
And with the lasso that he used as girdle,
And which assured him of the Worldlord's aid,
Grasped in his hand, gained entrance to the cave. V. 1389
The king, as Húm approached, leapt to his feet.
They struggled long and Húm prevailed at last,
Threw down Afrásiyáb and tied his hands,
Then going from the cavern dragged him forth
With frantic efforts such as madmen use.
This is a matter that is wonder-worth;
But let whoever is a king on earth
About his own fair reputation think
Naught else—excepting only meat and drink.
Thus after all his luxury and ease,
His power, his army, and his treasuries,
Afrásiyáb to choose a cave did well;
If 'twas a net of bale how could he tell?

§ 42

How Afrásiyáb escaped from Húm

Húm, after having bound the monarch's arms,
Bore him from his retreat. Afrásiyáb

Exclaimed: "O pious man, thou devotee,
Who knowest holy God! what wouldest thou
With me—a monarch of the world although
I live concealed in this unfathomed cave?"
Húm said: "For thee it is no resting-place.
Thou art reported through the world as one
Oppugnant to the fear of holy God,
Who slew midst kings his brother Ighríras,
Illustrious Naudar, and Siyáwush,
That heirloom of the Kaians. Shed not thou
V. 1390 The blood of kings nor flee from throne to cave[1]
Unfathomed."
"Man of might!" the king replied,
"Whom knowest thou in this world free from fault?
Such was the process of high heaven above me
That I have brought forth travail, loss, and anguish;
Though one may catch a lion by the neck
He cannot thwart the purposes of God.
Oh! pity me who am in hopeless plight,
And am, however much I be a tyrant,
The grandson of the glorious Farídún!
Oh! free me from thy lasso's bondage! Whither
Wouldst bear me vilely bound? Hast thou no fear
Of God upon the Day of Reckoning?"
Húm said: "Malignant one! good sooth, thy days
Are few, thy words as weeds within a garden:
Thy fate is in the hands of Kai Khusrau."
Albeit Húm was sorry for the wretch,
And loosed for him the royal lasso's coils,
While he, on finding that the holy man
Felt pity for a king's bewailings, writhed,
And wrenched his body from his captor's clutch,
Then plunged into the lake[2] and disappeared!

[1] There is a play of words in the original between Gáh (throne) and Ghár (cave).

[2] *I.e.* Urumiah. See p. 136.

It happened that Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
Was on his way with Gív and other nobles
In state with expedition to the Sháh,
And gazing from a distance at the lake
Observed Húm with the lasso in his hand
Disconsolately wandering on the shore,
Saw too the water troubled and, observing
The sorry looks of Húm, said in his heart:—
"This holy man is fishing on the bank.
Perchance his net hath caught a crocodile,
And he is in amazement at the sight."
He spake to Húm and said: "O holy man!
What is thine object? Make it known to us!
What wouldst thou of the lake unless to wash V. 1391
That dusky form of thine?"
Húm answered him:—
"O noble man! consider what hath chanced:
I have my dwelling on yon mountain's top
Afar from men and 'tis mine oratory.
I passed the night, the livelong night, in prayer
Till at the hour when birds begin to sing
A sound of lamentation reached mine ears,
And thus I thought in my shrewd heart: 'Now I
Will rase the root of vengeance from the world.
This bitter wailing in the hours of slumber
Can be from no one but Afrásiyáb.'
I rose, searched all the mountain and the caverns,
And saw in one the famous man himself;
That luckless one was lying in the cave,
Lamenting bitterly o'er crown and throne.
He sprang up at mine entry from his place,
And gained a footing on the flinty floor,
Yet bound I with my girdle both his hands
Firm as a rock, so that they dripped with blood,
And brought him from the mountain in all haste,
What while he wailed and shrieked as women do.

Moved by his great and lamentable cries
And promises, I somewhat loosed his bonds.
Then on this very spot he slipped my grasp,
And pierced my heart and soul by his escape.
He vanished in these waters of Khanjast.
Now have I told thee all about the case."

Gúdarz, when he had heard the whole account,
Recalled to mind a legend of old times,
And full of thought went to the Fane of Fire,
Just like a man o'erwrought, and there began
To pray before the Fire, and offer thanks
To Him who made the world; then told the Sháhs
The secret and the things that he had witnessed,
Whereat they mounted on their steeds again,
And full of joy departed from the Fane.

§ 43

How Káús and Khusrau came to Húm

V. 1392 The monarch of the world in grave concern
Went instantly to Húm who, when he saw
The crowned heads of the two Sháhs, offered them
The reverence that was due, while they invoked
God's blessing on him. Then said Sháh Káús:—
"Thanks be to God in whom our refuge is
That I have seen the face of this good man,
This man of knowledge, power, and mastery."

Húm answered: "Through thy justice may the land
Be prosperous, may the days of this young Sháh
Be bright, and thy foes' hearts be rooted out.
I offered prayer upon this mountain-top,
What time the Sháh was passing to Gang-dizh,
That He who made the world would prosper earth
Through him. When he returned I laughed for joy,

[1] *Id.*

And sought God's presence, offering my praises.
At night-time suddenly the blest Surúsh
Made that which had been secret known to me:
A cry went up from yon unfathomed cave;
I heard it and attended to the voice.
One bitterly lamented ivory throne,
Realm, army, state, and crown. Down from the peak
To that strait cave I came and grasped a lasso—
My girdle. I beheld the head and ears
Of him that sojourned there—Afrásiyáb.
I used my lasso as a cord and tied him
Firm as a rock, then haled him forth all helpless.
He bitterly complained of those tight knots,
And said in anguish: 'O beloved of fortune!
Relax for me the tightness of these bonds.'
But when I did so he escaped my grasp,
Plunged, and is hidden in the water there!
We must cut off his foothold from the world.
If he be still as heaven fashioned him V. 1393
His blood will stir with love for Garsíwaz
What time the exalted Sháh shall give command
To bring that brother with his feet in fetters,
And sew him to the neck in raw ox-hide,
Depriving him of power to help himself.
Afrásiyáb, when he shall hear the voice
Of Garsíwaz, will come forth from the lake."
The Sháh bade those who mounted guard that day
To go with swords and bucklers of Gílán,
And fetch the miserable Garsíwaz—
The cause of all the trouble in the land.
The monarch bade the executioner:—
"Drag him along and show him no respect."
They put him in an ox-hide to the neck
So that he could not stir. His skin burst on him,
He begged for mercy, and asked God for aid.
Afrásiyáb, whenas he heard that voice,

Rose quickly to the surface of the lake,
And swimming onward with his hands and feet
Came to a spot that was within his depth,
And listening to his brother's cries on shore
Saw what was worse to him than death itself.
When Garsíwaz beheld him in the water,
With eyes fulfilled with blood and troubled heart,
He cried and said: "O monarch of the world,
The head of nobles and the crown of chiefs!
Where are thy customs, state, and policy?
Where are thy head and treasure, crown and host?
Where all thy knowledge and thy might of hand?
Where are the mighty men that were thy lieges?
Where are thy glory and thy fame in war?
Where are thy joys in goblet and in feast
v. 1394 Since thou hast need to hide thee in the lake,
And such ill fortune hath befallen thee?"
Afrásiyáb thereat shed tears of blood,
And answered: "I have roamed the world at large
Both publicly and privily withal
If haply I might 'scape mine evil lot,
But ill and worse than ill befalleth me!
Now is my life grown loathsome and my soul
Fulfilled with anguish for thy sake that one
Sprung from Pashang and Farídún erewhile
Thus should be netted by the Crocodile!"

§ 44

How Afrásiyáb was taken the second Time and how he and Garsíwaz were slain

While these two princes were exchanging words
The mind of Húm, the devotee, devised
A scheme; he went upon a spit of land,
And, when he saw Afrásiyáb anear,

Undid the royal lasso from his waist,
And came on stalking like a savage lion,
Then flung the lasso that was ready coiled,
And took the monarch's head within the noose.
Húm dragged him forth in miserable plight,
And loathing life itself, from lake to land,
Resigned him to the Sháhs and went his way;
Thou wouldst have said: "He and the wind are mates!"
The world-lord with a trenchant sword approached,
His head all vengeance and his heart all wrath,
And thus Afrásiyáb, the insensate, spake:—
"This is the very day whereof I dreamed![1]
The sky hath long turned o'er me, and it now
Hath rent the veil that hid its purposes.
O wicked seeker of revenge!" he cried, V. 1395
"Why dost thou wish to slay thy grandsire? Speak!"
"O evil-doer," answered Kai Khusrau,
"Well worthy of reproach and infamy!
First I allege the murder of thy brother,
Who never sought to injure noble men;[2]
Next of Naudar, that famous sovereign—
That world-lord and memorial of Íraj—
Whose neck thou clav'st with thy sharp scimitar,
And brought'st a Day of Doom upon the world;[3]
And thirdly that of Siyáwush, like whom
None seeth any horseman to recall him,
Whose head thou didst cut off as 'twere a sheep's,[4]
And didst exalt thyself above high heaven.
How was it possible to slay my sire
And not expect an evil day like this?
Thou wast in haste to work iniquity,
And hast for ill a recompense of ill."
He said: "O Sháh! that which hath been hath been,
I cannot choose but listen to thy words;

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 232.
[2] See Vol. i. p. 367.
[3] See Vol. i. p. 362.
[4] See Vol. ii. p. 320.

Yet suffer me to see thy mother's face,
And then speak on."
But Kai Khusrau replied:—
"Instead of asking for my mother, think
What evil thou hast wrought upon my head!
My sire was guiltless; I was still unborn;
Yet was thine evil rampant in the world!
Thou didst behead a king for whom the crown
And throne of ivory wept bitterly;
Now is the day when God will recompense;
He payeth ill with ill."
With Indian sword
He smote Afrásiyáb upon the neck,
Then flung upon the dust the swarthy form,
V. 1396 Whose ears and hoary beard were red with blood,
While Garsíwaz his brother lost all hope;
Afrásiyáb's imperial throne was void;
The day of his good fortune reached its close;
Ill came on him for ill. Seek not, my son,
A key whereby ill's bonds may be undone.
Why shouldest thou? Thou knowest that from ill
Ill will befall the evil-doers still?
A king possessed of Grace divine will vent
His wrath in bonds and in imprisonment,
For if he sheddeth blood his life will be
Forlorn, high heaven exact the penalty.
To fierce Bahrám thus said an archimage:—
"Shed not the blood of guiltless heads. If thou
Wouldst keep that crown of thine upon thy brow
Be clement, let good thoughts thy mind engage.
Consider what the crown said to the head:—
'O head! in thee let brains and wisdom wed.'"
The cheeks of Garsíwaz were wan, his heart
Was full of trouble for Afrásiyáb.
They dragged him from the jailors shamefully
In heavy bonds, on that his evil day,

Begirt with guards and executioners
As such a noted miscreant deserved.
When in sad plight he came before Khusrau,
With tears of blood upon his livid cheeks,
The Sháh, the king of kings, set loose his tongue,
Discoursing of the dagger and the bowl,
Of Túr, the son of Farídún, fierce Salm,
And of Íraj, that most illustrious prince;
Then called an executioner who came
With trenchant sword unsheathed, and cruel heart,
And clave the chief asunder at the waist
While all the soldiers' hearts were terror-stricken.
They flung those two like mountains side by side
While folk stood round beholding far and wide.

§ 45

How Káús and Khusrau returned to Párs

In all haste from the lake, when he had won V. 1397
His whole desire from God, the Sháh departed
Toward the temple of Ázargashasp.[1]
He and his grandsire offered to the Fire
Much gold and murmured many a benison.
One day and night they stood before the Judge
Of all the world, the Guide, and when Zarasp,
The treasurer of Kai Khusrau, had come
He gave Ázargashasp a treasure, clad
In robes of honour all those archimages,
And lavished drachms, dínárs, and precious things.
Within the city to the mendicants,
And those who earned their living by their toil,
The Sháh gave wealth as well, and made the world
Alive by justice and munificence,
Then took his seat upon the Kaian throne,

[1] See p. 258.

Undid the audience-door and shut his lips.
They wrote dispatches to the provinces,
To every man of name and every chief;
From west to east went letters to each place
Wherein there was a chieftain known to fame:—
"The scimitar of Kai Khusrau hath freed
Earth's surface from the evil of the Dragon;
V. 1398 The Sháh, sustained by God the Conqueror,
Hath neither rested nor relaxed his girdle;
The soul of Siyáwush hath gained new life
In him, the world's whole surface is his slave."
The Sháh bestowed much wealth upon the poor,
Upon the devotees, and his own kin,
Then said: "Ye men of name, illustrious lords!
Bring from the city wife and little ones,
With minstrels and provisions to the plain."
Therewith he gave himself to minstrelsy.
Then all the nobles of the royal seed,
And all the kindred of Zarasp withal,
Went to the temple of Ázargashasp,
And there spent forty days with Kai Káús,
With minstrels, harp, and wine. When the new moon
Shone like a gold crown on a young king's head,
The mighty men betook themselves to Párs
To rest from war and strife. In every city
Along the road men gathered round the throne,
Meanwhile the Sháh oped treasure-bags till all
The folk grew rich, except the prodigal.

§ 46

The Death of Kai Káús

Káús, assured of peace of mind, declared
The secrets of his heart to God: "O Thou
Above all fortune and the Guide to good!

I had from Thee Grace, state, and majesty,
With fortune, valour, throne, and diadem;
None else, as Thou hast me, hast Thou endowed
With treasure, throne, and an exalted name.
I asked of Thee that some illustrious man
Might gird his loins in wreak for Siyáwush,
And saw my grandson, who is mine own Eye,
Achieve at once my vengeance and his own.
This atheling surpasseth other kings
In wisdom, Grace, and height. Since fifty years
Thrice told have made these musky locks of mine V. 1399
Like camphor, and the graceful Cypress boweth,
I take it not amiss that life should cease."
But little time elapsed and then his name
Remained as his memorial in the world.
Khusrau, the worldlord, left his throne and sat
Upon the grimy dust. The Íránian nobles
Went in funereal robes of blue and black,
Without bright colours or perfumes, afoot,
And spent two sennights mourning for the Sháh.
They built a lofty hall ten lassos high
To be the mausoleum of Káús;
This done, the royal officers brought out
The finest lawn with black brocade of Rúm,
And, having poured upon them aloes, musk,
And camphor, wrapped the shrivelled corpse therein.
They set him on a throne of ivory,
Placed on his head a crown of musk and camphor,
And when Khusrau had turned and left the throne
They locked the portal of the place of sleep,
And no man looked on Kai Káús again:
He rested from revenge and battlefield.
Such is the fashion of this Wayside Inn!
Thou wilt not tarry here in toil for ever.
The man of lore, the mailèd paladin,
Obtain remission from Death's clutches never;

Be we Zarduhsht himself, or be we king,
Brick is our pillow, dust our cushioning.
Be merry then, ensue what pleasureth thee,
And afterward, when thou hast made that sure,
Seek fame, but know this world thine enemy,
The earth thy bed, the grave thy garniture.
The Sháh bewailed his grandsire forty days,
Refraining from all pleasure, crown, and state.
The next day on the ivory throne he donned
The heart-illuming crown. The troops assembled
At court, the chiefs and magnates helmed with gold
V. 1400 Blessed him with joy and strewed the crown with jewels.
There was a festival throughout the world
Because he sat victorious on the throne,
And thus, till sixty years had passed away,
The whole world was obedient to his sway.[1]

§ 47

How Kai Khusrau fell into Melancholy

V. 1405 The Sháh's great soul became solicitous
About God's dealings and his own high state:
He said: "From Hind and Chín to Rúm each place
Is prosperous; withal, from west to east,
Mount, desert, land, and sea have I made void
Of foes; the rule and throne of might are mine;
The world no longer dreadeth enemies.
Full many a day hath passed above my head,
And I have gained from God my full desire,
Besides the vengeance that I had at heart,
Yet let me not grow arrogant of soul,
Corrupt in thought, an Áhriman in faith,
And be an evil-doer like Zahhák,
Jamshíd, or such an one as Túr or Salm.

[1] A spurious passage, describing how Kai Khusrau made Jahn king of Túrán, is omitted here.

Sprung from Káús on one side, on the other
Sprung from Túrán—all rancour and vainglory—
I, like Káús and like Afrásiyáb,
That warlock froward even in his dreams,
May grow an ingrate unawares to God,
And fray mine own pure soul. His Grace will quit me,
I shall incline to falsehood and unwisdom,
And when I pass within the gloom, and when
My head and diadem shall come to dust,
I shall but leave a bad name in the world,
And make an evil ending in God's sight.
This face of mine, this colour of my cheeks
Will fade, my bones be clad in dust, and all
Accomplishment be lost. Ingratitude
Will come instead, and in the other world
My soul be dark. Another will assume
My crown and throne, and tread my fortune down.
A bad name will be my memorial;
The roses of mine ancient toils will turn
To thorns. Since now I have avenged my sire, V. 1406
And have adorned the world with goodliness,
Have slain who should be slain, because they were
Perverse and hostile to all holy God,
No place remaineth—settlement or desert—
That hath not read the legend on my sword;
While all the mighty of the world obey me
Albeit they be monarchs throned and crowned.
Thanks be to God who gave to me the Grace,
With feet and wings amid the change of fortune.
And now I deem it better to depart
To God in all my glory, and perchance
The Almighty's messenger may, though unseen,
And while I still am flourishing, convey
My spirit to the dwelling of the just,
Because this Kaian crown and throne will pass.
None will excel me in success and fame,

In greatness, welfare, peace, and revelry,
For I have heard and witnessed this world's secrets,
Its good and ill both privy and apert;
But still for husbandman and king alike
There is a common end—the way to death."
The Sháh gave orders to the chamberlain
On duty: "Whoso cometh to the court
Refuse admittance to him with fair words,
Be courteous to him and refrain from harshness."
Thus saying he departed to the pleasance
With lamentations and with loins ungirt,
Bathed, ere he prayed, his body and his head,
And sought by wisdom's lamp the way of God,
Then donned a new white robe and all devout
With heart of hope paced toward the oratory,
There prayed in secret to the holy Judge,
And said: "O higher than pure soul, the Maker
Of fire, of air, and dust! behold and grant me
Much wisdom, and to know both good and ill.
I will give praises to Thee while I live,
And strive to better what I have done well.
Forgive whatever I have done amiss;
Let me not use my power frowardly;
V. 1407 Keep from this soul of mine the ills of fortune,
And all the machinations of the Dív,
So that unlike Káús, Zahhák, Jamshíd,
I may not yield to passion's tyranny;
And if he shut on me the door of virtue,
And fraud and guile grow strong, let not his power
Avail to the destruction of my soul,
But bear it to the mansions of the just.
Look down on me in answer to my prayer."
He stood thus for a week both day and night
In body, but his spirit was afar.
Now when the sennight ended Kai Khusrau
Began to totter, for his strength had failed,

And with the eighth day's coming he had gone
From oratory back to royal throne.

§ 48

How the Nobles inquired why Khusrau had closed his Court

The paladins of the Íránian host
All marvelled at the conduct of the Sháh,
And divers were those famous warriors' thoughts.
Now, when the illustrious Sháh resumed the state,
The chamberlain came to the door and bade
Remove the curtain and admit the host.
Then came with folded arms the mighty men—
The cavaliers and men of lion-looks—
Such men as Tús, Gúdarz, and gallant Gív,
Gurgín, Ruhhám the Lion, and Bízhan,
Shídúsh and Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
With Faríburz and Gustaham and others,
Who, having seen the Sháh and done obeisance,
Disclosed to him their secret thoughts and said:—
"O Sháh! O brave! O head! O cypress-tree!
O ruler of the world and chief of chiefs!
No Sháh like thee hath filled the ivory throne;
From thee both sun and moon derive their light,
Thou dost exalt steed, mail, and saddle, and give V. 1408
To glorious Ázargashasp fresh lustre.
Not fearing travail, toying not with wealth,
Thou makest toils more numerous than treasures.
We paladins are all of us thy slaves,
Dependent for our lives on sight of thee,
Who hast trod all thine enemies to dust,
And in this world hast no one left to fear.
Thine are the troops and treasure of all realms:
Where'er thou settest foot thou labourest.
We know no reason why the monarch's thoughts

Have grown so gloomy at this present time;
This is thy season to enjoy the world,
Not to be sorrowful and fade away.
If now the Sháh is vexed by any fault
In us, so let him say that we may please him,
And fill our cheeks with blood, our hearts with fire;
Or if he tell us of some secret foe
All those that wear a royal crown themselves
Will pledge their thrones and crowns to take the head
Of that man off him, or to lose their own,
What time they don the helmet of the brave.
Let him inform us what the secret is,
And then devise with us."
The noble Sháh
Replied: "O paladins, who seek the way!
I am not harassed in the world by foes,
My treasure is not squandered anywhere,
The army doth not trouble me at all,
Nor is there one in fault among yourselves.
When on his foemen I avenged my sire,
And decked the world with justice and the Faith,
No single foot of darksome earth was left
That had not read the inscription on my signet;
Return ye then your falchions to their scabbards,
And wield the goblet not the scimitar;
Instead of twanging bows make ready flutes
And harps with wine and colour and perfume,
For we have done what there was need to do,
And cleared the world of foes. For one whole week
V. 1409 Have I been standing in the sight of God,
Fulfilled with contemplation and good rede.
I have a secret longing which I ask
The Maker of the world to gratify,
And will declare it when He answereth,[1]
And by His answer maketh glad my days.

[1] Reading with P.

Do ye too offer praises unto God,
Entreating Him, who is the Source of power
For good and ill, to grant this boon and blessing:
Praise be to Him who hath revealed the way.
When this is done ensue all happiness,
And banish thoughts of evil from your hearts.
Know that the restless sky, discerning not
'Twixt fosterer and fostered, cherisheth
The old and young alike, and we are witness
Both to its justice and its tyranny."

The paladins departed from the Sháh,
Their hearts distracted with their griefs. He bade
The chamberlain: "Sit down behind the curtain,
And let none, kin or alien, come to me."

At night he went forth to the place of prayer,
Unclosed his lips before the almighty Judge,
And said to Him: "O higher than the height,
Thou who exaltest purity and goodness!
Vouchsafe to be my guide to Paradise
Or ever I shall quit this Wayside Inn;
May no perverseness turn my heart aside,
But let my soul among the blest abide."

§ 49

How the Íránians summoned Zál and Rustam

Now when a week had passed, and Kai Khusrau
Showed not his face, there rose much talk and clamour.
The paladins assembled to a man—
The lords, the sages, and the counsellors—
Such as Gúdarz and Tús, son of Naudar,
And there was much dispute of right and wrong,
About the ways of autocratic Sháhs—
Those that served God and those that did amiss—
And all narrated stories of the great,

The nobles and the sages of the world.
V. 1410 Gúdarz said unto Gív: "O fortune-favoured,
The servant ever of the crown and throne!
Thou didst sustain much travail for Írán,
Abandoning thy country and thy kindred.
A sorry matter now confronteth us—
One that we cannot hold of small account.
Thou needs must set forth for Zábulistán,
Dispatch a mounted courier to Kábul,
And say to Zál and Rustam: 'Kai Khusrau
Hath turned himself from God and lost the way,
Hath closed the door of audience to the nobles,
And surely is in conclave with the Dív.
We have asked questions and have made excuses,
Appealing to his justice in the case;
He listened much but answered not; we see
His heart distraught, his head fulfilled with vapours,
And fear that he will grow, like Sháh Káús,
Perverse, and that the Dív will make him err.
Now ye are paladins more wise than we,
With greater influence in all affairs,
So whatsoever counsellors ye have—
Men of Kannúj, Dambar, and Margh and Mái,
Star-readers of Kábulistán and all
The sages of Zábul—bring to Írán
To treat this matter. All the realm is full
Of rumours since the Sháh denieth speech
And audience. Now that we have tried all means
We look to Zál to set the matter right.'"
Gív, hearing this, chose out some valiant men,
And went in dudgeon, brooding moodily,
Toward Sístán. Arrived he told to Zál
And Rustam those strange things that he had seen
And heard; to noble Zál he sadly said:—
"We have espoused much grief." He said to Rustam:—
"Call from Kábul and summon from Zábul

The wise, the astrologers, and archimages
To bear us company."
Then all set face V. 1411
Toward Zál and they departed for Írán.
The worldlord stood seven days in prayer, but when
The world-illuming sun shone on the eighth
The audience-chamberlain removed the curtain,
And Kai Khusrau sat on the throne of gold.
Then all the paladins and archimages
Approached. A multitude of prudent nobles
And counsellors stood there before the worldlord,
Who looked on them, received them graciously,
And, as the Kaians used, assigned them seats;
But of those famous, loyal lieges none
Would take his seat or loose his folded arms;
They oped their lips and said: "O turning Heaven!
O worldlord full of justice, bright of soul!
Thine are the power and Grace of majesty;
From earth to sun and Fish all, all is thine.
We stand as slaves before thy presence, we
Thy paladins and faithful counsellors,
To ask why thou hast shut thy court to us.
Now time hath passed thus and our hearts are sore
And sad. If then the Sháh will tell this secret
To us his marchlords, who are all astray,
We will turn seas to land if they annoy him,
And change the robe of dust thereon to musk,
We will rase mountains if they be the cause,
And with our falchions cleave the hearts of foes,
While if the cure be wealth let not the Sháh
Be troubled in respect of cash and treasure;
We all keep watch upon thy treasury,
And full of anguish weep at thy distress."
He made reply: "I need my paladins
Although my heart hath no anxieties V. 1412
Respecting mastery and men and treasure.

No foeman hath appeared within the realm
To cause me any care on his account;
But yet mine ardent heart hath one desire
That I will not uproot therefrom, and now
Throughout the dark night till the dawn of day
I wait the consummation of my hopes,
And when that cometh I will tell you all,
And utter what as yet I leave unsaid.
Go ye your ways victorious and glad,
Dismissing such thoughts from your memories."
Then all the paladins, those noble men,
Called blessings down on him, and grieved again.

§ 50

How Kai Khusrau saw Surúsh in a Dream

As soon as they had gone the wakeful Sháh
Gave orders to the chamberlain, who closed
The curtains and sat down beside the portal,
Despairing of victorious Kai Khusrau.
The worldlord went before the Lord most high,
Entreating Him that He would be his guide,
And said: "Almighty Ruler of the heaven,
Who kindlest goodness, charity, and justice!
This sovereignty advantageth me not
Unless I am in favour with my Lord;
But whether I have acted well or ill
Bestow on me a seat in Paradise."
Thus stood he pleading for five sennights' space
Before the presence of the Lord most high.
One night the Sháh slept not for suffering
Until the moon had risen, then he slept
But with his mind awake—that spouse of wisdom—
And dreamed that blest Surúsh thus whispered him:—
"O Sháh, the favourite of the stars and fortune,

Who much hast handled armlet, crown, and throne!
Now hast thou won thy whole desire, if thou V. 1413
Art instant in abandoning the world.
Near to the throne of God, the holy Judge,
Shalt thou have place; abide not in this gloom.
Bestow thy treasures on the worthiest,
And let another have the Wayside Inn.
Thou shalt grow rich by bounteously entreating
The mendicants and those of thine own kindred.
Know that the man who hath escaped the clutch
Of misadventure, or the dragon's breath—
Each that hath suffered travail for thy sake—
Endured the toil that he might win the spoil.
Give then thy havings to the worthiest,
Because thou wilt not tarry here for long,
And choose as ruler for the throne a man
That will not hurt an ant upon the ground.[1]
When thou hast given away the world rest not,
Because the season of dispatch hath come
To thee. Luhrásp hath fitting excellence;
Resign to him the kingship, throne, and girdle.
The place that thou hast sought from God is thine,
Ascend without death and depart thou thither."
He spake much else in secret to the Sháh,
Who marvelled at the message and, what time
He wakened from his slumber, all fordone,
Saw that the oratory ran with sweat!
He wept and, with his face upon the ground,
Made his thanksgiving to the Omnipotent,
And said: "If I shall pass away forthwith
I shall attain from God my heart's desire."
He went to occupy the ivory throne,
And carried in his hand a robe unworn,
And, having donned that raiment, sat him down,
A Sháh without an armlet, torque, or crown.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 201 and *note*.

§ 51

How Zál admonished Kai Khusrau

V. 1414 Now on the sixth week Zál and Rustam came
In discontentment and distress of heart.
The Íránians when they were advised thereof
Made haste, heart-broken too, to go to them.
When Rustam had appeared in sight with Zál,
Together with the prowest archimages,
All those who were the kinsmen of Zarasp
Urged on their steeds to go and welcome them,
While all the nobles with the golden boots
Advanced with Káwa's standard. When Gúdarz
Reached matchless Rustam tears ran down his cheeks;
The faces of the advancing troops were wan;
All hearts were seared and troubled for Khusrau.
The Íránians spake to Zál and Rustam thus:—
"The Sháh hath erred by counsel of Iblís.
The audience-chamber is completely thronged,
But none beholdeth him by night or day.
They ope the door of audience once a week,
And thither go we but, O paladin!
Quite other now is Kai Khusrau than when
Thou usedst to behold him bright and happy
Of soul. The straight-stemmed Cypress-tree is bent,
The red Rose hath the colour of the quince.
I know not that the evil eye hath seen him,
Or why his rosy face is withered so,
Unless the Íránians' fortune hath grown dim,
Or stars have brought on him this decadence;
Or whether 'tis the fear of holy God
That causeth in his heart such melancholy;
Or if the Dív hath made him err and wrecked
Once and for all the world."

Brave Zál replied:—

"The Sháh hath grown aweary of the throne.
There are such things as health and suffering,
Distress and gladness too have each their time.
Have not your heart so greatly sorrowful,
For sorrow casteth down the blithest soul.
We will speak much to him and counsel him, V. 1415
And by our counsel bring his star success."
The wayfarers made haste to court. The curtain
Was drawn aside. They were admitted gladly
In order due—Zál, elephantine Rustam,
Tús and Gúdarz and all their company,
And then Gurgín, Bízhan, and Gustaham
With all the warriors of their retinue.
The king of kings, when he beheld Zál's face,
And heard the voice of Rustam at the curtain,
Rose to his feet in wonder from the throne,
And standing greeted Zál and clasped his hand:
As for the wise men from Zábul, Kannúj,
Dambar, and from Kábul, he greeted each,
And courteously entreated them, assigning
To each his place and to the Íránians
The highest. Zál did reverence and spake thus:—
"Live happily while month and year endure!
Of all the famous chiefs that we can call
To mind from Minúchihr to Kai Kubád,
As well as Zav, son of Tahmásp, Káús—
Great men and Sháhs whose steps were fortunate—
And Siyáwush, who was as mine own son,
Endowed with stature, dignity, and Grace,
None have I seen with Grace, renown, and wisdom
Such as the Sháh's, and may he reign for ever
Victorious, intrepid, just, and wise.
Thou hast pervaded all the world with justice,
And come again in triumph and in joy.
What king but is as dust beneath thy feet?
What bane for which thy name is not a cure?

Received have I some most unwelcome news,
And thereupon have made all haste to come.
V. 1416 One from Írán declared: 'The conquering Sháh
Hath bid the audience-chamberlain to leave
The curtain down and hide our monarch from us.'
I like an eagle or a ship at sea
Have come in all haste, since the Íránians grieve,
That I might ask the monarch of the world
About the secret matter on his mind.
The readers of the stars, the mighty men
Whom I saw chief within their provinces,
Have come with Indian tablets from Kannúj,
Dambar, and Margh and Mái to ascertain
The secret of the sky, and why the Sháh
Withdraweth his affection from Írán.
Now all well-being resteth on three things,
With which the throne of royalty is safe;
The three are treasure, toil, and valiant men:
Without them glory, rule, and fight are not.
A fourth is that we offer praise to God,
And make our prayers before Him night and day,
Because He is His servant's succourer,
One who restraineth the injurious.
We will bestow much wealth upon the poor,
Though it should cost us what we value most,
That He may make thy spirit bright again
With wisdom for the armour of thy brain."[1]

§ 52

How Kai Khusrau answered Zál

Khusrau gave ear, then made a sage reply:
"Old man of honest brain!" he said to Zál,
"Right goodly are thy counsels and thy speech.

[1] Reading with P.

Since Minúchihr was on the throne till now
Thou hast been kindly and benevolent,
While Rustam of the elephantine form,
That man of name, the pillar of the Kaians
And people's joy, became the fosterer
Of Siyáwush and source of good to him.
Troops that have looked on Rustam's iron mace,
His breast, his helmet, and his lion-limbs,
Have often fled before the fight, and dropped V. 1417
Their bows and arrows on the plains and dales;
He helped mine ancestors to seek revenge,
And was their glorious minister and guide.
Were I to tell thy toils the tales would last
A hundred generations and be fresh,
And were inquiry made of thy good deeds
My praise would only be disparagement.
Next, as to what thou askest of my case
In thus refusing audience and lamenting,
I will inform thee of each circumstance
That thou mayst know the matter point by point:
By God, I have no wish on earth but one—
To quit this wretched world. Five sennights now
Have passed while I have stood to supplicate
The Judge and Guide to pardon past offences,
To brighten my dark moon, convey me hence,
And leave on earth no pain or grief through me.
I must not quit the right and turn aside
Like former Sháhs. I have attained my wish,
And must dispatch because glad news hath come.
Whenas mine eyes were sleeping yester-morn
Surúsh, the blessèd, came to me from God,
And said: 'Prepare, for 'tis thy time to go,
Thy watching and distress are overpassed.'
So now mine audiences, care for the host,
For crown and throne and belt, are at an end."
The paladins were troubled in their hearts

About the Sháh and knew not what to do.
Zál, when he heard the monarch's words, was wroth
And from his liver drew a deep, cold sigh;
He said to the Íránians: "This is bad!
No wisdom still abideth in his brain;
Since first I girt a girdle round my loins
I have attended at the Kaians' throne,
V. 1418 But never saw I one who spake like this!
Yet may we not ignore what he hath said,
Or give assent thereto in any way,
When he is holding forth in such a strain.
He may have been in conclave with the Dív,
And thus his head is turned away from God.
Húshang and Farídún, God's worshippers,
Ne'er laid their hands on such a branch as this.
I will declare to him the honest truth
E'en at the cost of life."
The Íránians said:—
"No Kaian e'er spake thus! We are with thee
In what thou say'st to him. May God prevent
His wandering from use and precedent."

§ 53

How Zál rebuked Kai Khusrau

Zál heard their words, then rose and said: "Khusrau,
Thou upright chief! list to the words of one
Advanced in years, one who hath seen the world,
And answer not if he adviseth ill.
Though honest speech be bitter it will bar
The door of ruin by its bitterness.
Take therefore in good part the honest words,
Which I will speak before this company:
Born wast thou in the country of Túrán;
There was thy fountain-head and there thy home;

Thou hadst on one side great Afrásiyáb,
Who never dreamed of aught but sorcery,
For grandsire, on the other base Káús
With wrinkled visage and deceitful heart.
From west to east the greatness and the sway,
The crown and belt, were his. Now he was fain
To pass the sky and count the circling stars,
And though I counselled him at large thereon,
And spake with bitterness as I do now,
He was not profited by all my counsels,
And seared and grieved I turned away from him.
He soared and came down headlong to the dust,
But holy God vouchsafed to spare his life.
On coming home he was ungrateful still; V. 1419
His heart was awed, but war was in his thoughts.
Thou with a hundred thousand swordsmen mailed,
And armed with ox-head maces, didst go forth,
As 'twere a lion roused, to levy war,
And rank upon the desert of Kházm.
Thou wentest forth, the champion of thy host,
To fight afoot against the valiant Shída.
If he had got the upper hand of thee
Thou wouldst have brought the great Afrásiyáb
Upon Írán; the Íránians' wives and children
Had perished; none had girt him for revenge;
But God vouchsafed deliverance from his hand,
Had mercy on thee and confirmed thy counsels.
Thou slewest him whom there was cause to fear,
Him who was thankless to the almighty Judge;
But when I said: 'It is the time for peace,
The time for robes, for largess, and for goblet;
The king and host will rest from toil, and we
Shall have our souls refreshed for months and years,'
This grievous business came upon Írán,
And more than ever filled our hearts with sorrow,
For thou hast put from thee the way of God,

And ta'en to evil paths and frowardness.
Thy person will not profit by this wrong,
Nor will it please the Maker of the world.
If thou art bent on such a course, O Sháh!
No one will go about to do thy bidding,
And then thou wilt repent thee of thine acts.
Consider! Do not what the dívs command.
Moreover if thou seekest thus their way
The Worldlord will withdraw from thee the Grace,
Thou wilt be left in misery and sin,
And men will never hail thee Sháh again;
God is our Refuge; therefore turn to God,
Because He is our Guide to what is good.
If thou rejectest this my counselling,
And trustest unto wicked Áhriman,
Thou wilt retain no homage and no fortune,
No royal majesty, no crown, no throne.
V. 1420 May wisdom be the leader of thy soul,
Because the way in front of us is long.
Mayst thou be prudent, may thy counsels prosper,
And may thy brain be steadfast and devout."
Whenas the words of Zál had reached their end
The heroes all assented, saying thus:—
"The old man saith what we too think is best,
It is not right that truth should be suppressed."

§ 54

How Kai Khusrau answered and how Zál excused himself

When Kai Khusrau had hearkened to their words
He was a while anangered and breathed hard,
Then spake deliberately: "O veteran Zál,
Whose manhood reacheth countless years! if I
Speak coldly to thee here before the folk
The Worldlord never will approve that wrong

In me. Moreover Rustam will be grieved,
And through his grief loss will befall Írán;
Moreover should I reckon up his toils
They would be more e'en than his famous treasures.
He hath enshielded me with his own body,
And suffered not our foes to eat or sleep,
So I will answer thee with kindliness,
And will not break thy heart with cruel words."
Khusrau then cried aloud: "O noble men
Whose fortunes never slumber! I have heard
What Zál hath said in presence of you all.
By God, the almighty Lord, I am afar
Both from the way and bidding of the Dív;
My soul inclineth God-ward, for in Him
I have beheld my remedy for care.
Mine ardent heart hath looked upon this world,
My breast is troubled by the woes thereof."
He said to Zál: "Forbear thine anger, thou
Shouldst speak in measured words. First, for thy saying:—
'None wise and shrewd hath issued from Túrán,'
Worldlord and son of Siyáwush am I, V. 1421
A prudent monarch of the Kaian stock,
The grandson of the worldlord Kai Káús—
The love-inflaming, wise, and fortunate—
And through my mother from Afrásiyáb,
Whose wrath deprived us both of food and sleep.
Sprung thus from Farídún and from Pashang,
I shame not at my birth because the sea
Could not have purged the Lions of Írán
Of fears inspired by Afrásiyáb.
Next for the carriage which Káús once made
To raise his head above the sovereignty,
Know that no blame attacheth to a king
For lofty aims. Now that I have avenged
My father and have decked the world with goodness,

Have slain my foes, and all who were on earth
The common source of outrage and injustice,
No work remaineth for me here below;
The miscreants have not a monarch left.
Now whensoe'er I meditate awhile
On kingship and long rule I go the way
Of Kai Káús and of Jamshíd, and lose
My footing as they did. I fear that I,
As soon as icy age shall come upon me,
Shall, like impure Zahhák and daring Túr,
Whose outrages revolted all the world,
Be haled to Hell. Again, thou saidst: 'Thou foughtest
With Shída like a lusty crocodile.'
The reason was—I saw no cavalier
In all Írán who would engage with him,
Or on engaging would not shrink and prove
Of little worth with Shída as a foe,
And so I battled for Írán in person;
Bright is his star who hath the Grace divine.
For these five sennights both by night and day
Have I unclosed my lips with orisons
V. 1422 If so the Worldlord, the all holy God,
Might free me from this grief and this dark earth,
And now aweary of host, crown, and throne
I have returned in haste to make all ready.
Thou son of Sám, old and illustrious,
Said'st that the Dív had laid a snare for me,
That darkly and perversely I have left
The way, grown vile of soul and black of heart!
I do not know what chastisement divine
Thou thinkest due to me for life misspent."
Zál was confounded when he heard these words,
And could not look the monarch in the face.
Then with a cry he rose upon his feet,
And said: "O Sháh, thou worshipper of God!
I have been rash and foolish while thou art

A holy man, and one divinely wise.
Forgive me if the Dív hath led me wrong.
I have been living for unnumbered years
With loins girt up in presence of the Sháhs,
But never saw I one who sought of God,
The Judge of sun and moon, what thou hast sought.
Now Kai Khusrau hath come to be the teacher: V. 1423
Be evil fortune ever far from him.
I would not lose Khusrau; yet, though my soul
Is dark, let wisdom witness to my words
That to his faithful lieges of Írán
The Sháh's act overrideth all their grief,
So that with us there is desire to part
From our just judge, beneficent Khusrau."

The Sháh, when he had heard Zál's words, approved
The excuse thus proffered by his loyal liege,
Reached forth and clasped in his the old man's hand,
And made him take his seat upon the throne;
The sun-faced Sháh was ware that naught could move
His liege to speak such words excepting love.

§ 55

How Kai Khusrau gave his last Charge to the Íránians

The Sháh spake afterward to Zál, and said:—
"Now gird ye, every one of you, your loins,
Thou, Rustam, Tús, Gúdarz and Gív and all
The others that are men of name and courage!
Bear ye the camp-enclosure from the city
Out on the plain with our victorious standard;
Take thither all the tents and the pavilions
To furnish an encampment; there assemble
The chieftains' flags, the elephants, and troops,
And make a splendid feast-stead."

Rustam did

As said the Sháh. They brought the camp-enclosure
Forth to the plain, and all the Íránians
Girt up their loins to do as they were bidden.
The earth was filled with tents from hill to hill—
Tents white and sable, violet and blue—
While Káwa's flag was in the midst and made
The world look yellow, red, and violet.
They pitched Zál's tent-enclosure on the plain
Hard by the Sháh before the army. Rustam,
The paladin, was stationed on the left
With shrewd chiefs from Kábul. In front were Tús,
Gúdarz, and Gív, Bízhan the warrior,
V. 1424 And brave Gurgín, and, in the rear, Shápúr
With Gustaham and nobles in attendance.
The king of kings sat on the golden throne,
With ox-head mace, on one side Zál and Rustam—
A stately Elephant and Lion grim—
Upon the other Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív,
Gurgín, Farhád, and valorous Shápúr,
While every eye was fixed upon the face
Of Kai Khusrau to know what he would say
About the host. He raised his voice and said :—
"Ye famous men of action! every one
That is possessed of rede and wisdom knoweth
That good and ill will pass away alike;
We all must go, and this world passeth too:
What need for all this travail, grief, and care?
'Tis well to go now while we have our troops,
We must not go as though impuissant;
For us the bull is still within its hide,
And elsewhere are reward and retribution.
Be all of you in fear of holy God,
And put no confidence in this dark earth,
Because the day of each of us will pass,
And time is reckoning our every breath.
From glorious Húshang to Sháh Káús

Of all that had the throne, the crown, and Grace
Naught but the name remaineth to the world,
And no one readeth rescripts from the dead.
Of them full many showed ingratitude, V. 1425
And trembled for their error in the end.
A bondslave am I even as they were;
And striven though I have with pains, and I
Have striven and endured exceeding toil,
I realise that here is none abiding.
Now from this Wayside Inn have I uprooted
My heart and soul, and lifted them o'er care
And toil; now have I won my whole desire,
And turned my back upon the Kaian throne.
To every one that hath borne toil with me
Will I give treasure equal to his wish,
And speak to God, who heareth what is good,
For them whom I approve. I give the Iránians
My treasures and mine implements of war.
To every prince among you I will give
A province. Of my purses, slaves, and steeds
Have I bethought me; I produce a list
And now bestow them, for I go my way,
And clear my heart of this obscurity.
Put forth your hands in gladness to the feast,
One sennight eat and drink, and pray that I
May quit this Wayside Hostel and abide
Afar from toil."
When he announced his purpose
The warriors were all astound at him,
And one among them said: "The Sháh is mad,
And wit is as a stranger to his heart!
I know not what will come to him, or where
The crown and throne will find repose!"
Anon V. 1426
The warriors departed band by band;
Plains, dales, and mountains were all troops. The sounds

Of piping and of neighing steeds ascended
Above the very sky, as thou wouldst say;
Thereat the spirits of the Íránians rose,
And for one week none thought of griefs and woes.

§ 56

How Kai Khusrau appointed Gúdarz to be his Mandatary

The Sháh the eighth day sat upon the throne
Without his armlets, mace, and golden helm,
And since the time when he must pass was near
They oped the portal of the treasury,
Which done he made Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
His mandatary, saying: "See to all
The world's affairs—the public and the secret.
There is a season for amassing wealth
With labour, and a time for lavishing.
Look to the ruined caravansaries,
As well as to the bridges on our borders;
The dried up cisterns, those within Írán
And those constructed by Afrásiyáb;
The children motherless, the womenfolk
That have no husbands and are destitute,
With those that come to want in their old age;
Moreover close not thou the treasury's door
To such as strive to hide their sufferings.
Bestow and live in fear of evil days;
See to the cities that are lying waste—
The lurking-dens of leopards and of lions.
Next as to places where the Cult of Fire
Prevailed, but which are waste and priestless now,
As well as every one in indigence,
Who in his early days gave liberally,
V. 1427 And all the wells grown old and waterless,

Make all these flourish through this hoard of gold
And silver. Think drachms vile; remember death."
As to the treasure which was called "The Bride,"
Stored by Káús within the town of Tús,
He bade Gúdarz: "Give it to Gív, to Zál,
And to the lord of Rakhsh."
He reckoned up
His wardrobe and bestowed the whole on Rustam.
The armlets also and the chieftains' torques,
The massive maces and the coats of mail,
He gave to Gustaham—a just award.
Then, choosing from the steeds and saddlery,
He gave a herd of horses highly bred,
And then at large, to Tús the general.
He gave Gúdarz his gardens, rosaries,
And certain palaces the which he named.
The body-armour that he treasured so—
That precious armour worn in his campaigns—
He had bestowed complete on gallant Gív
What time he grew aweary of the throne.
A palace, camp-enclosure with the tents,
Pavilions, stalls, and horses he presented
To Faríburz, son of Káús, as well
As coats of mail and helms and Rúman casques.
A torque which was more bright than Jupiter,
Together with two radiant rings of ruby,
Engraven with the worldlord's name and known
Throughout the world, "These," said he to Bízhan,
"Receive as a memorial of me,
And sow not any seed but that of good."
Then said he to the Íránians: "My time
Approacheth, and I long afresh to go;
Make your requests of me for what ye need,
For this assembly must be broken up."
The chiefs were overcome by grief, they wept,
And burned in anguish for the king of kings.

"To whom now will the Sháh," inquired they all,
"Bequeath the crown as his memorial?"

§ 57

How Zál asked of Kai Khusrau a Patent for Rustam

V. 1428 When Zál, that loyal liege, had heard the Sháh
He kissed the ground, then springing to his feet
Spake out, and said: "O monarch of the world!
Let me disclose to thee my heart's desire.
What for Írán's sake Rustam hath achieved
In combats, travails, and campaigns thou knowest.
When Kai Káús went to Mázandarán—
A lengthy march of many toilsome leagues—
And when the dívs had put him into ward,
Together with the proud Gúdarz and Tús,
Then matchless Rustam, having heard thereof,
Went to Mázandarán in haste alone.
Through desert and through gloom, midst dívs and lions,
Enchanters and fierce dragons, in distress
And toil he cut his way, and reached the Sháh;
He rent the White Div's flank, he tore the reins
Both of Púlád,[1] son of Ghundí, and Bíd,
And plucked off Sanja's head. His war-cry reached
High heaven. Káús went to Hámávarán,
And there folk made him fast in heavy bonds
With Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív—those gallant hearts
And wary warriors. But matchless Rustam
Marched thither with a mighty host and chieftains,
The chosen of Írán and of Zábul,
And freed Káús, Gúdarz, and Gív and Tús.
When Rustam slew Suhráb—a son unmatched
Mid high and low alike throughout the world—

[1] The texts have Úlád, but *cf.* Vol. ii. pp. 44, 54, 64, 93.

When waging battle for Káús, the Sháh,
He wept in agony for months and years;
And when he fought Kámús in after-times
His valour sent the dust up to the clouds.
However I might speak about his acts
The tale of them would never reach an end.
Now if the Sháh is tired of crown and throne
What leaveth he this loyal lion-heart?"
"His actions," such was Kai Khusrau's reply,
"On our behalf, his fightings and his toil,
Who knoweth save the almighty Lord of Heaven— V. 1429
He that revealeth justice, peace, and love?
Yet Rustam's fame is manifest to all,
And he hath none to match him in the world."
He ordered that a scribe should come to him
With paper, musk, and spicery. They wrote
A patent from the monarch of the earth,
The exalted Kai Khusrau, the pure in Faith,
For elephantine Rustam, that brave chieftain,
Praised for his valour in all companies,
The foremost of the world, a lord thereof,
A chieftain, vigilant, and valiant,
A conquering leader and the Light of hosts,
Assigning him the province of Nímrúz.
They sealed the patent with the golden signet,
As was the usance of just Kai Khusrau,
Who gave the deed to him, commending him,
And saying: "May the earth be blessed in Rustam."
Then to the chieftains that had journeyed thither
With Zál, the son of Sám the cavalier,
And astrolabes upon their bosoms bare,
He gave robes, gold, and silver—each his share.

§ 58

How Kai Khusrau gave a Patent to Gív

Zál, seeing this, gave thanks exceedingly
To that victorious and discerning Sháh.
When Zál resumed his seat Gúdarz arose,
He urged a just request, and thus he said:—
"Victorious Sháh! we never yet have seen
A master of the throne to equal thee.
From Minúchihr as far as Kai Kubád,
And from Káús until thy noble self,
We have girt up our loins before the chiefs,
And have not had a single day's repose.
My sons and grandsons numbered seventy-eight;
Now eight remain; the rest have passed away.
V. 1430 Moreover watchful Gív for seven years
Was in Túrán, deprived of food and rest;
Upon the waste he lived on onager,
And wore the skins of game. The Sháh, when he
Came to Írán, had seen what toils Gív bare
For him. He wearieth of crown and throne,
And Gív expecteth kindness at his hands."
Khusrau replied: "He hath done better still,
And may a thousand blessings rest upon him,
The Master of the world be his ally,
And may his foemen's rose be full of thorns.
My havings great and small are in thy hand.
May health of body and of mind be thine."
He made a grant of Kum and Ispahán—
The seat of nobles and the home of chiefs.
The scribe wrote out with musk and ambergris
On silk the great king's letter, who impressed
His golden seal thereon, blessed it, and said:—
"May God be well contented with Gúdarz,
And may his foemen's hearts be filled with smoke!"

He thus addressed the Íránians: "Know ye this,
That gallant Gív, who hath the thews of chieftains
And lion's claws, is my memorial
To be your succour after I am gone.
Submit yourselves to his authority,
And not transgress the counsels of Gúdarz."
The chieftains of that race with one accord
Renewed their blessings on their sovereign lord.

§ 59

How Kai Khusrau gave a Patent to Tús

Whenas Gúdarz resumed his seat Tús rose,
Came, kissed the ground before Khusrau, and said:—
"O monarch! live for ever. May ill's hand
Be ever far from thee. Of all these nobles
I only am derived from Farídún;
We were the royal house till came Kubád.
Before the Íránians have I girt my girdle,
And never loosed that bondage from my loins.
Upon Mount Hamáwan the breastplate galled V. 1431
My body; it was all I had to wear;
And in that war of wreak for Siyáwush
I was each night the watchman of the host.
I could not save the army at Ládan,
But was myself within the Dragon's breath.
When in Hámávarán Káús was bound
There were chains also on the neck of Tús,
And in Mázandarán I was in bonds
With him, and was in dudgeon for his sake.
I, whether I behaved me well or ill,
Served in all places as his general.
I never anywhere dispersed the host,
And no one ever made complaint of me.
The Sháh is tired of treasury and throne,

And is about to quit this Wayside Inn;
What dost thou bid me do? What power is mine?
Thou knowest both my virtues and my faults."
The Sháh made answer: "Thou hadst greater hardships
Than these from fate. Keep Káwa's standard still,
Be general and wear the golden boots.
Thy portion of the world is Khurásán;
None of these nobles will molest thee there."
They wrote a patent out to that effect
Before the magnates and the mighty men;
Khusrau then sealed it with the golden signet,
And gave to Tús a golden torque and girdle,
Invoking blessings on him fervently:—
"May my heart never more be wroth with thee."

§ 60

How Kai Khusrau gave the Kingship to Luhrásp

The king of kings, when he had ordered thus
The matter of the chiefs, went to his throne.
Now of the chiefs Luhrásp remained, whose name
None read upon the roll of royalty,
And him the Sháh required Bízhan to bring
Before the presence with his helmet on.
The worldlord when he saw Luhrásp arose,
Saluted him with outstretched hands and then,
V. 1432 Descending from the famous ivory throne,
Took from his head the heart-illuming crown,
Resigned it to Luhrásp and hailed him Sháh
Of all the Íránian realm, and said to him:—
"May this thy crown prove fortunate to thee;
Be all the world thy slave. On thee have I,
Since mine exceeding toil and pain are over,
Bestowed the crown of kingship and the treasure.

Speak naught but what is just henceforth, for thou
Through justice wilt be conquering and glad.
Make not the Dív the comrade of thy soul
If thou wilt keep thy fortune vigorous;
Be prudent and without offence, and set
For evermore a watch upon thy tongue."
He said to the Íránians: "Let your hearts
Be joyful in his fortune and his throne."
The Íránians were amazed, they raged like lions,
And said: "Must we salute Luhrásp as Sháh?"
Then from among them Zál rose to his feet
To speak the righteous counsels of his heart,
And said on this wise: "O exalted king!
Thou mayest make dust precious, but may dust,
Dust only, fill the head of that man's fortune,
And antidotes prove poison in his mouth,
Who sayeth that Luhrásp is Sháh by right.
We never will consent to such injustice.
Whenas he came Írán-ward with Zarasp
I saw him poor, and owning but one horse;
Thou sentest him to battle with the Aláns,
Providing him with army, flag, and belt.
His birth I know not; I have seen no merit
In him; I never heard of such a monarch.
Though nobles of the royal race abound
The Sháh hath not remembered one of them!"
When Zál, the son of Sám, had spoken thus
The whole assembly sided with the speaker,
And from the Íránians rose a shout: "O Sháh!
Henceforth we will not gird our loins or seek
To fight at all upon the battlefield V. 1433
If now the king exalteth thus Luhrásp."
Khusrau, when he had heard the words of Zál,
Replied: "Restrain thyself and be not wroth,
For whoso speaketh that which is not just
Will only get the smother of the fire,

Since God approveth not of ill from us,
And bad men writhe 'neath time's vicissitudes,
While he whom God createth for high fortune,
Fit to be monarch and adorn the throne,
Endowed with modesty, Faith, birth, and Grace
Will flourish, conquer, and rejoice in justice.
The Maker is my witness when I say
That all these qualities are in Luhrásp.
He is descended from Húshang the worldlord,
A noble of discernment and clean hands,
A scion of Pashín and Kai Kubád,
Well stocked with knowledge, righteous in his thoughts.
He will cut off the sorcerers from the earth,
And manifest the way of holy God,
His counsels will renew the age's youth,
And as he is his stainless son will be.
God said to me: 'Look thou upon Luhrásp,'
And I have acted only as He bade.
Now do ye homage to him as your Sháh,
And as ye love me slight not mine advice,
For if a man transgress my parting counsel
I shall esteem his past exertions wind.
One such as that will give no praise to God,
And fear from all sides will assail his heart."
As soon as Zál had heard these righteous words
He reached out, set his fingers to the ground,
And in the act of homage smeared his lips
With grimy dust, then hailed Luhrásp as Sháh,
And said to that world's lord: "Mayst thou be happy.
Far from thee ever be the hand of ill.
Who save the Sháh, victorious and noble,
Knew that Luhrásp was of the royal race?
V. 1434 As I swore fealty my lips got smeared
With grimy dust: account it not a fault."

The great men showered jewels on Luhrásp,
And hailed him as the Sháh. When Kai Khusrau
Had thus achieved the matter of the kingship
He thought next of the folk and told the Íránians:—
"To-morrow ye will go the selfsame path,
And I, on quitting this vile dust, will pray
To holy God that we be reunited."
In taking leave he kissed the face of each;
The lashes of his eyes were full of tears;
He pressed each warrior closely to his breast,
And bitterly exclaimed: "Oh! would that I
Could bear this company along with me!"
A cry rose from the army of Írán:—
"The sun hath wandered from its way in heaven!"
Men, children, and the women in their bowers,
On mountain, in bázár, and midst the throng,
Were raising wails and lamentable cries,
And every quarter sorrowed for the Sháh,
While all the chieftains bent them with their heads
Upon the ground and rent their robes in grief;
The earth was in convulsion everywhere,
And all the mighty men were in amazement.
The Sháh then spake to the Íránians,
And said: "Heed, every one of you, this counsel,
All ye that are possessed of Grace and birth!
Be happy in the justice of your lord.
And now will I take order for my soul
That I may pass with honour, for my heart
Hath not been set upon this Wayside Inn:
Know that Surúsh hath come to be my guide."
He spake and bade to bring night-hued Bihzád,
While lamentations went up from the host;
He reached the palace, overcome with woe,
His noble cypress-stature bending low.

§ 61.

How Kai Khusrau farewelled his Women

V. 1435 He had four sun-like damsels; none had seen
Their faces e'en in dreams. He called those Idols
Forth from their bowers and told his purpose, saying:—
"I am about to leave this place of sojourn,
But be not sad or sorry. Ye henceforth
Will see me not, for tired of this ill earth
I shall depart to God, the holy Judge,
And see no way whereby I may return."
Thereat the sun-faced four became distraught,
And wailed for anguish, misery, and love;
They tore their faces, they plucked out their hair,
And broke their gay and scented ornaments,
Then as each one regained her self-control
She cried out with a lamentable voice:—
"Remove us also from this Wayside Inn,
And guide us to the attainment of this good."
The noble Sháh made answer to them thus:—
"Ye too will go upon a way like this.
Where are the sisters of Jamshíd the worldlord?
Where are the nobles with their gloryings?
Where is the daughter of Afrásiyáb—
My mother who came hither o'er Jíhún?
Where is Túr's daughter, Máh Áfríd, whose like
None ever saw? Their beds are brick and dust;
I know not if they be in Heaven or Hell.
The talons and the teeth of Death will close
On crown and helm alike, wear which we may;
Hence one should be adorned with righteousness,
For that not even death will take from us.
V. 1436 Seek not to make me sorry to depart,
Because the way is bright before mine eyes."

He cried aloud and called to him Luhrásp
To whom he spake much of the womenfolk,
And said: "These are mine Idols, and they are
The glory of my garden. Keep them here
Together in this home while thou remainest,
And when God calleth thee let not thy soul,
Through any act of thine, be shamed before Him,
Or feel itself disgraced before two kings
When thou beholdest me with Siyáwush."
Luhrásp assented unto Kai Khusrau
In all, and answered: "How should I behold them
In their seclusion?"
Kai Khusrau then girt
His loins, and went back to the Íránian chiefs;
He said: "Go home again with all dispatch;
Let not your hearts be seared and smoked for me,
Nor feel at home with this world, for it hath
Its glooms though yet unseen. For evermore
Be ye both great and happy. Never think
Of me except for good. Be jocund all,
Rejoice in God, and when ye have to pass
Be it a day for smiles and happiness."
Then all the nobles of the Íránian host
Bent to the ground before him, saying thus:—
"The counsels of the Sháh will we hold fast
As life itself as long as life shall last."

§ 62

How Kai Khusrau went to the Mountains and vanished in the Snow

Khusrau commanded that Luhrásp should come,
And said to him: "My day hath passed. Go thou,
Maintain the usage of the royal throne,
And in the world sow but the seed of good.

Whenever thou hast any times of ease
Boast not about thy treasures and thy crown;
Know this that when thy day of darkness cometh
The way before thee is the way to God.
Seek after and perform whate'er is just,
And hold the persons of the great in honour."
V. 1437 Luhrásp alighted quickly from his steed,
And kissed the ground with signs of sore distress.
Khusrau said: "Fare thee well and be thyself
The warp and woof of justice."
From Írán
Went chieftains with the Sháh, great, shrewd, and valiant,
As Zál and Rustam, as Gúdarz and Gív,
The brave Bízhan and gallant Gustaham;
The seventh was Faríburz, son of Káús,
The eighth famed Tús. The host marched troop on troop
Till from the waste they reached a mountain-top,
And tarried there a sennight to draw breath
And wet their lips, exclaiming at the Sháh,
And labour which they could not understand,
While every archimage said privily:—
"None in the world e'er told of such a case!"
Whenas the sun arose above the hills
A multitude collected from all parts,
And five score thousand of the Íránians,
Both men and women, went before the Sháh
In grief; the mount was full of wails and cries,
And e'en the flints were moved. The people all
Said to Khusrau: "O Sháh! what aileth thee
That thy shrewd heart is seared and full of smoke?
If thou hast taken umbrage at the host,
Or holdest this crown worthless, tell us so,
Quit not Írán nor give this ancient world
A youthful Sháh. We are thy horse's dust,

And worship thine Ázargashasp. Oh! whither
Are all thy knowledge, rede, and senses fled?
Surúsh came never thus to Siyáwush!
We all will offer up our prayers to God,
With supplications in the Fane of Fire,
If haply holy God may pardon us,
And thine own priestly heart illume us still."
The king of kings astonied called the archmages
Forth from the throng, and said: "Here all is well;
Ye must not weep at happiness like this.
Praise God, be happy, and acknowledge Him, V. 1438
For soon we meet again; mourn not my going."
Then to the chiefs he said: "Turn, all of you,
Back from this mountain-top without your Sháh,
Because the way is longsome, waterless,
And hard, devoid of grass and foliage.
Relieve yourselves of going to and fro,
And make your souls a path toward the Light.
Yon desert none may pass who hath not Grace
And lofty stature."
Three proud warriors
Attended to the bidding and turned back—
Zál, Rustam, and the old Gúdarz—all men
Of lofty aims, farsightedness, and heed,
But Tús and Gív and Faríburz, Bízhan,
And gallant Gustaham, would not return.
They went together for one day and night,
Distressed by reason of the waste and drouth;
At length a spring was seen upon the way,
And thither went the aspiring Kai Khusrau.
They lighted from their steeds by that clear spring,
Partook of food, and drew their breath awhile.
The Sháh addressed the marchlords thus, and said:—
"Here let us make our sojourn for the night,
And talk at large together of the past,
For henceforth nobody will see me more.

What time the radiant sun shall raise its flag,
And turn the darksome earth to liquid gold,
Then is the time when I shall pass away,
And haply with Surúsh for company;
My heart will I pluck out if darkening
It turneth from this path."
As night advanced
The famous Kaian went before his God,
Bathed, head and body, in the limpid stream,
Reciting to himself the Zandavasta,
And thus addressed those famous men of lore:—
"Farewell for ever! When the sky shall bring
The sun again ye shall not look on me
Henceforth save in your dreams. Moreover be not
V. 1439 Here on the morrow on these arid sands,
Although the clouds rain musk, for from the mountains
Will rise a furious blast and snap the boughs
And leafage of the trees, a storm of snow
Will shower down from heaven's louring rack,
And toward Írán ye will not find the track."

§ 63

How the Paladins were lost in the Snow

The chieftains' heads were heavy at the news,
The warriors slept in pain, and when the sun
Rose o'er the hills the Sháh had disappeared.
They roamed thence seeking him and set their faces
Toward the sands and waste. They saw no trace
Of Kai Khusrau and turned back from the way
Like men insane, heart-straitened all and anguished,
The ground well trodden but the Sháh not found.
Lamenting, sorrowful of heart, afflicted,
They came back to the spring and lighting there

They each farewelled the monarch of the world.
Then Farîburz repeated what Khusrau
Had said. "Be wisdom and his pure soul mates,"
He added, but the heroes answered thus,
Not doing honour to his words at heart:—
"The earth is soft and warm, the sky is clear.
We cannot travel wearied as we are.
When we have rested, eaten, and reposed
Beside the spring, it will be time to go."
They all of them alighted by the spring,
And made Khusrau the subject of their talk.
"None will behold a wonder such as this,"
They said, "however long his life may last!
When saw we such a passing of a Shâh?
We have not heard the chiefs e'en tell of such.
Alas for his high fortune and his counsel, V. 1440
His majesty, his mien, and noble bearing!
The wise will laugh at such a tale as this,
That any one should go alive to God!
Who knoweth what on earth hath chanced to him?
What shall we say? Ears will not bear to hear!"
Gîv thus addressed those chiefs: "No warrior
Will hear of one like him for manliness,
For justice, generosity, and parts,
For stature and demeanour, fame and birth.
He was an Elephant amid the host
In battle, and in feast a crownèd moon."
Thereafter they partook of what there was,
And, having eaten, quickly went to sleep.
Meanwhile there came up storm and cloud, the sky
Became as 'twere a lion's hide, and when
The snow had hoisted sail upon the earth
The lances of the nobles disappeared!
They tarried in the snow, I know not why,
And under it they struggled for a while,
And made a hollow space, but at the last

Strength failed them and they yielded up sweet life.
Now Rustam, Zál, and divers cavaliers
Abode for three days weeping on the mountain,
But on the fourth day when the world's light shone
They said: "A long affair—this tarrying
Mid rocks and mountains! If the Sháh hath vanished,
Blown from among us like a breath of air,
Where are the other nobles gone? Perchance
They heeded not the counsel that he gave."
V. 1441 They stayed a sennight on the mountain-height,
And by the sennight's end were all distraught,
All woe-begone, lamenting, and consuming
As on fierce fire. Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
Shed tears, plucked out his hair, and tore his cheeks,
Exclaiming: "None e'er saw such ills as come
Upon me from the offspring of Káús!
I once possessed a host of sons and grandsons;
Each wore a crown, and they were worldlords all.
They all were slain avenging Siyáwush;
My race hath had its day, for now the rest
Have disappeared. Whoever saw such marvels
As have befallen me?"
Zál spake at large:—
"Be God's just dealing and thy wisdom mates!
Perchance they may return and find the path
Whenas the highway showeth from the snow;
But we may not abide upon the mountain,
There is no food and we must needs depart;
We will dispatch some on the way afoot;
One day they will find traces of the band."
They left the mountain, weeping for distress,
And every one had some one to recall—
A kinsman, son, or friend, or else the Sháh,
Himself as 'twere a cypress in the garden.
The world is always thus; it will not stay
E'en with the best for ever. This it may

Exalt from dust, that from the throne remove,
Not that in anger and not this in love;
'Tis but the fashion of the sky above!
Where are those warriors and world-ruling kings?
Oh! banish if thou canst such questionings.

§ 64

How Luhrásp had Tidings of the Disappearance of Kai Khusrau

When from the troops escorting Kai Khusrau V. 1442
Luhrásp had tidings how the Sháh had fared
He sat with crown of gold upon the throne,
The heroes with their golden girdles came,
And, when the illustrious men and chief estates
Had ta'en their seats, Luhrásp looked round, arose,
Spake with good feeling and straightforwardness,
And said: "O leaders of the host! ye all
Have heard the parting counsels of the Sháh.
Whoe'er rejoiceth not at mine accession
Hath not the counsels of Khusrau in mind.
All that he said and bade me will I do,
Will strive for good, and carry out his will.
Do ye too not reject his last request,
Or keep your secret counsels hid from me.
The man is guilty in the sight of God,
That heedeth not the last requests of Sháhs,
And therefore whatsoe'er ye have in mind
Of good and ill ye must reveal to me."
Zál answered: "Kai Khusrau gave thee the name
Of Sháh. Accepting his last words and bidding
My foot shall stray not from the limits set.
Thou art the Sháh; we are thy lieges all,
And we will not transgress thy rede and orders.
I, Rustam, and the people of Zábul,

Will never wash our hands of love to thee.
Whoe'er he be that taketh not this course
Shall find no good thing left within his reach."
Luhrásp, when he had heard the words of Zál,
Applauded him, and then embracing him
Spake thus: "God grant that justice and the right
May never prove your loss and injury,
For He created you with this intent
That toils and ills might vanish. Kai Khusrau—
V. 1443 The worldlord, the beloved of time and fortune—
Ere he departed gave to you Nímrúz.
Now in addition take what else ye need.
'Tis not for me to share with you my wealth;
I and my kin and kingdom are all yours."
Then said he to Gúdarz: "Speak out thy mind,
Whate'er it be, thou chief of paladins!"
Gúdarz made answer: "I am left alone,
For I have lost Bahrám, Bízhan, and Gív."
Then overcome by anguish for his kin
He cried out in a lamentable voice:—
"Woe for the hero Gív of brazen form,
And that aspiring wielder of the sword
Bízhan!"
He spake and rent from head to foot
His robe of Chín and tunic made in Rúm,
And said thus to the nobles: "Blest is he
Whose mate is dust. I give assent to all
That Zál hath said, I have no secrets from him.
Thou art the Sháh, and we are all thy lieges:
We will keep fealty and do thy will."
The chiefs with one consent called blessings down,
And bent their heads in homage to the ground,
While at their words Luhrásp, refreshed at heart,
Drew himself up and was another man.
He chose himself a most auspicious day
Whereon to set the crown upon his head,

And, just as Farídún of glorious birth
First put the crown on in the month wherein
They celebrate the hocktide of Mihrgán,
Luhrásp selected that same day and month—
The time of the Autumnal Equinox.
He had the hall of Kai Khusrau adorned, V. 1444
And in his hands Írân took added lustre.
Such is the world—all ups and downs—and so
One man is glad, another is brought low;
From it are joy and grief; its How and When
And Why are all beyond our human ken.
Completed is the tale of Kai Khusrau,
The acts of Sháh Luhrásp engross us now;
His crown and court alike I celebrate,
And place him in his seat upon the state
By the triumphant grace of our great king.
The author of our hopes and fears is he,
To his well-wishers' hearts all good doth bring,
And to the ill-disposed calamity.
Hearts that have been rust-eaten by the brine
Of speech will be refurbished by old wine.
When eld hath stolen on a man good sooth!
Wine that hath waxen old will give him youth.
Faint hearts when quaffing turn to men of might,
And foxes in their cups like lions fight;
In wine too thou wilt show thy quality,
And to thine own locked door thyself be key.

XIV

LUHRÁSP

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Gushtásp, the son of Luhrâsp, dissatisfied with his position at the court of his father who, mindful of his obligations to Kai Khusrau, reserves his chief favours for the descendants of Kai Káús, quits Írán in dudgeon and takes refuge in the land of Rúm, where Cæsar's daughter falls in love with him and marries him. Gushtásp achieves great quests in his adopted country and, returning to Írán, is reconciled to his father who resigns the throne in his favour.

NOTE

For Luhrâsp see Vol. II. p. 8 *seq.*

The romantic legend that occupies practically the whole of this reign was partially extant with certain variations in the days of Alexander the Great, some thirteen centuries before Firdausí wrote. Athenæus in his *Deipnosophistæ*[1] quotes the following story from Chares of Mytilene, who was an official (εἰσάγγελεύς) at the court of Alexander the Great, and wrote an anecdotal history of him and of his campaigns in ten books, of which only fragments are extant in the writings of Athenæus and other authors: "We must not be astonished at some folk having fallen in love with others upon mere hearsay of their beauty when Chares of Mytilene in the tenth book of his anecdotal history of Alexander affirms that some have dreamt of those whom they never saw and fallen in love with them in consequence. He writes as follows: 'Hystaspes had a younger brother named Zariadres and they were both very good-looking. The people of the country say that

[1] Book xiii. c. 35, ed. A. Meineke.

they were the children of Aphrodite and Adonis. Hystaspes was king of Media and of the lower lands thereabout, while Zariadres ruled over the country above the Caspian Gates up to the river Tanais.[1] Now the daughter of Omartes, the chief of the Marathi, a people that dwelt beyond the Tanais, was named Odatis. She, as the histories tell us, dreamt of Zariadres and fell in love with him while in like fashion he fell in love with her. Thus for a long time they loved each other through the phantasies of sleep alone. Odatis was the most beautiful woman in Asia, and Zariadres too was very good-looking; but when he sent to Omartes to ask Odatis in marriage her father refused because he had no sons and desired to marry her to some one at his own court. Soon after he convoked the magnates of the realm, his kindred and his friends, and held a marriage-feast without announcing on whom he intended to bestow his daughter. When they were revelling he sent for Odatis and said to her before all the guests: "O Odatis, my daughter! we are engaged in celebrating your marriage-festival, so now look about you, scan those who are here, then take a golden goblet, fill it and give it to him unto whom you would like to be married, for you shall be his wife." But Odatis, having looked about her, went away in tears, for she wanted to see Zariadres whom she had informed concerning her marriage-festival. Meanwhile Zariadres, who was encamped on the Tanais, had left his army there, had crossed the river secretly with his chariot-driver only, had driven through the city by night, and covered a distance of some eight hundred stadia without a pause. When he reached the town where the marriage-festivities were taking place he left the chariot with the charioteer hard by and went on alone dressed in Scythian garb. When he reached the palace he saw Odatis by the table in tears and filling the goblet very slowly. He got close to her and said: "Here am I as you asked me, Odatis—I, Zariadres!" She looked and saw a handsome man, like him of whom she had dreamed, and overjoyed gave him the goblet. He seized her, bore her off to his chariot, and fled away with her. The attendants and handmaids, who wotted of the love between the pair, held their peace, and when her father called for her said they knew not whither she had gone. This love-story of theirs is rife among the barbarians of Asia and greatly admired. They have pictures of it in their temples, palaces, and private houses, and many magnates in those parts give their daughters the name of Odatis.'"

It seems clear that in the brothers Hystaspes and Zariadres of the story we have the brothers Gushtásp and Zarír of the

[1] The Don.

Sháhnáma. In the poem the framework of the story is different and the account has become much elaborated. The scene is changed from Scythia to Rúm and the chief actor is Gushtásp himself. The dream is confined to the lady's side and a posy is substituted for the goblet, so that we lose the pretty picture of Odatis standing by the table in tears and pouring out the wine as slowly as possible in the forlorn hope of her lover appearing. Still the identity of the legend in Athenæus with that in the Sháhnáma seems fairly obvious.

The method of contracting marriage as illustrated by the above story was known in ancient India as "Swyamvara" or "Self" or "Maiden's Choice." We read in the Mahábhárata: "The large-eyed daughter of Kuntibhoja, Pritha by name, was endued with beauty and every accomplishment. . . . Her father . . . invited . . . the princes and kings of other countries and desired his daughter to elect her husband from among his guests. . . . The amiable daughter of Kuntibhoja, of faultless features, beholding Pándu—that best of men—in that assembly, became very much agitated. And advancing with modesty, all the while quivering with emotion, she placed the nuptial garland round Pándu's neck. . . . Then . . . the bride's father caused the nuptial rites to be performed duly."[1]

§§ 14 and 15. The Khazars, who dwelt between the Caucasus and the Don and Volga rivers, had frequent political relations with the Eastern Roman, the Sásánian, and the Muhammadan empires till they were absorbed by Russia in Firdausí's lifetime.

The principal Íránian characters of this reign—Luhrásp himself, Gushtásp, and Zarír—appear in the Zandavasta as Aurvat-aspa, Vistaspa, and Zairi-vairi respectively, but the allusions to them in that work are concerned with the events recorded in the next reign, that of Gushtásp, which will appear in Vol. V. of this translation.

§ 1

How Luhrásp built a Fire-temple at Balkh

V. 1445 Now when Luhrásp sat on the ivory throne,
And donned the crown that brighteneth the heart,
He praised the Maker and besought Him much,
Then said: "Have hope in God, the righteous Judge;

[1] RM, Adi Parva, § CXII. See too § CII.

Hold Him in fear and awe; the Artist He
Of yon revolving sky, and magnifieth
The Glory of His slave. When He created
Earth, with its seas and mountains, He outspread
High heaven over it, one turning swiftly,
The other fixed; the Artist gave thereto
No feet to move withal. The sky is like
The polo-stick, we, bandied to and fro
By profit and by loss, are like the ball.
Amid thy pleasures Death with sharpened claws
Is crouching like a fierce and angry lion;
So let us quit the lust of covetise,
Acknowledging our ignorance meanwhile,
And from this crown of kingship, this high throne,
Ensue but justice, peace, and goodly counsels,
Lest haply in this Wayside Inn our lot
Should prove but vengeance, travail, and a curse.
I will do more than Kai Khusrau enjoined,
And banish from my heart revenge and greed.
This do and justice will bring happiness, V. 1446
Be peaceable and have no thoughts of vengeance."
The mighty of the world called blessings down
Upon him, hailed him monarch of the earth,
And great Luhrásp had quiet, wisdom, wealth,
And all his heart's desire continually.
Thereafter he sent envoys unto Rúm,
To Hind, to Chín, and other peopled lands,
And all the men that were possessed of knowledge,
And those that practised divers useful arts,
From all the marches and the provinces
Went to the Sháh's court and abode at Balkh
A while at leisure tasting of the salts
And sours of knowledge. He erected there
A city with its streets, bázárs, and quarters,
In each whereof there was a place to hold
The feast of Sada, round a Fane of Fire,

And there he built Barzín, for so they call
That glorious temple and magnifical.

§ 2

How Gushtásp quitted Luhrásp in Wrath

He had two sons, as 'twere two moons, well worthy
Of sovereignty, of throne, and diadem,
One hight Gushtásp, the other hight Zarír,
Who conquered lions, in all knowledge passed
Their father, and in valour raised their heads
Above the other troops. There were besides
Among those in attendance on Luhrásp
Two princes, both of whom he held in honour,[1]
Men of high rank whose steps were fortunate,
The grandsons of the worldlord Kai Káús.
The soul of Sháh Luhrásp rejoiced in them,
And thereby grew neglectful of Gushtásp,
Who took it in bad part, but folly still
V. 1447 Possessed Luhrásp, and so as time went on
The son was full of dudgeon with the father.
It was so that one day in Párs they set
The throne 'neath blossom-shedding trees. Luhrásp
Invited certain chieftains of the host,
Who at the table called for cups of wine,
And made his heart rejoice. Gushtásp too drank,
Then rose and said: "O just and righteous Sháh!
Blest be thy sitting on the royal throne,
And may thy name live on for evermore!
God hath bestowed upon thee casque and girdle,
Besides the crown of upright Kai Khusrau.
Now I am here a slave before thy gate,
A servant of thy star and diadem,
I hold not one a man of those that come

[1] Inserted from T.

Before me on the day of fight save Rustam,
The son of Zál, the son of Sám the horseman,
For none is able to contend with him.
Now when Khusrau grew weary of the world
He gave the crown to thee and passed away.
If then I am of noble birth appoint me
Successor to the crown and Kaian throne,
And I will be a slave before thee still,
As I am now, and hail thee sovereign."

Luhrásp made answer: "O my son! give ear,
For vehemence commendeth not the noble,
While I recall the advice of Kai Khusrau,
That thou mayst acquiesce in what is just.
'If,' said that righteous king to me, 'a weed
Infesteth any garden in the spring,
And findeth water, it will grow and spoil
That garden utterly.' Thou art still young:
Aspire not thus; speak weighty, measured words."

Gushtásp, on hearing, left his father's presence
With dolorous heart and livid face, exclaiming:—
"Then cherish strangers and neglect thine offspring."

He had three hundred horsemen as retainers, V. 1448
All warriors and ready for the fray.
Alighting from his steed he summoned these
To tell them all the secrets of his heart;
He said: "Make ready to depart to-night,
And cease to think, or look, upon this court."

One asked him saying: "Whither goest thou?
Where wilt thou shelter when thou settest forth."

He said: "With those of Hind. The monarch there
Affecteth me. I have his letter written
On silk with ink musk-scented. Thus he saith:—
'If thou wilt come to me I am thy servant,
Will do thy bidding and be thine ally.'"

Whenas night came he mounted with his men,
And started, full of choler, mace in hand.

Luhrásp, who had the news thereof at dawn,
Was grieved and all his joy was at an end.
He summoned to him veterans from the host,
And told the case to them in fitting terms.
"Behold," said he, "that which Gushtásp hath done,
And filled my heart with pain, my head with dust!
I cherished him until he had grown up,
And was unparalleled in all the world,
But even as I said 'He beareth fruit,'
The tree itself departed from my garden!"
He spake and for a while sat deep in thought,
Then ordered that Zarír should come and said:—
"Choose out a thousand valiant cavaliers,
Equipped for war. Toward Hindústán speed ye,
And may that land of warlocks cease to be."

§ 3

How Gushtásp returned with Zarír

Gushtásp, the atheling, with tearful eyes
Fared onward wrathfully before his men
In haste until he reached Kábul, and looked
Upon its trees and blossoms, grass and streams.
V. 1449 Alighting at that jocund place they stayed
One day and breathed themselves. The mountain-tops
Were full of game, the streams like wine and milk.
At night he bade the drawers bring forth wine,
And carry lights down to the river-side;
But when the world-illuming sun o'ershone
The mountains they departed from the woods
With hawk and cheetah.
In hot haste Zarír
Went in pursuit, with scarcely halts for rest,
Till, as the warriors with Gushtásp returned
From hunting, rose the neigh of steeds. He heard,

And said: "'Tis from the charger of Zarír—
None other—for it hath a lion's voice.
If he hath come he hath not come alone,
But with a gallant host in company."
Now as he spake dust azure-dim appeared,
A standard too charged with an elephant,
And leading all the rest Zarír the chief
Came onward as it were a rushing wind.
He saw and hurried weeping toward Gushtásp
Afpot with thanks and praises to the Maker.
The brothers clasped each other tenderly,
And as they fared along the field they wept.
Then prince Gushtásp, the warrior, called the captains,
Who sitting with him canvassed all the case,
And one said: "Hero of the golden girdle!
The readers of the stars, all whom we know
To be expert among the Íránians,
Foretell in thee another Kai Khusrau
Predestined to ascend the royal throne.
We cannot then consent that thou shouldst be V. 1450
The subject of the king of Hindústán.
His people are not worshippers of God,
And thou and they will ne'er be in accord,
Consider then if wisdom could consent
To make the Sháh the subject of the Rája!
Thou hast the fairest treatment from thy father;
I know not wherefore thou shouldst feel aggrieved."
Gushtásp replied: "O seeker of renown!
I am not held in honour by my sire,
Who keepeth for the offspring of Káús
His kindness, majesty, and royal crown.
There is no place with him for us; he meaneth
No better for us than complete subjection,
Yet for thy sake will I return although
My heart is full of choler at Luhrásp.
If he shall give to me the Íránian crown

I will adore him as idolaters
Adore their idols, but if otherwise
I will desert his court, no moon of his
Shall light my heart. I will elude his search,
And will abandon everything to him—
Both land and wealth."

This said, he left that land,
And went back to the noble Sháh. Now when
Luhrásp had news thereof he with the chiefs
And many followers went to meet Gushtásp.
The atheling beheld his father's face
Again and, having lighted from his steed,
Did reverence. Luhrásp embraced him warmly,
And readily accepted his excuses,
Exclaiming: "May the moon's crown be thine own,
The Dív's hands shortened that they may not reach thee,
For, like a bad king's evil minister,
He is for ever teaching thee bad ways.
As for the kingship—crown and throne are mine
In name, but love and fealty, rule and fortune
Are thine."

Gushtásp replied: "My sovereign!
I am but as a servant at thy gate.
If thou abasest me I will obey,
And stake my heart upon my fealty."

V. 1451 The great men that were with him on his journey
Went to the palace of the Sháh rejoicing.
He had his jewelled banquet-hall prepared,
They spread the board and served delicious wines;
They made a feast so splendid that the stars
Rained from the firmament upon the throne,
And every chieftain was bemused and wore
A coronal of roses on his head.
Yet still Luhrásp found pleasure in the race
Of Kai Káús, remembering Kai Khusrau,

And still Gushtásp aggrieved shed tears of blood,
Consulting on all points with his adviser,
To whom he said: "Strive wisely as I may
I cannot find a remedy herefor.
If I depart with horsemen then my father
Will send a chieftain after me with troops,
Will in some way divert me from my journey,
And ply me with appeals and with advice,
While if I go alone I shall be shamed,
And have besides a grudge against Luhrásp,
Who joyeth in the offspring of Káús,
And loveth not his own. If I depart
Without an escort, and a questioning
Arise, will any take me for a king?"

§ 4

How Gushtásp set off for Rúm

At night he put the saddle on Shabdíz,
A charger of his father's, donned a tunic
Of cloth of gold of Chín, stuck in his crown
An eagle's plume, and took whate'er he needed
Both of dínárs and royal jewelry.
He left Írán for Rúm, for since the father
Preferred to reign the son preferred to range.
On hearing what Gushtásp had done Luhrásp
Was troubled, all his joy was at an end.
He called to him Zarír and all the sages, V. 1452
Held talk with them at large about Gushtásp,
And said to them: "This lion-man will bring
Crowned heads to dust. What are your views herein?
What course do ye advise? Treat it not lightly."
An archmage said: "O fortune's favourite!
A crown and throne are very dear to men.
None else hath had a son such as Gushtásp,

No man of name e'er heard of such an one.
Dispatch in quest of him to every quarter
Some valiant nobles that are good at need;
Then, if he shall return, deal gently with him,
Do what is right, and banish selfishness,
Because the Kaian crown beholdeth many,
Such as thou art, but loveth no one long.
Bestow upon Gushtásp a host of men,
And set the noble crown upon his head.
We nowhere see a cavalier like him,
Save Rustam that illustrious paladin,
While in respect of stature, wisdom, looks,
And sense, ear hath not heard of such another.'

Luhrásp sent chiefs and sought through all the world
To find his son. They went their various ways,
But in the end returned despairingly,
Because they journeyed under sluggish stars.
Luhrásp had all the censure for his share,
The grief and travail were Gushtásp's affair.

§ 5

How Gushtásp arrived in Rúm

Gushtásp dismounted when he reached the shore,
And there Híshwí—a man advanced in years,
Frank, vigilant, respected, prosperous,
Who was employed as toll-collector—saw him.
Gushtásp saluting said: "May thy pure soul
Be wisdom's mate! A rising scribe am I,
Come from Írán, discreet, of ardent spirit,
V. 1453 And heedful. It will be a lasting favour
To ferry me across."

Híshwí replied:—

"Crown, mail, and plunder are the things for thee;
Tell me the truth and try not thus to cross;

Give me a present or declare thyself;
Where are the mien and manners of a scribe?"
Gushtásp said: "I have nothing to conceal;
Moreover I will give thee what thou wilt—
This coronet, sword, charger, or dínárs."
The man accepted some dínárs with joy,
Set sail, and took across the atheling.
There was a city in the land of Rúm
Above three leagues in breadth. Salm was the founder
Of that great seat where dwelt the valiant Cæsars.
Gushtásp, as soon as he arrived thereat,
Sought out a lodging in that busy place,
And walked about the district for a week
Among the people there to seek employment
Till, having eaten or bestowed his all,
He went in dudgeon, sighing heavily.
He tramped the city for a while, passed through
A hall, and entering a public office,
Addressed the chief clerk thus: "O friend in need!
A scribe of some pretensions from Írán
Am I, and can perform the office-work
To thy content."
The scribes in that department
Looked one upon another saying thus:—
"A pen of steel would weep, a sheet of paper
Scorch, at a man like this! A lofty charger
Is what he needeth under him, with bow
Upon his arm and lasso at his saddle."
They cried: "We want no scribe here. Go thy ways." V. 1454
Gushtásp departed thence heart-sorrowful
With pallid cheeks and, heaving deep, cold sighs,
Sought Cæsar's master of the herds, a man
Brave, wise, and generous, by name Nastár.
Gushtásp saluted him, was well received
And seated by the master, who inquired:—

"Who art thou that in mien and countenance
Art like a king?"
Gushtásp said: "Noble sir!
A horseman am I and a bold rough-rider.
If thou wilt take me I will prove of use,
And stand beside thee too in stress and trouble."
Nastár said: "Go thy way. Thou art a stranger,
And hast no standing. Here are desert, sea,
And steeds at large! How then can I entrust
The herds to one unknown?"
On hearing this
Gushtásp went off in dudgeon. Thou hadst said:—
"His skin hath burst upon him!" He exclaimed:—
"A man will fare the worse for his desire
To be a source of trouble to his father."
He went in haste to Cæsar's cameleers,
Saluted him that was the chief and said:—
"Be thine an ardent and discerning mind!"
That wise man, when he saw Gushtásp, advanced
To meet him, offered him a place, and spread
A carpet, bringing out what food he had.
Gushtásp said: "Prosperous, bright-hearted friend!
Entrust to me one of thy caravans,
Assigning me such wages as thou wilt."
V. 1455 "O lion-man!" replied the camel-keeper,
"This occupation is not fit for thee;
Shouldst thou engage in such a work as mine?
'Tis better to apply to Cæsar's court,
He will enfranchise thee from such a business,
And if the way is longsome I have camels,
Such as thou wilt approve, and men as guides."
Gushtásp gave thanks to him and turned away.
Full of distress he started for the city,
His sufferings lying heavy on his heart,
And turned his steps toward the smiths' bázár.
There was a noted smith by name Búráb,

Skilled in the trade, the farrier to the court,
Of influence with Cæsar; he employed
Some thirty-five apprentices and workmen
Accustomed to the hammer and the iron.
Gushtásp sat in the shop until the master
Grew weary of him, and exclaimed: "Good fellow!
What wouldst thou in my shop?"
Gushtásp replied:—
"O prosperous man! I am not one to turn
My head away from hammers and hard work.
If thou wilt make me one of thine assistants
I will excel them all at smithery."
Búráb, when he had heard Gushtásp thus speak,
Received him in apprenticeship, and heating
A mighty mass of metal in the fire
Made haste to place it glowing on the anvil.
They gave a heavy hammer to Gushtásp,
And all the smiths flocked round, but when he smote
He smashed the iron and the anvil also,
And made himself the talk of the bázár.
Búráb, alarmed, exclaimed: "Young man! no anvil,
Stone, fire, or bellows will withstand thy blows!"
Gushtásp, on hearing this, flung down the hammer
In dudgeon, left the smith and went off hungry,
Without a glimpse of food or where to lodge;
But neither do the days of toil and stress,
Nor those of ease and wealth and happiness,
Abide with any. Good and evil here V. 1456
Are transient, and the sage is of good cheer.

§ 6

How a Village-chief entertained Gushtásp

Gushtásp was sorrowful and railed at heaven
Because in this world he had nought but bane.

Hard by the city he beheld a hamlet,
Trees, flowers, and streams—a gladsome spot for youth.
Beside the water was a mighty tree,
Its shade impervious to the sun's bright rays,
And in that shade the young man sat him down,
And fretted in his trouble and depression.
He spake on this wise: "O almighty Judge!
Grief is the lot assigned to me by fortune.
My star, I see, is evil, but I know not
Why 'tis that evil cometh on my head."
A nobleman of that fair hamlet passed,
Beheld the outcast weeping tears of blood,
His chin supported by his hand, and said:—
"O noble youth! why art thou sorrowful
And dark of soul? If thou wilt visit me
Thou for a while shalt be my gladsome guest;
These sorrows may be lessened to thy heart,
And dried the arrowy lashes of thine eyes."
Gushtásp replied: "My lord! first let me know
Thy lineage."
The householder made answer:—
"What is the purpose of thy questioning?
Descended am I from Sháh Farídún,
The warrior—no paltry ancestor."
Gushtásp, on hearing this, arose and went
With him. The chief reached home and had his hall
Decked to receive his guest, he held Gushtásp
As though he were a brother, and the time
Passed leaving not a wish unsatisfied.
A while elapsed with matters in this stay
Until month after month had passed away.

§ 7

The Story of Katáyún the Daughter of Cæsar

Now at that time 'twas Cæsar's policy, V. 1457
Whenever he possessed a daughter grown
To womanhood, well favoured by the stars,
And he perceived that she was fit to wed,
To gather to his palace all the magnates,
The sages, and the counsellors—all those
Of competent degree and high estate
Among the nobles—and the moon-faced damsel
Would roam her father's hall to seek a spouse,
But so surrounded by her waiting-maids
That men could view not e'en her lofty crown.
He had three daughters then within his bower,
Like roses in the spring, tall, fair, and gentle,
Wise, modest, and well seen in everything.
The eldest was the princess Katáyún,
The wise, the merry, and high-spirited.
One night she dreamed that all the country shone
With sunlight. There appeared a throng of men,
The Pleiades among them and a stranger—
A wanderer of mournful heart and wise,
In height a cypress and in looks a moon,
Whose seat was as a king's upon his throne—
And Katáyún held out to him a posy,
A posy bright and sweet, which he accepted.
As soon as day dawned, and the sun arose,
The nobles woke, and Cæsar called together
A vast assembly of the great and brave,
Who sat rejoiced. The fairy-faced princess
Was summoned, and appeared with sixty handmaids,
A bunch of fresh narcissus in her hand,
And roamed about until she grew aweary,
But no one of the throng found favour with her.

V. 1458 She went back from the hall to her apartments
In state, but wept; her heart yearned for a husband.
Meanwhile earth grew as dark as ravens' wings
Until the Lamp rose o'er the mountain-tops;
Then Cæsar bade that all the wealthy nobles
Among his lieges in the land of Rúm
Should meet together in his lofty palace,
That some one might find favour by his beauty.
Now when the tidings came to every chieftain,
To high and low alike, the same good friend
Said to Gushtásp: "How long wilt thou be hidden?
Come! It may be that looking on the palace
And throne of greatness may abate thy grief
Of heart."
Gushtásp thereat set forth with him,
And sat down in the palace but apart,
Aggrieved, and sore. Shrewd-hearted slaves appeared,
Then Katáyún with rosy-cheeked attendants.
She roamed the hall with slaves before and after,
And when from far she saw Gushtásp she said:—
"The meaning of my dream is manifest,"
And set the rich and splendid coronal
Upon his glorious brow. On seeing this
The minister, her tutor, came in haste
To Cæsar, saying: "She hath chosen one
In stature like a cypress in the orchard,
With cheeks like rosebuds, and such neck and shoulders
That whosoever seeth is astonied!
Thou wouldest say: 'Here is the Grace of God,'
And yet we do not know him!"
Cæsar answered:—
"Forbid it, Heaven! that a child of mine
V. 1459 Should wrong her race. If I give him my daughter
My head will be abased in ignominy;
We must behead them both within the palace."
The bishop said: "'Tis not so grave a case,

And hath occurred to many chiefs before thee.
Thou saidest to thy daughter: 'Choose a husband.'
Thou saidest not: 'Choose an illustrious prince,'
And she hath taken him that pleaseth her;
Show then submission to the will of God.
This was the custom of thine ancestors,
Those eminent, God-fearing, holy men,
And Rúm hereon is founded; take not thou
A new way when the land is prospering;
It would not be auspicious. Speak not so,
And by untrodden paths forbear to go."

§ 8

How Cæsar gave Katáyún to Gushtásp

As soon as Cæsar heard this he determined
To give his precious daughter to Gushtásp,
To whom he said: "Go with her as thou art,
I will not give thee treasure, crown, or signet."
Gushtásp, on seeing that, was all astound;
He oft invoked the Maker of the world,
And spake to that exalted damsel, saying:—
"O thou who hast been delicately nurtured!
What hath induced thee to make choice of me
Amid these many chiefs and famous crowns?
Thy chosen is an alien, and thou
Wilt have no wealth with him but live in travail.
Select an equal from these noble men,
And so retain the favour of thy father."
But Katáyún replied: "Misdoubting one!
Rage not against the process of the sky.
If I am satisfied with thee and fortune
Why seekest thou crown, throne, and diadem?"
They left the palace, Katáyún in pain,
Gushtásp with sighs, and reached the village-chief

In grievous plight; he made a home for them
Within the village, furnished it superbly,
And said: "Content you and be prosperous."
Gushtásp, beholding these things, offered thanks
To that kind friend of his, the pious chieftain.
Now Katáyún had trinkets numberless,
And ample stores of gems and jewelry.
From these she chose a stone, such that the eye
Of expert never had beheld the like,
And this they carried to a jeweller,
Who lavished on it praises numberless,
And gave therefor six thousand gold dínárs.
They purchased what was suitable or needful,
And lived upon the cash that they had raised,
At whiles rejoicing and at whiles in tears.
Gushtásp's whole occupation was the chase;
He spent all day with arrows in his quiver.
Once, when returning from the hunting-field,
His road lay by Híshwí. He had with him
All kinds of game. He pricked along. His quiver
Was full. All that he had of great and small
He carried to Híshwí[1] who, when he saw,
Ran forth in high delight to welcome him,
And, having spread a carpet, brought out food.
Gushtásp reposed him for a while and ate,
Then went back swift as dust to Katáyún.
Since he had formed a friendship with Híshwí,
On whose discretion he relied, he used,
Whenever he went forth to hunt gazelles,
To give that friend two-thirds; the other third
Went to the chief or other village-magnate,
And thus the master of the house and he
Lived in the closest bonds of amity.

[1] Gushtásp, with an eye to the future, wisely ingratiates himself with Híshwí. *Cf.* p. 340.

§ 9

How Mírín asked in Marriage Cæsar's second Daughter

There was a certain Rúman hight Mírín,
Rich, noble, wise, and prosperous withal.
He sent a message unto Cæsar saying:—
"A man am I of rank, wealth, and renown.
Bestow on me thy daughter Dilánjám,
And give thy name and crown new life through me."
"No more such marriages for me," said Cæsar,
"For Katáyún and that ignoble man
Have stayed me. Now who seeketh such alliance,
Or wisheth to exalt his head before me,
Must carry out some mighty enterprise
That folk may call him brave among the great;
So will he prove both famous in the world
And helpful to ourselves. Let such an one
Go to the forest of Fáskún and bathe
Heart, hand, and thoughts in blood. There will he see
A wolf as huge as any elephant,
Of dragon-form and mighty as the Nile.
It hath two horns; its tushes are like boar's.
The elephants themselves dare not approach it,
But they, the lions, tigers, and the brave
Among the people, all avoid the wood.
Whoe'er shall rend that wolf's hide shall become
My son-in-law, my comrade, and my friend."
Mírín said thus: "Within this noble land,
Since first the Maker laid the base of Rúm,
Mine ancestors have ne'er engaged in combat
Unless with chiefs and with the massive mace.
Now what with me would Cæsar? Speaketh he V. 1462
Thus out of malice? I will practise craft,
And take all prudent counsel."
So that worthy

Departed to his palace, and considered
The matter every way. He brought and set
Before him writings, tables of the stars,
And his own horoscope, and there he saw
Upon this wise: "At such and such a time
A famous man will come forth from Írán,
And by his hand three weighty enterprises,
That balk the chiefs of Rúm, will be achieved.
He will become the son-in-law of Cæsar,
A diadem on that imperial head.
Within the realm two wild beasts will appear,
Inflicting general calamity,
And both of them will perish by his hand:
He will not be afraid for all their might."

Mírín had heard the case of Katáyún,
How she had mated with the bold Gushtásp,
And how Híshwí and that famed village-chief
Were both of them regarding him with favour,
So hurried to Híshwí, told what had passed
And of the wonders that philosophers
Of Rúm predicted would befall the land.
Híshwí replied: "Be pleased to tarry here
With us to-day in friendship and good will.
The man whereof thou speakest is a person
Illustrious mid the great, and all his days
He giveth to the chase, he heedeth not
The throne of him who ruleth o'er the West.
He came not yesterday to me to gladden
My gloomy soul, but presently will come
Back from the hunting-field and doubtlessly
His way will lie by us."

He furnished wine
And boon-companions. Mid perfumes and flowers
They sat with golden goblets. Now when they
Had drained four cups that valiant cavalier
Appeared afar. The twain descried his dust,

And went to meet him on the field. Mírín,
When he beheld Gushtásp, said to Híshwí:— V. 1463
"This man hath not his equal in the world!
He is a noble warrior by birth
To have such limbs, such neck, and excellence."
Híshwí returned reply: "This noble man
Is lion-hearted on the battlefield.
His prowess, modesty, high birth, and wisdom
Surpass his looks."
When he drew near, the twain
Advanced afoot dust-swift to welcome him;
Híshwí prepared a place where they might sit
Beside the water and then called in haste
To spread the board afresh and brought out wine
To have another bout with his new comrades.
When cheeks were flushed with rosy wine he thus
Addressed Gushtásp: "Great man! thou call'st me friend
On earth, and knowest not another such.
Mírín the warrior—a man of name
And puissant—hath just appealed to me.
He is a scribe both learned and well-advised,
He taketh reckoning of the stars above,
Discourseth of philosophers of Rúm,
Of regions populous and desolate,
And furthermore is of the stock of Salm,
Can tell his ancestors from sire to sire,
And hath the scimitar that Salm was wont
To carry all his years. He is right valiant,
A gallant rider, and a hero-taker,
And bringeth down the eagle with his arrow.
He wisheth further to obtain distinction
By making an affinity with Cæsar,
To whom he spake; but when he heard the answer
His heart was verily perturbed thereby,
For 'In the forest of Fáskún thou'lt find,'

So Cæsar said, 'a wolf huge as a camel,
And if it shall be slaughtered by thy hand
Thou shalt be my most honoured guest in Rúm,
V. 1464 Shalt be a worldlord and my son-in-law;
Then all the world will yield to me my rights.'
Now if thou wilt assist us I will be
Thy slave and he will be thy noble kinsman."
Gushtásp said: "Good! Agreed. Where is the forest?
What is this beast that frayeth small and great?"
"It is a savage wolf," replied Híshwí,
"Whose head is higher than a lusty camel's.
It hath two tusks like elephant's, with eyes
Like jujubes, and a hide like indigo;
Its horns are like two beams of ebony,
And in its rage it will bear off a horse.
Upon this quest full many famous chiefs
Have gone with heavy maces, but returned
Successless, worsted, and with melting hearts."
Gushtásp replied: "Bring me that sword of Salm's
Together with a noble, fiery steed.
I call that beast a dragon not a wolf,
Do thou too deem it so."
Mírín departed,
And chose a sable charger from his stalls,
With costly mail and Rúman casque; he took
That splendid sword of diamond-sheen which Salm
Had tempered both in poison and in blood,
Chose also many presents from his treasures,
And five of every kind of precious jewels.
Whenas the sun had rent its pitch-hued robe,
And left its bower, Mírín, the ambitious one,
Departed from his palace in all haste,
And reached Híshwí just as Gushtásp returned
From hunting, and Híshwí observing him
Went with Mírín to welcome him. Both marvelled

To see his charger and his scimitar.
Gushtásp, when he had looked upon the presents, V. 1465
Chose for himself the steed and sword, and gave
Híshwí the rest which pleased his soaring soul.
Gushtásp arrayed himself as quick as dust,
And mounted on the charger with his bow
Upon his arm, his lasso at the saddle—
A noble cavalier and stately steed.
Híshwí went with him and Mírín withal,
The aspiring one, who had invoked his aid.
Their hearts were full, they hurried on and soon
Were hard upon the forest of Fáskún.

§ 10

How Gushtásp slew the Wolf

When forest and wolf's haunt were near, Mírín,
Who feared that fierce beast, showed Gushtásp its lair,
Then turned back with Híshwí, grieved, with full heart,
And weeping tears of blood. Thus said Híshwí:—
"We shall not see that noble man return.
Woe for that breast and arm and neck of his!
Woe for his courage, puissance, and mace!"
Now when Gushtásp was drawing near the wood
His warlike heart was full of anxious thought;
He lighted from his noble charger, prayed
Before the Master of the world, and said:—
"O holy Fosterer of all, who sheddest
Thy lustre o'er the processes of time!
Do thou assist me to o'ercome this beast.
Have mercy on the soul of old Luhrásp,
For if this monster, which the ignorant
Have termed a wolf, shall triumph over me,
My sire will wail when he hath heard the tidings,
Will never rest again but be distraught,

Like those that are insane, and everywhere
Be questing and lamenting; while if I,
V. 1466 In sheer dismay, shall shun this evil beast
I may not face the folk for very shame."
He mounted, raised the battle-cry, and grasped
The scimitar of Salm; with bow hung ready
Upon his arm he made his way with caution
And throbbing heart till he was near the spot,
And then he thundered like a cloud in spring.
Now when the wolf beheld him from the wood
It sent a roar up to the darksome clouds,
And like a lion or a savage leopard
Tore with its claws the ground. Gushtásp, on seeing
The monster, took in hand and drew his bow,
And showering arrows from it swift as wind
He made it as it were a cloud in spring.
When wounded by the arrows of Gushtásp
The beast became yet fiercer for the pain.
It fell, but leaping to its feet came on—
A lusty monster—butting with its horns,
Stag-like, with smarting body and in wrath,
Closed with the charger, gored its sable loins,
And ripped it up from testicles to navel.
The atheling drew from his waist the sword,
Dismounted, smote the beast full on the head,
And clave asunder back and breast and shoulder;
Then in the presence of the Lord of beasts,
Lord of omniscience and of good and ill,
Made his thanksgiving to the Omnipotent,
And thus he said: "O Thou who madest fortune!
Thou pointest out the way to them that err,
And art the just, supreme, and only God.
We prosper and we triumph in Thy name;
All Grace and knowledge are at Thy disposal."
He left the place of prayer, wrenched out the tusks,
V. 1467 The two long tusks, and going from the forest

Alone fared onward till he reached the sea
Whereby Híshwí was sitting and Mírín
In anguish, deep in converse of the past;
Their talk was of Gushtásp and of the wolf:—
"Woe for that brave and gallant cavalier
Now in his arduous fight and stained with blood
In that wolf's clutch!"
Whenas Gushtásp appeared
Afoot, all bloody, and with cheeks like flower
Of fenugreek, they rose with sad exclaims,
Embraced him mournfully, their cheeks all wan,
The lashes of their eyes like clouds in spring,
And cried: "How went thy battle with the wolf?
Our hearts were bleeding at thine enterprise."
Gushtásp made answer saying: "My good friends!
Is there no fear of God in Rúm, that thus
A savage monster is allowed to live
Within the kingdom for a length of years,
Destroying all the people in its path,
And holding Cæsar as a pinch of dust?
But I have cleft it with Salm's scimitar,
So now all fear and dread for you are over.
Go and behold this wonder while yet warm,
See how the hide is rent upon the monster!
Thou'lt say: 'There is a mighty elephant
Inside, as long and broad as is the forest!'"
Then both ran thither brightened by his words,
And saw the wolf as 'twere an elephant
With lion's claws and indigo in hue,
But cleft from head to midriff by the blow;
That one skin would have held two mighty lions.
Thereafter they invoked full many a blessing
Upon that glorious Sun of earth, and went
Glad-hearted from the wood, and came again
Before that Lion of the fight to whom
Mírín brought many presents, such as he

V. 1468 Esteemed befitting, but Gushtásp accepted
Naught but another steed and made for home.
When, journeying from the sea, he reached his dwelling,
Observant Katáyún came forth to him,
And asked: "Where didst thou get that coat of mail,
Because thou wentest out to hunt?"
He said:—
"A wealthy company from mine own city
Gave me this coat of mail, the sword, and helmet,
With many a greeting from my kith and kin."
Then Katáyún brought wine as 'twere rose-water
For scent, and feasted with her spouse till bed-time.
The happy couple slumbered happily,
But constantly he started in his sleep,
While dreaming of his battle with the wolf
That seemed a lusty dragon. Then to him
Said Katáyún: "What aileth thee to-night
To be thus terrified when no one touched thee?"
He said: "I dreamed about my throne and fortune."
Then Katáyún perceived that he was born
Of royal race—a king by heart and nature,
A grandee, but concealed the fact from her,
And would not look to Cæsar for advancement.
Gushtásp said: "Moon-faced one of cypress stature,
With silvern breast and odorous of musk!
Prepare for us to journey to Írán,
To journey to the dwelling of the brave.
Thou shalt behold those glorious fields and fells,
And therewithal the just and generous Sháh."
"Speak not so foolishly," said Katáyún,
"Nor rashly undertake such enterprises,
But have an understanding with Híshwí
When going. He may ferry thee. The world
Renewed its youth when he conveyed thee hither;
But I shall tarry here in longsome grief,
Not knowing how I shall behold thee more!"

They wept upon their couch o'er what might chance, V. 1469
No fire was needed, they were burned with sorrow;
Yet when the circling sun rose in the sky
The young folks, wide awake and full of hope,
Arose from that soft couch and questioned saying:—
"What aspect will the heaven wear for us,
And will the world prove harsh to us or loving?"
Mírín for his part went as swift as wind
To Cæsar, saying: "O illustrious lord!
Our losses by the wolf have reached an end,
The monster's body filleth all the forest,
And thou mayst see the wonder if thou wilt.
The beast attacked me with a furious charge,
And gat a sword-stroke from my hand, whereby
From head to midriff it was cleft asunder,
And terror filled the Dív's heart at the blow."
The words made Cæsar heighten, his shrunk cheek
Glowed as he bade men go with wains and oxen
To fetch the wolf. They found the mighty beast
Cut down from head to midriff with the sword,
And when they haled it forth among the meadows
Thou wouldst have said the very hill-tops shook.
The world was there to gaze upon that wolf,
That wolf? That monstrous, fierce, and lusty dív!
When Cæsar saw the elephantine form
Of that fierce brute, he clapped his hands for joy,
And, summoning the bishop to the palace,
Bestowed his daughter on Mírín that day.
They wrote to the patricians, notables,
And prelates of the kingdom thus: "Mírín,
That Lion and that man of high degree
In Rúm, hath set it from that fierce wolf free."

§ 11

How Ahran asked Cæsar's third Daughter in Marriage

Exalted mid the warriors of Rúm
Was one—a chieftain younger than Mírín,
A man of haughty nature named Ahran,
Of brazen body and illustrious race.
He sent a message unto Cæsar saying :—
"O famous monarch! I surpass Mírín
In treasure, prowess, swordsmanship, and all;
Give me thy youngest daughter as my spouse,
And make thy realm and crown revive through me."
But Cæsar said: "Thou surely must have heard
What I have sworn by Him that watcheth o'er us
That this girl shall not choose her spouse, but I
Will quit the custom of mine ancestors.
Thou must perform some action like Mírín's
That we may stand on an equality.
Infesting Mount Sakíla is a dragon,
Which is that region's bale the whole year through;
If thou wilt rid the land thereof, my daughter,
My treasure, and my kingdom are thine own.
It matcheth with the lion-quelling wolf:
Its venom-breath is Áhriman's own snare."
Ahran replied: "I will perform thy hest,
And pledge my soul to execute thy will."
Then to his friends: "The blow that slew the wolf
Was from the scimitar of one of valour.
How could Mírín accomplish such a deed?
But Cæsar thinketh one man like another.
I will go ask Mírín; that shifty one
May haply tell the shift that he employed."
So to the palace of Mírín he went
Like dust, with one before him to announce him.
Mírín sat in a chamber, which the Moon

Throughout her orbit hath not one to match.
The ambitious man was in a warrior's garb, V. 1471
And crowned with an imperial diadem.
The servant said: "Ahran, the elephantine,
Is coming with a train of followers."
Mírín thereat adorned his chamber more,
While all his worthiest servants went to meet
Ahran. Mírín, on seeing him, embraced him,
And then began to pay him compliments.
When nobody remained within the hall,
Save those two chieftains sitting on the throne,
Ahran said to Mírín: "Come tell me this,
And, whatsoe'er I ask, dissemble not.
My heart is set on making Cæsar's daughter,
Who is the chief princess of Rúm, my wife;
But when I asked him he returned this answer:—
'First battle with the dragon on the mountain.'
If thou wilt tell me how thou didst destroy
The wolf thou wilt assist me mightily."
Mírín was troubled and considered thus:—
"If I tell not Ahran what that young hero
Achieved, the matter still will get abroad.
The sum of manliness is being upright,
And dark, deceitful ways are cause for tears.
I will inform him. Haply that brave horseman
May lay the dragon's head upon its breast.
Ahran will be my friend and back me up,
Our enemies will only clutch the wind;
Then will we raise this horseman's heart in dust,
And this affair will for a time be hidden."[1]
He thus addressed Ahran: "I will inform thee
About the wolf, but first of all require
A mighty oath that thou wilt not reveal
This secret night or day, but shut thy lips."
Ahran accepted what Mírín proposed,

[1] Reading with P.

And swore the mighty oath. Mírín set pen
To paper, wrote a letter to Híshwí,
V. 1472 And said: "Ahran, who is akin to Cæsar,
An atheling possessed of throne and treasure,
And just withal, demandeth Cæsar's daughter,
The youngest and the only one remaining,
In marriage; Cæsar maketh of the dragon
A snare to catch Ahran and take his head;
Ahran hath come to me to ask assistance,
And I, to help him, have revealed the secret
About the wolf and that brave cavalier,
Who, having done so well for me, no doubt
Will do as well for him too, will create
Two princes in the land, and crown two Suns."
Ahran departed with the schemer's letter
And sought Híshwí. As he approached the sea
The veteran ran to meet him, welcomed him,
Received the flattering letter, loosed the band,
And said thus to Ahran: "Dost thou not know
That 'tis our friends who desolate our gardens?
A youth—an alien and a man of name—
Made his own life a ransom for Mírín,
And yet may not escape, strive as he will,
Against the dragon. Be my guest to-night,
Here set thy candle, and enjoy the sea.
When that fame-seeking hero cometh hither
To-morrow, I will tell him what thou wilt."
They lit the surface of the sea with candles,
And called for wine and meat, till topaz dawn
Rose in the vault of lapis-lazuli;
V. 1473 Then by the sea the famed Ahran beheld
A warrior-horseman coming in the distance.
As he drew near both went with joy to meet him.
Dismounting he requested meat and wine
From famed Híshwí who made all haste to say:—
"Rejoice, illustrious man, both day and night!

Behold this warrior of Cæsar's kindred—
The darling of the ever turning sky.
Not only is he of imperial race,
But he hath wealth, Grace, fame, and everything.
He fain would be the son-in-law of Cæsar,
And would have one to guide in that emprise.
He hath no equal save in Cæsar's kindred;
A youth is he with Grace and thews and stature.
He asked for Cæsar's daughter's hand in marriage,
And he was answered by a new expedient,
For Cæsar said: 'Be thou a dragon-catcher;
If thou art of my race display thy prowess.'
Before the mighty men by night and day
No name except Mírín's is on his lips,
And only those will illustrate his throne
Who are in fame and fortune like Mírín.
Near is a lofty mountain, once a place
For mirth and feasting; now upon the summit
There is a dragon feared by all in Rúm.
It draweth down the vulture from the sky,
Up from the deep the savage crocodile;
Its poison and its fume consume the ground,
And all the region is unblessed by heaven.
Now if by hand of thine it should be slain
The deed would be a wonder in the world;
Nathless, if holy God shall be thy helper, V. 1474
And if the sun revolve as thou desirest,
Thou with thy stature, form, and might of hand
Mayst lay that dragon with the scimitar."
He said: "Go make a sword five cubits long,
Including hilt, toothed like a serpent's teeth
Upon both sides, and pointed sharp as thorn.
The sword must be of finely tempered steel,
Of watered metal and exceeding keen.
Provide me too a mace, a barded steed,
A gleaming glaive and royal garniture.

By God's victorious fortune and decree
Will I suspend that dragon from a tree."

§ 12

How Gushtásp slew the Dragon and how Cæsar gave his Daughter to Ahran

Ahran departed and prepared whatever
Gushtásp required of him. When all was ready
The hero mounted, and with his companions
Set forward. When Híshwí saw Mount Sakíla
He pointed with his finger, breathing hard,
And when the sun shot out its rays on high
He and Ahran turned and retraced their steps.
Gushtásp remained before the mountain-lair
Of that fierce worm and, having hung his helmet
Upon his saddle, thinking dragon's breath
And death but trifles, drew anear the mountain,
And gave a shout that made the dragon quake.
Now when it looked upon that lofty form
It strove to suck Gushtásp in with its breath,
While he rained arrows on it swift as hail,
And thick as petals from pomegranate-bloom.
V. 1475 It closed with him. Invoking all his powers
The young man thrust his sword adown its jaws,
And called upon the Judge who giveth good.
The dragon gnashed its teeth upon the sword
Deep in its maw, while blood and venom flowed
And drenched the mount until the brute grew weak.
Then, scimitar in hand, the Lion clove
The dragon's head and strewed the rock with brains.
Dismounting next that lucky warrior
Prized out a couple of the dragon's teeth,
And thence departing washed his head and body;
Then as he wallowed in the dust he raised

His voice before the Lord, the Victory-giver,
Who had bestowed on him such mastery
O'er wolf and lusty dragon, saying: "Luhrásp
And glorious Zarír had had enough,
Both soul and body, of Gushtásp, yet I
By shrewdness, courage, and sheer strength have flung
A dragon such as this upon the dust!
My lot from fortune is but travail, hardship,
And bane spread out instead of antidote.
If the Omnipotent shall grant me life
To look once more upon the monarch's face,
Then will I say: 'What hath the throne availed me?
I sought the throne and fortune disappeared.'"
With tearful cheeks he mounted on his steed,
Still grasping in his hand his glittering sword,
And coming to Híshwí and to Ahran
Informed them of that marvel, saying: "The dragon
Proved naught before this trenchant blade of mine.
Ye were afraid of that great dragon's breath,
And in the matter of the wolf, but I
Am more distressed by fight with valiant captains,
Exalted and equipped with massive maces,
Than by contending with a crocodile V. 1476
That cometh from the depths to fight with me.
Seen have I many a dragon such as this,
And never turned my back thereon in fight."
They heard him—young in speech but old in knowledge—
And those two nobles came and reverenced him:—
"O Lion! never will be born of woman
One brave as thou. The Master of the world
Aid thee whose might hath done the deed for us."
Ahran produced abundance of rich gifts,
With noble steeds caparisoned. Gushtásp
Accepted for himself a sword, a bay,
A bow, ten wooden arrows, and a lasso,

Bestowing everything that still remained—
New raiment and dínárs—upon Híshwí.
Gushtásp said: "Nobody must know this matter,
Or be aware that I have seen the dragon,
Or hearkened to the howling of the wolf."
He went thence merrily to Katáyún.
Ahran fetched wains and oxen, and consigned
The carcase of the dragon to his servants.
He said: "Convey it unto Cæsar's court
In presence of the great men of the host."
He went himself before the wains and oxen
To Cæsar. When they gat the news in Rúm
The veterans hurried forth and, when the oxen
Descended from the mountain to the plain,
A shout rose from the concourse at that stroke,
And that grim dragon burdening ox and wagon.
V. 1477 They cried: "This is a stroke of Áhriman's,
And not Ahran's own sword and scimitar!"
They brought forth from the palace Cæsar's throne,
And called the great and wise. Then o'er the dragon
They held high revelry from dawn till dark.
The next day when the sun had crowned the sky,
And when the teaks were gilded with its rays,
The bishop came at the command of Cæsar,
Who seated him upon the golden throne.
Then the patricians and the presbyters,
So far as they were men of any standing,
Assembled in the presence of the prelate,
Of Cæsar, of his veterans, and advisers,
To marry Cæsar's daughter to Ahran,
Her loving mother giving her consent.
Then Cæsar, after all the folk had gone,
Spake thus, his heart still thrilling with delight:—
"This is my day of days! High heaven illumeth
My heart, for none will see in all the world
'Midst great and small two sons-in-law like mine."

They wrote a letter unto all the chiefs,
Possessing throne and diadem, and said:—
"The dragon fierce and towering wolf are slain;
Two mighty heroes' hands their lives have ta'en."

§ 13

How Gushtásp displayed his Prowess on the Riding-ground

In Cæsar's palace was a belvedere
As lofty as his own resplendent throne,
And on the riding-ground both sons-in-law
Were wont to entertain his gladsome heart
With polo, javelin-play, and archery,
And wheeling to display their horsemanship;
Thou wouldst have said: "They are consummate riders."
It came to pass at length that Katáyún,
Who always took the lead, came to Gushtásp,
And said: "O thou that sittest moodily! V. 1478
Why is it that thy heart is plunged in grief?
There are two chieftains in the land of Rúm,
Enjoying treasures, crowns, and diadems;
One slew the dragon mid no little peril,
And never showed his back, the other rent
The wolf's hide; Rúm is ringing with his fame.
Now on the riding-ground these two send dust
To heaven! Go see, for Cæsar will be there:
It may perchance relieve thy melancholy."
Gushtásp replied: "My beauty! what remembrance
Or interest can Cæsar have in me?
He keepeth thee and me outside the city,
How then should he be friendly if we meet?
Yet notwithstanding if it be thy counsel
I will not disregard it, O my guide!"
Gushtásp bade put the saddle on a steed

That rolled the earth up under it. He came
To Cæsar's riding-ground and watched the polo,
Then asking for a stick and ball he cast
The ball amid the throng and urged his steed;
The warriors paused, not one could see the ball,
His stroke had made it vanish in mid air!
How could the cavaliers recover it?
Not one was minded to renew the game,
The Rúmans' faces paled and all was din
And clamour. Then they turned to archery.
Some gallant cavaliers advanced, and when
Gushtásp the hero saw them, "Now," he said,
"Must I display my prowess."
So he flung
The polo-stick away and gripped the bow.
Both string and arrow were astound at him.
V. 1479 When Cæsar looked upon that noble man,
With such a grasp, such shoulders, and long stirrups,
He asked and said: "Whence is this cavalier,
Who wheeleth on such wise to right and left?
Full many noble warriors have I seen,
But never heard of cavalier like that.
Call him that I may ask him who he is—
An angel or a mortal seeking fame."
They called Gushtásp to Cæsar whose ill mind
Was troubled. Cæsar said: "Brave cavalier,
Head of the proud and coronal of war!
What is thy name? Tell me thy race and country."
Gushtásp made no reply concerning this,
But answered thus: "A wretched stranger I
Whom Cæsar drave aforetime from the city.
When I became his son-in-law he banned me,
And no one readeth on his roll my name,
For Cæsar treated Katáyún with harshness
Because of all the world she chose a stranger,
Yet only followed custom in the matter,

And was disgraced albeit she did well.
Within the forest that pernicious wolf,
And on the mountain that ferocious dragon,
Lost through my blows their heads, to which emprises
My prompter was Híshwí. The teeth moreover
Are at my house, the blows that my sword dealeth
Are proof besides. Let Cæsar ask Híshwí;
The matter is still recent, not outworn."

Whenas Híshwí had come and brought the teeth
He told to Cæsar what had passed, who framed
His tongue to make apology: "Injustice
Is over, youth! Now where is Katáyún,
My well-beloved? Well mayst thou call me tyrant!"

Indignant with Mírín and with Ahran
He said: "Things cannot be concealed for ever."

Then mounting on his windfoot steed he went V. 1480
To ask forgiveness of his prudent daughter,
And said: "O pure, well-fortuned child of mine!
Thou art my right eye in the world. My heart
Hath no wish but for thee. I prithee ask
Of him who is thy husband and companion
To tell the secret of his home and kindred,
For otherwise he will not speak the truth
To us."

She answered: "I have questioned him,
But never saw him on the skirt thereof.
He talketh not before me of his secret,
And he is reticent to every one.
He answereth not with candour to my questions,
And only saith: 'My name is Farukhzád.'
But I suspect that he is nobly born,
For he is fond of fight and valiant."

Then Cæsar parted palace-ward and heaven
Turned for a while with matters in this stay
Until the morning when Gushtásp, whose head
Was full of wisdom, rose and went to him,

Who, when he saw Gushtásp, was mute but gave him
A seat upon the famous golden throne,
V. 1481 Called for a signet, belt, and jewelled crown,
Befitting princes, from the treasury,
And having kissed him placed it on his head,
Recounted his achievements in the past,
And said to those concerned: "Be diligent,
Both young and old! Do fully the commands
Of Farukhzád and not transgress herein."
This order was dispatched on every hand
To all the ruling men throughout the land.

§ 14

How Cæsar wrote to Ilyás and demanded Tribute

Now Cæsar's nearest neighbour was Khazar,
Whose folk made dark his days. Ilyás, the son
Of veteran Mihrás, was chief thereof,
And Cæsar wrote to him, thou wouldst have said:—
"He dipped his pen in blood": "Thou, O Khazar!
Hast lived on us and flouted us for long,
But now the day of thy delight is over.
Send me a heavy tribute and a fine,
With many of thy chiefs as hostages,
Else Farukhzád like some mad elephant
Will come and make the surface of thy realm
Bare as my hand."
Ilyás perused the letter,
Then dipped his pen-point into gall and answered:—
"Such power was not in Rúm in days of yore,
And if I ask not you to pay me tribute,
Why then rejoice therefor, both field and fell.
Are ye so heartened by this single horseman,
Who sheltered with you? Know him for a snare
Of Áhriman's and, though an iron mountain,

Still but one man; so do not trouble him
With this campaign for I shall not be long."
When news came to Mírín and to Ahran V. 1482
About Ilyás, and how he spread his toils
Mírín dispatched a message unto Cæsar:—
"No dragon this to let himself be snared,
Nor yet a wolf to perish by a sleight,
And be convulsed by being smeared with poison;
Ilyás, when he is raging in the battle,
Will make the atheling weep tears of blood.
Mark how completely this proud warrior
Will quail before him on the battlefield."
Concerned was Cæsar when he heard their words;
He withered at their dark designs and said
To Farukhzád: "A man of might art thou,
As 'twere a gem upon the head of Rúm.
Know that Ilyás is one to conquer lions,
A brazen-bodied, elephantine horseman.
If thou hast strength to fight against him say so,
But seek not to deceive me through vain-glory,
For if thou art not able to withstand him
I will deal with him in a kindly sort,
Divert him from his purpose by mine unction,
And lavish on him words and subsidies."
Gushtásp said: "Why this talk and questioning?
When I shall plunge my charger in the dust
I shall not fear the marches of Khazar;
But in the day of fight we must not reckon
Upon Mírín and on Ahran, for they
Will show their hatred, devilry, and guile;
So, when the foe arriveth from that coast,
Do thou with one son guard me. Then will I,
Strong in the only God—the Conqueror—
Lead on the troops, annihilate Ilyás,
His throne, his crown, his host, and majesty,

Will grasp his girdle, take him from his saddle,
Raise him aloft and dash him to the ground."
One day what time the sun was up, and streams
Reflected in their depths its golden shield,
V. 1483 The brazen trumpets sounded from Khazar,
And dust rose sunward. Noble Cæsar bade
Gushtásp: "Lead forth the host."
He left the city,
Marched with his peers and warriors to the plain,
Armed with an ox-head mace, and as he went
Looked like a lofty cypress by a stream;
He chose upon the plain a battlefield,
And sent the dust to heaven. Anon Ilyás
Observed the breast and bearing of Gushtásp,
His whirling mace and battle-ax, and sent
A horseman to beguile his subtle mind.
The horseman came and said: "Exalted chieftain!
Be not so proud of Cæsar for thou art
Thyself his cavalier, his Spring, and hero.
Withdraw thee from between the embattled lines.
Why art thou thus with lips afoam? Ilyás
In battle is a lion, one that sendeth
The dust up cloudward with his scimitar.
If thou desirest presents he hath treasure;
Gall not thy hands with travailing for wealth.
Choose where thou wilt to rule, it shall be thine;
I will be thy companion and thy subject,
And never break my faith."
Gushtásp replied:
"It is too late and things have gone too far.
Thou wast the person to begin this quarrel,
And now thou turnest back on thine own word;
But nothing that thou sayest will avail,
'Tis time for battle and the grip of war."
The messenger returned like wind and told
The answer to Ilyás, but time for fighting

Was not, the sun was sinking rapidly,
Night hid the pallid orb with ebony.

§ 15

How Gushtásp fought with Ilyás and slew him

When Sol had issued from his bower, and mounted V. 1484
Upon the throne of Sagittarius,
The realm of Rúm became like sandarach,
The roar of trump and drum and clash of arms
Rose from the armies on both sides, the field
Of battle was as 'twere a stream of blood;
Then Cæsar came on quickly on the right,
Set his two sons-in-law to guard the baggage,
And his own son Sakíl upon the left:
The elephants and drums remained with Cæsar.
The din of battle went up from both hosts:
Thou wouldst have said: "The sun and moon contend."
Gushtásp kept moving up and down the line,
His steed a Crocodile, his sword a Dragon;
Thereat Ilyás said to his warriors:—
"This is why Cæsar hath demanded tribute;
He hath a Dragon such as this at court,
And therefore is thus minded."
When Gushtásp
Beheld Ilyás he said: "Now is the time
To show accomplishment."
Both cavaliers
Rushed on with lances and mail-piercing shafts.
No sooner had Ilyás discharged an arrow,
In hope to give the first wound, than Gushtásp
Struck at his foeman's hawberk with a spear,
And in a moment pierced his warrior-form,
Dismounted him like one bemused, reached out,
And, having clutched his hand, haled him along,

Bore him away before the cavaliers,
And gave him up to Cæsar. Then Gushtásp
Led on the host in mass against the foe,
Advancing like a blast. What multitudes
He slew and captured, while the world looked on
V. 1485 Astound! Perceiving all the Rúman forces
In full pursuit he turned and came with triumph
And exaltation into Cæsar's presence,
Who, seeing him approaching, went attended
To welcome him, right gladly kissed the hero
On head and eyes, and greatly thanked the Maker.
Thence they returned with joy. The general
Assumed the crown of greatness while all Rúm
Came gladly to the presence of the king,
And brought him many a gift and offering.

§ 16

How Cæsar demanded from Luhrásp Tribute for Írán

Heaven turned awhile with matters in this stay,
Concealed its purposes, and made no sign,
Till Cæsar spake thus to Gushtásp: "Great chieftain!
Consider wisely what I say; 'tis matter
Requiring thought. I will dispatch an envoy,
Experienced and noble, to Luhrásp
To say to him: 'Thou hast without dispute
The treasures of the great and half the world.
If thou wilt pay me tribute for thy land
Both wealth and worship shall continue thine;
But if not I will send a host from Rúm,
Such that thou wilt not see the land for horse-hoofs.'"
"'Tis thine," Gushtásp made answer, "to determine,
For all the world is underneath thy feet."
There was a nobleman Kálús by name,
Wise, learnèd, well advised, and powerful;

Famed Cæsar called that sage and said: "Depart, V. 1486
And tell the Sháh: 'If thou wilt pay me tribute,
Perform my bidding, and submit thyself,
Thou mayest keep the Íránian crown and throne,
And thou shalt be a conquering worldlord still;
If not, behold forthwith a mighty host
Of Rúmans and the spearmen of the desert!
Their battle-shout shall rise above the plain,
Victorious Farukhzád shall be their leader;
I will make all your country desolate,
The lurking-place of leopards and of lions.'"
The envoy came as swift as wind; his head
Was full of wisdom and his heart of justice;
On drawing near the mighty Sháh he saw
The portal and the splendid audience-chamber,
And when the chamberlain was 'ware he came
With stately step before the monarch, saying:—
"There is an ancient statesman at the gate;
In sooth he is an envoy sent by Cæsar,
A cavalier with whom are many spearmen,
And seeketh audience of the Sháh."
Luhrásp,
On hearing this, sat on the ivory throne,
And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,
While all the great men of the kingdom sat
Below him, happy in their high estate.
The monarch gave command to raise the curtain,
And introduce the envoy cordially,
Who, coming near the throne, called blessings down
Thereon, did reverence and, himself a man
Of wisdom and of justice, gave the message
Of noble Cæsar. At his words the Sháh
Was grieved and raged against this turn of fortune.
They had a splendid banquet-hall prepared,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
The Sháh sent tapestries of cloth of gold,

With raiment and with provand; but at night
Lay down distracted by anxiety,
"The spouse of pain and grief," as thou hadst said.
V. 1487 Now when the sun sat on the golden throne,
And dark night tore its visage with its nails,
The monarch called Zarír who spake at large.
They cleared the hall of strangers, introduced
The envoy for an audience, and Luhrásp
Addressed him thus: "O man fulfilled with wisdom!
May thy soul have no other sustenance.
I will interrogate thee. Answer truly,
And pander not to guile if thou art wise.
Such puissance was not heretofore in Rúm,
And Cæsar was submissive to the Sháhs,
Yet now he sendeth and requireth tribute
Of every realm, demanding throne and state!
Ilyás, who ruled the kingdom of Khazar,
A warrior with the Grace, hath Cæsar taken
A captive, binding him and all his host.
From whom hath Cæsar learned the path of glory?"
The envoy said: "I went, wise Sháh! to ask
For tribute to the marches of Khazar,
And bare much travail in the embassage,
But no one ever questioned me in this wise.
Yet hath the Sháh entreated me so kindly
That I must not essay to misinform him.
A cavalier, who taketh with his hands
The lion from the wood, hath come to Cæsar;
On battle-days he laugheth at the brave,
In banquet he is mighty at the goblet.
In fight, in feast, and on the hunting-day
The eye ne'er looked on such a cavalier.
Upon him Cæsar hath bestowed his daughter,
The goodliest and dearer than the crown.
This cavalier hath made his mark in Rúm
By vanquishing a dragon; furthermore

A wolf, like elephant upon the plain,
Such that e'en Cæsar dared not pass that way,
He overthrew, prized out the teeth thereof, V. 1488
And kept Rúm scathless."
Said Luhrásp: "Truth-speaker!
Whom doth that lover of the fray resemble?"
The envoy answered: "Thou wouldst say at once:—
'In countenance he favoureth Zarír.'
And further: 'It is brave Zarír himself
In height, appearance, courtesy, and counsel.'"
Whenas Luhrásp heard this his visage cleared.
He showed much kindness to that man of Rúm,
And gave him many slaves and many purses,
So that on leaving he was well content,
But said the Sháh: "Give Cæsar this reply:—
'I march against thee as an enemy.'"

§ 17

How Zarír carried a Message from Luhrásp to Cæsar

Luhrásp mused long, then called Zarír, and said:—
"This man must be thy brother, therefore take
Thy measures instantly and tarry not.
If thou delayest all is over with us;
Rest not and order out no halting steed.
Take throne, a led horse, and the golden boots,
Take Káwa's standard and the crown withal,
For I will give to him the sovereignty,
And lay no obligation on his head.
March on thy saving mission to Halab,
But speak before the troops of battle only."
The worshipful Zarír said to Luhrásp:—
"I will discover all the mystery;
If 'tis Gushtásp he is both liege and lord,
And all the other lords are but his lieges."

This said, he chose a noble company,
The great, illustrious grandsons of Káús
And of Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, as well
As those who were descended from Zarasp—
Bahrám the lion-queller and Rívníz—
V. 1489 And those exalted grandsons of brave Gív
The athelings Shírúya and Ardshír,
Two doughty Lions, offspring of Bízhan,
Both haughty warriors of stainless birth.
These chieftains went, each with two steeds, and shone
Bright as Ázargashasp. None stopped to rest
Until they reached the marches of Halab,
And filled the world with trumpets, gongs, and tumult.
They raised the glorious standard, pitched the tents
And tent-enclosures, then Zarír committed
The host to proud Bahrám, and journeyed on
As one that is the bearer of a message,
Or bringeth monarchs tidings of great joy,
With five wise, prudent warriors of his meiny,
And when he had arrived at Cæsar's court,
The chamberlain descried him from the gate.
Now Cæsar with the wise Gushtásp was sitting
In dudgeon in the palace and, on hearing
The chamberlain's announcement, granted audience.
Gushtásp joyed at the coming of Zarír,
Who at his entry seemed a lofty cypress,
And sitting by the throne gave Cæsar greeting,
And complimented all the Rúmans present.
Then Cæsar said: "Thou slightest Farukhzád,
And heedest not the rules of courtesy."
The blest Zarír replied: "He is a slave,
Who, weary of his service, left our court,
And now he hath attained position here."
Gushtásp made no reply, but of a truth
His thoughts were on Írán. Shrewd-minded Cæsar
Grew serious as he heard the young man's words,

And thought: "He must be speaking truth and yet
The truth alone is hidden."
Then Zarír V. 1490
Declared to him the message of Luhrásp,
Which ran thus: "If just judges grow unjust
I will make Rúm my seat, and leave behind
A scanty population in Írán.
Set forth, O warrior! prepare for battle,
And tarry not when thou hast heard my words.
Írán is not Khazar and I myself
Am no Ilyás, whose people thou hast robbed
Of him."
Then Cæsar answered: "I am ready
For battle always. Since thou art an envoy,
Depart. We will prepare to take the field."
The glorious Zarír was sore distrest
At hearing this, and stayed not long to rest.

§ 18

How Gushtásp returned with Zarír to the Land of Írán and received the Throne from Luhrásp

On his departure Cæsar asked Gushtásp:—
"Why madest thou no answer to Zarír?"
Gushtásp replied: "When I was with the Sháh
What deeds I did both troops and people tell.
The best course is for me to go and hold
A parley with them. I will get for thee
All that thou wishest, and will make thy fame
Shine in the world."
"Thou art more wise than I,"
Said Cæsar, "and canst best achieve our ends."
Gushtásp on that bestrode his eager steed,
And, crown on head, approached Zarír his brother.
Now when the Íránian host beheld Gushtásp,

Luhrásp's most glorious son, they went afoot
To welcome him, but in distress and tears,
V. 1491 Yet thankfully for their long toils were shortened.
Zarír, of discord weary, came to him
Afoot. Gushtásp embraced his well loved brother,
And with his first words sought to make excuse.
They sat upon the throne in company
With warriors, chiefs, and great men of Írán,
And blest Zarír said to Gushtásp: "Mayst thou
Companion with the throne while life shall last!
Our father's head is hoar, thy heart is young.
Why dash the expectations of the old?
The throne is but affliction at his age,
He hath become a devotee of God,
And herewithal he sendeth unto thee
The crown and treasure; let thy hardships cease.
His words were these: 'Irán is all thine own,
The throne, the army, and the crown are thine.
For me a corner of the world sufficeth,
Because the throne of greatness is another's;
Thy brother bringeth thee the glorious crown,
The earrings, torque, and throne of ivory.'"
Gushtásp rejoiced to see his father's throne,
And, sitting down upon it, crowned his head.
The grandsons of the worldlord Kai Káús,
And all the prosperous scions of Gúdarz,
Bahrám too and Shápúr,[1] Rívníz, and such
As were of high degree, with brave Ardshír,
Son of Bízhan, who was their general,
A lion-taking chief, and all the host,
Hailed him as Sháh and named him king of earth,
While all the warriors stood before his presence
With girded loins. Gushtásp perceived their love
And earnestness, and sent to Cæsar saying:—
"Thy business with Írán hath been achieved,

[1] Reading with P.

For matters have attained a pass indeed;
Zarír and all the army are in hopes
That thou wilt come alone and feast with us.
We all will join in league with thee and make V. 1492
Our souls the pledges of our loyalty;
So, if it irk thee not, come to the plain,
For fortune hath accomplished thy desire."
The envoy, having entered Cæsar's presence,
Declared what he had seen and heard; then Cæsar
Bestrode without delay a windfoot steed,
And sped as swiftly as an autumn-blast
Until he reached the warriors of Írán.
He saw upon the ivory throne and crowned
With turquoise crown Gushtásp who, coming forward,
Embraced him tenderly, and spake at large.
Then Cæsar, knowing him to be Gushtásp,
The lustre of the Sháh's throne, praised him greatly,
And showed him all respect. They took their seats,
And Cæsar made excuses for the past
In great amazement at that wondrous fortune.
Gushtásp accepted all the monarch's words
And, having clasped his head in fond embrace,
Said to him: "When the sky becometh dark,
And it is well to set the lamps alight,
Send to me her who chose me for her husband,
For she hath borne exceeding pain and travail."
Ashamed and weary Cæsar went away
To reckon with his own ill bent at large.
He sent to Katáyún a store of wealth—
A ruddy coronet, five gems, a thousand
Young Rúman slaves, both boys and girls, a torque
That was one mass of jewels fit for kings,
Five camels' burden of brocade of Rúm, V. 1493
And, in the charge of all that wealth, a sage,
Who, having carried them before Gushtásp,
Accounted to his treasurer for all.

Upon the troops and chieftains of Írán,
Upon the scions of the mighty men,
And every notable and valiant swordsman,
Did Cæsar then bestow both arms and money,
With presents to the captains every one.
He oped the portal of the treasuries,
With praise to Him who made both earth and time.
As soon as Katáyún had joined the Sháh
The roar of kettledrums rose from the court,
The troops began to march toward Írán,
And horses' dust to overcast the sky.
The Sháh turned Cæsar's rapid charger round
When he had gone two stages on the march,
Made him retrace his steps with oaths of friendship,
And sent him Rúm-ward with good wishes, saying:—
"I will not while I live ask any tribute
Of Rúm; that country is a joy to me."
He journeyed on till he approached Írán,
Approached the monarch of the brave. The Sháh,
On hearing that Zarír came with Gushtásp,
His brother, that fierce Lion, went with all
The chiefs, great men, and warriors of Írán
To welcome them. Gushtásp alighted quickly,
And homaged joyfully Luhrásp who seeing
His son embraced him, grievously deploring
The tyranny of heaven. Whenas they reached
The royal palace at their journey's end,
V. 1494 Like Sol in Pisces, said Luhrásp to him:—
"Look not askance, the Maker so ordained,
And thus perchance 'twas written o'er thy head
That thou shouldst be an exile from thy kingdom."
Luhrásp then kissed Gushtásp and, having crowned him,
Did homage to him and rejoiced in him.
Then said Gushtásp: "O Sháh! God grant that time
May never look on me deprived of thee.

Thou art the king; I am thy liege and I
Will trample on the fortune of the foe.
May all thine ends be prosperous. God grant
Thy fame may never perish, for the world
Abideth not with any one and each,
While in the body, hath full many a toil."
Such is this fickle world! With might and main
From sowing seeds of ill therein refrain.
One day a man may be in want of bread,
Another day may be a king instead.
The righteous Judge, and only God, I pray
That from this world I may not pass away
Till in my goodly tongue I shall have told
This story of the kings in days of old;
Then let mine honoured body go to dust,
And my poetic spirit join the just.

XV

GUSHTÁSP

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

The advent of Zarduhsht is described. Gushtásp is converted, and war ensues between him and the Túránian king Arjásp. Gushtásp is helped out of many straits by his valiant son, Asfandiyár, who is incited to exertion by the promise of the kingship. Gushtásp, however, always finds fresh excuses for delaying his own abdication, and at length, being much pressed by Asfandiyár, sends him to bring Rustam in chains to court, with tragic results to all parties concerned. Gushtásp bestows the kingship on Bahman, the son of Asfandiyár, and dies.

NOTE

The reign of Gushtásp falls naturally into four Parts. It is not, however, so divided, as indicated by the independent numbering of the couplets of each Part, either in the Vullers-Landauer text, from which our translation is made, or in that of Mohl. In Macan's edition the couplets are not numbered. The division into Parts is a convenient arrangement. We have adopted it in the present instance, and propose to do so in future cases when the reign is long and the subject-matter lends itself to such treatment.

To the student of the Sháhnáma the reign is one of much interest for many reasons. It contains a fine example of poetic justice, inasmuch as Gushtásp, having embittered the life of his own father,[1] now finds himself, owing to rash promises,[2] placed in a similar quandary with regard to his own son, Asfandiyár. There is the question, too, as to the position that he occupies

[1] See Vol. iv. p. 318 *seq.*

[2] See pp. 66, 97, 107, 114.

from the standpoint of history. We have the account of the advent of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), his preaching and the consequent conversion of Gushtásp, and, what renders this still more interesting, not in Firdausí's own words but in those of his contemporary Dakíkí, whose untimely death gave Firdausí the great opportunity of his life—one of which he was prompt to avail himself. Here, too, for the first time, we are enabled to compare the Sháhnáma with an extant Pahlaví version of the same subject-matter, and can see for ourselves how closely Dakíkí followed his authorities, just as later on we shall be enabled to compare Firdausí's own work with a similar extant Pahlaví version, when we come to the Ashkánian dynasty and the account therein given of the rise to power of Ardshír Pápakán, the founder of the Sásánian dynasty. Here, too, the great champion of priestly tradition—Asfandiyár—is introduced and brought face to face with the great hero of popular tradition—Rustam. In this reign, too, the long life of the latter hero comes to an end, and Firdausí tells us whence he obtained the information that enabled him to include his account of that end in the poem. We have also in his continuation of Dakíkí what we may regard, not, indeed, as the earliest of his literary efforts, but the earliest in intentional connexion with the Sháhnáma. It is interesting, too, to compare the styles of the two poets, though that is rather for the student of the original than for the reader of the translation.

For Gushtásp, see Vol. ii. p. 9. We may, however, add a few words on the way in which some of the more salient features of the historical epoch associated with the names of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis are indicated in the legendary accounts of Kai Khusrau, Luhrásp, and Gushtásp. The Achæmenids, as is well known, ruled in a double collateral line—an elder and a younger. With the death of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, the elder line came to an end. The rightful heir, so to speak, was the head of the younger line—Hystaspes—a man, as later events showed, not lacking in vitality and courage, for as Governor of Parthia he maintained the cause of his house energetically during the troublous times that followed the accession of his more famous son, Darius I., to the throne. Why Hystaspes stood aside in favour of his son it is difficult to see, but the facts, if we leave out of account the reign of Cambyses, seem clearly reproduced in legendary form in the Sháhnáma. Kai Khusrau, before his passing, appointed a distant, little-known Kaiánian collateral—Luhrásp—to succeed him, but Luhrásp was overshadowed completely by his more famous son, Gushtásp, in whose favour ultimately he retired. In a time of stress later on, however, he is represented as fighting gallantly. Again, the period ushered in

by the death of Cambyses was one of great religious and political disturbance. Magism became very prominent in the person of the false Smerdis, and, whatever interpretation we put upon the statement in the Bihistún inscription, that he destroyed the temples of the gods and that Darius restored them,[1] it is evident that some grave religious question was at stake. Further, the accession of Darius was the signal for a series of revolts extending over several years and involving nearly the whole empire. It was only after a most desperate struggle that the genius of Darius triumphed. Among his other enemies, he had to contend against the northern foe—the Scythians—and later on led a famous expedition against them to the banks of the Danube. These three features of his reign—the religious question, civil war, and wars with the Scythians—are all indicated in a legendary form in the reign of Gushtásp. The religious question is very prominent, the civil war is represented by the fact that the leaders on both sides have Persian names,[2] while the wars themselves are waged against a northern foe. Again, the information that we possess seems to indicate that Darius was the Constantine the Great of his time, and changed his religion in the course of his reign[3] just as Gushtásp is represented as doing in the Sháhnáma. Zarduhsht "came" to Darius in a spiritual sense just as he came in the flesh, traditionally, to Gushtásp. Lastly, Darius married the widow of Cambyses—Atossa. There is no trace of this in the Sháhnáma, where Gushtásp is represented as marrying Cæsar's daughter, Katáyún, but it is worth mentioning with a view of connecting him with Darius Hystaspis that, as West has suggested,[4] the name of Gushtásp's wife in the Zandavasta—Hutaosa—bears a striking resemblance to that of Darius' wife.

Many of the chief characters of this reign appear in the Zandavasta, with the exception of Zál and his descendants, who were either not known to, or were ignored by, its compilers. Luhrásp appears as Aurvat-aspa, but is mentioned merely as the father of Gushtásp.

Gushtásp, who appears as Vistáspa, had one of its Books—the Vístásp-sást—named after him. It dealt with his conversion by Zarduhsht (Zoroaster) and his subsequent war with Arjásp. It is partly extant.[5] Gushtásp has the distinction of appearing in the Gáthas—the oldest part, as generally is held, of the Zandavasta. Elsewhere in it he is represented as praying that he may

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[1] See Vol. i. p. 58.
[2] *Id.* ii. 9.
[3] *Id.* i. 59.
[4] WPT, v. 71, *note.*
[5] DZA, i. xxxvi, ii. 324 *seq.*

overcome and put to flight Arjásp and others.[1] His triumph over them also is recorded.[2]

Zarír, Gushtásp's brother, appears as Zairi-vairi, and is represented as offering up sacrifices that he may overcome Arjásp.[3]

Asfandiyár, the most famous of Gushtásp's sons, appears as Spe*n*tó-dáta.[4] He is not nearly so much in evidence as one would expect in view of the important place that he occupies in later tradition, where he becomes a sort of Zoroastrian Khálid, spreading the Faith with fire and sword. The chief credit is given to Gushtásp himself.

Bishútan, Asfandiyár's brother, appears as Peshó-tanu, and is described as exempt, like Kai Khusrau, from sickness and death.[5]

Gurazm, probably another brother, though the Sháhnáma leaves the exact relationship indefinite, appears as "the holy Kavárazem."[6] In the Sháhnáma, however, he has an evil reputation as the slanderer of Asfandiyár, who in consequence is imprisoned by Gushtásp.

Humái, Asfandiyár's sister, appears as Huma.[7]

Nastúr, Zarír's son, seems to be the same as "the holy Bastavairi."[8] If so, we should read Bastúr for Nastúr.

Jámásp, Gushtásp's chief minister, is mentioned in the Gáthas as well as elsewhere in the Zandavasta. He married one of Zarduhsht's daughters,[9] wrote down the Zandavasta,[10] and succeeded the Prophet as high priest of Írán.[11] Further mention will be made of him, Gushtásp, Asfandiyár, and Bishútan below.

Árish, who is merely referred to, appears in the Zandavasta as Erekhsha khshviwi-ishush, and in Pahlaví as Árish Shívátír, *i.e.* "Árish of the swift arrow." He was a famous Iránian archer, and after a war, not mentioned in the Sháhnáma, between Minúchihr and Afrásiyáb, was deputed to settle the frontier between Írán and Túrán, by shooting an arrow from the top of Mount Damáwand, the boundary to be wherever the arrow fell. He shot accordingly. The arrow flew eastward from dawn till noon, and then dropped on the banks of the Jíhún (Oxus).[12]

In the Zandavasta, as we have seen already, the foes of the Iránians, *e.g.* Zahhák[13] and Afrásiyáb,[14] offer sacrifices and pray for boons in just the same way as the Iránians themselves do, and to the same divine beings. Similarly we find Arjásp and his brother Andarímán, who appear in the Zandavasta as Are*g*at-aspa and

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[1] DZA, ii. 79, 117. [2] *Id.* 306. [3] *Id.* 80.
[4] *Id.* 207. [5] *Id.* 329. [6] *Id.* 207.
[7] *Id.* 224. [8] *Id.* 207 and *note.* [9] JZ, 21.
[10] *Id.* 117. [11] *Id.* 136. [12] DZA, ii. 95 and *note.*
[13] Vol. i. p. 142. [14] *Id.* iv. 137.

Vandaremaini respectively, praying for victory over Gushtásp and Zarír.[1] It should be mentioned, however, that Arjásp is not called a Túránian, as Afrásiyáb is,[2] but a *Hvyaona*.[3] Who the *Hvyaonas* were is a disputed point. Their name has suggested both the Hiong-Nu of Chinese records, who may or may not have been the Huns,[4] and the Chionitæ of Ammianus Marcellinus, who refers to their political relations with the Sásánian Sháh Sapor II. in the middle of the fourth century A.D.[5] The identification of the *Hvyaonas*—the Khyóns of the Pahlaví Texts and of the Yátkár-i-Zarírán [6]—with the Chionitæ is a very probable one, and bears out the view adopted in this work that the legends of the Sháhnáma originated, and its chief scene of action lay, at least during most of the mythical period, west of the Caspian.[7] The Chionitæ are associated with the Gelani or people of Gílán, by Ammianus Marcellinus,[8] and Gushtásp is represented in the Zandavasta as praying behind the river Dáitya for victory over them.[9] It is certain that the Dáitya, which has been identified with the Aras,[10] the Kúr, and the Safíd Rúd,[11] is to be looked for to the west of the Caspian. It is true that in another passage Gushtásp is represented as praying by Lake Frazdánava for victory over Arjásp and other foes,[12] and that in the Pahlaví Texts this lake is described as being in Sagastán (Sístán),[13] but the tendency at present seems to be in favour of identifying it with the Armenian river Hrazdán,[14] which will bring it into line with the other passages. It is only natural that the Chionitæ should leave their traces in Persian tradition, as they came on the scene at the epoch when the Zandavasta was being compiled.[15] They are not mentioned by name in the Sháhnáma, but in Dakíkí's portion a peculiar word, "Paighú," not found elsewhere in the poem, or at all events not in the texts used in the present translation, is occasionally employed with reference to the northern enemy.

Zarduhsht or Zardusht, as the name is varyingly spelt in the Sháhnáma, but more familiarly known to western readers as Zoroaster, naturally dominates the Zandavasta, of which he is the traditional author. His name therein appears as Zarathushtra, and many scholars have exercised their ingenuity as to its meaning. Perhaps the best interpretation divides the word into "zar" and

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[1] DZA, ii. 80. [2] *E.g., id.* 114. [3] *Id.* 117.
[4] BGDF, iii. 493. [5] Bk. xvi. c. 9, xvii. 5, xviii. 6 *seq.*
[6] See p. 24.
[7] See Vol. i. pp. 16 *seq.*, 71, ii. p. 336, iv. p. 136.
[8] Bk. xvii. c. 5. [9] DZA, ii. 117, 280. [10] *Id.* i. 4, *note.*
[11] JZ, 197 and *note.* [12] DZA, ii. 79. [13] WPT, i. 86.
[14] JZ, 211 and *note*, 220, 221. [15] See Vol. i. p. 63.

"ushtra." The reader may be reminded, that Sám, on recovering his outcast son, gave him the name of Zál-i-zar or Zál the old.[1] "Ushtra" is the ancient form of the modern "ushtar," camel. Zarathushtra therefore seems to mean "Old Camel," or "He whose camels are old." For reasons sufficiently weighty at the time when the Sháhnáma was written, the account given of him in that poem is of the briefest, and it is proposed therefore to amplify it from other traditional sources. According to these he was born in B.C. 660—the year of the accession of Sháh Gushtásp.[2] His father's name was Pourushaspa,[3] his mother's Dughdhóvá.[4] His father's home seems to have been situated in a valley[5] on the upper bank of the river Dareja,[6] best identified with the modern Daryai Rúd, also known as the Kara su, or "Blackwater," which flows from Mount Savalán, northward to the Aras.[7] His mother, Dughdhóvá, seems to have been a native of the city or district of Rai, near Tihrán.[8] Being the highly favoured among women as the destined mother of the Prophet, the divine Glory rested on her in a visible form from her birth. The demons, instinctively aware that it would not be to their interests to ignore this portent, smote the district where she lived with three plagues—excessive cold, pestilence, and oppressive enemies—and then suggested to the inhabitants that the girl was a witch, and therefore the cause of the trouble. Pourushaspa did his best to defend his daughter, affirming that such a radiance as proceeded from her was too brilliant to be accounted for on the score of witchcraft, but, owing to the pertinacity of the demons, the interference of the Karap and Kavíg of the district, and the secret purpose of Providence to confound the wicked by their own devices, the girl was sent away to the house of her future father-in-law, thus directly bringing about the very result that the demons were most anxious to avoid.[9] The Karaps and Kavígs, so called in the Pahlaví Texts, appear in the Zandavasta as Karpans and Kavis. The Karaps seem to have been the orthodox witch-doctors, or medicine-men, of a time when the separation, still incomplete, of the crafts of the priest, the leech, and the witch, not even had begun, and naturally they are held up to execration by the later orthodox Zoroastrian clergy. The Kavígs, equally reprobated, perhaps represented the lay official element.[10] The village to which the maligned maiden was exiled was the home of a family or clan called, from their eponymous ancestor, "Spítámas." Zarduhsht thus became known to future times as Zarathushtra

[1] Vol. i. p. 248. [2] WPT, v., xxix. [3] DZA, i. 211.
[4] WPT, iii. 302. [5] *Id.* v. 21. [6] DZA, i. 211.
[7] *Id.* xlix.; 1st. ed. JZ, 194. [8] *Id.* 192.
[9] WPT, v. 18 *seq.* [10] *Id.* 19, *note.*

Spítáma. Urmuzd, it should be stated, had begun, in consultation with the ameshaspentas, to make arrangements for his birth 5970 years before it occurred.[1] The procedure involved being somewhat complex,[2] it will suffice to say that the maiden Dughdhóvá was in due course espoused to Pourushaspa,[3] that for three days before the Prophet came into the world the village was all luminous with the divine Glory to the great terror of the inhabitants,[4] and that the babe was born laughing, to the discomfiture of the seven midwives that were in attendance.[5] Dughdhóvá was fifteen years old when her son was born, and from that moment the divine Glory, which had encompassed her from her birth, passed to him.[6] The situation seems to have been altogether too much for Pourushaspa, who appears to have felt and acted just as Sám did on the occasion of the birth of Zál.[7] Especially, he was perturbed at the laughter of the babe at birth, and was only too eager to be rid of his uncanny offspring. Accordingly, he called in the most famous medicine-man of the district, by name Dúrásróbó, who at once attempted to lay violent hands upon the babe, but they became so twisted that he never could feed himself again.[8] He, however, so wrought upon the father that the latter tried several times to put the child to death. He made a pyre of wood and laid Zarduhsht thereon; placed him on a narrow path and drove cattle along it; set him beside a pool and brought horses to water there; but all his endeavours proved fruitless. The fire would not burn the babe, while the foremost ox and horse stood over him till the rest of the herds had passed. The child was then left in the den of a wolf, whose cubs just before had been slaughtered, but on each occasion the babe was recovered unhurt by the devoted mother, who indignantly informed her spouse that he was worse than the wolf![9] Dúrásróbó then brought upon the scene a malignant disciple of his own named Brádrók-résh, a sort of Balaam, who, though willing to injure Zarduhsht, yet was impelled to proclaim his future greatness. These two and the father still collogued, but all their plans were frustrated and their arguments refuted by the growing child. At length Dúrásróbó came to a bad end,[10] but Brádrók-résh lived to be the slayer of the Prophet.[11] Zarduhsht had four brothers, two elder, of course by another wife of his father's, and two younger.[12] When he was fifteen years old, he and his brothers asked their father to bestow portions upon them, and he did so. Part of what was divided consisted of

[1] WPT, v., xxviii. [2] *Id.* 17, 18, 21; JZ, 24. [3] WPT, v. 25.
[4] *Id.* 30. [5] *Id.* 35. [6] JZ, 24.
[7] See Vol. i. p. 239 *seq.* [8] WPT, v. 36. [9] *Id.* 36 *seq.*
[10] *Id.* 40 *seq.* [11] *Id.* 126. [12] *Id.* 144.

raiment, and from this Zarduhsht selected and assumed the girdle —a symbolical act like that of the assumption of the sacred cord by the twice-born in India. At the age of twenty he left his parents' house without their permission, and began the years of preparation that was to end in divine illumination later on. Of this period little is recorded except that he went about doing good, helping the weak and aged, and in times of scarcity giving his father's fodder to feed other men's cattle, which were so hungry that, as the original record puts it, they constantly ate off each other's tails.[1] He is said also to have abandoned worldly desires, but this did not prevent his marrying, partly, as it would seem, to please his parents. He showed, however, his good sense by asking to see the face of the proposed bride before espousing her. Also he attended the assembly of the wise, and asked them questions.[2] On the day Dai pa Mihr of the month Ardíbihisht, or, in our prosaic modern equivalent, on May 5th, B.C. 630, when he was thirty years old, the Revelation came to him. The ameshaspenta Vohu Manau (Vohúman, Bahman)[3] met him in the neighbourhood, probably, of the Safíd Rúd, or White River, in Ázarbáiján,[4] and bore him to the presence of Urmuzd and to the other five ameshaspentas. When Zarduhsht arrived within twenty-four feet of them, he ceased to see his own shadow on the ground owing to the universally diffused radiance that proceeded from them. In the conference with Urmuzd that ensued, Zarduhsht was informed that the three perfections of the embodied world were good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; that to recognise the ameshaspentas as such, *i.e.* as immortal benefactors, was good; that to behold them was better; and that to obey them was best of all. He was instructed also in the doctrine of Dualism. The vision occurred thrice on that day, and Zarduhsht underwent three ordeals—walking on fire, having molten metal poured on his chest and holding it in his hand, and being wounded with a knife and healed by the passing of hands over the place, so that in time to come the faithful also might be enabled to endure the like for the glory of the good religion.[5] Inspired by this revelation, Zarduhsht began his missionary labours,

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[1] *Cf.*, "the animals were so hungry that they bit one another's tails. . . . One horse had actually not a hair left on his tail." Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, p. 160.

[2] WPT, v. 151 *seq.* [3] See Vol. iii. p. 271. [4] JZ, 41, 197.

[5] WPT, v. 154 *seq.* In the reign of Shápûr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II. A.D. 309–379), the saintly Ádarbád, son of Mahraspand, underwent the ordeal of having molten metal poured upon his breast and came out of it triumphant. DZA, i., xlvi.; WPT, iii. 171, and *note*.

attempting in the first instance to convert the assembled Kavígs and Karaps. He appealed to them to accept the religion of Urmuzd, to forego demon-worship, and to adopt the principle of next of kin marriages. With regard to this last article, it is difficult to rise superior to inherited taboos and not feel a certain sympathy with Zarduhsht's hearers when we read that at this point they rushed upon him and strove to put him to death.[1] We may, however, acquit Zarduhsht, or at least the Zarathushtra of the Gáthas, of ever having advocated such a doctrine, first on the general principle that it never would have occurred to one who not yet had made a single disciple, it being a device far more suitable to a Faith *in extremis*, and secondly, because it is not advocated in the Gáthas themselves. Next of kin marriages, of course, occurred in ancient times between exalted, almost divine, personages regarded as being above the customary taboos, but such marriages were not peculiar to Zoroastrians.[2] Other attempts of Zarduhsht to spread his evangel are recorded, in the course of which he is said to have journeyed as far east as Sístán,[3] but all proved fruitless. It was not till ten years after his receipt of the Revelation that he made his first convert—his cousin Maidhyó-maungha, the son of Árásti, who was Pourushaspa's brother.[4] During these ten years Zarduhsht appears to have returned from time to time to his own home, apparently for the winter months, and to have received at such seasons a series of further Revelations from each of the six ameshaspentas in turn.[5] Time, however, was slipping by; ten years had passed, only one convert had been made, and in despair the Prophet again appealed to Urmuzd, received the complete Revelation, the sacred formula wherewith to smite the fiends—the formula known as the Ahuna Vairya, beginning, "The will of the Lord is the law of righteousness,"—and was warned that he would be assailed by the demons.[6] The warning was needed. He was attacked at the moment of his greatest spiritual exaltation. The demon Búiti made the first assault, but was repulsed. Next came the evil counterpart of the ameshaspenta Vohu Manau—Akem Manau ("Bad thought")[7]—with his malignant riddles; but Zarduhsht pelted him with stones. Lastly, Áhriman came on the scene in person. All that was required of the Prophet was that he should worship as his mother worshipped—a very subtle form of temptation. Let him but renounce the good religion, and the sovereignty of the whole world should be his; but Zarduhsht refused, chanted the Ahuna Vairya, and foiled the tempter.[8] Another trial, against which

[1] WPT, v. 50. [2] See on the whole subject WPT, ii. 389.
[3] *Id.* v. 57. [4] *Id.* v. 163; DZA, ii. 203. [5] WPT, v. 159 *seq.*
[6] JZ, 51. [7] *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 271. [8] DZA, i. 209 *seq.*

Urmuzd had warned him, was still to come. One of the medicine-men of the old religion assumed the form of the female ameshaspenta Sapandármad, and accosted him. Now Zarduhsht had had opportunities of seeing the true Sapandármad, and knew that she was in all respects well formed and lovely while her impersonator would be fair in front but hideous behind. He therefore bade the temptress turn herself round. After protesting vainly, she did so; her falsity became evident, and the phantasm was annihilated.[1] Inspired by Urmuzd, Zarduhsht now determined on a bold step—that of attempting to convert Sháh Gushtásp to the Faith. The "terrible conflict," as tradition calls it, that ensued lasted two years,[2] for the Evangelist was opposed desperately by the medicine-men whom he found in possession at that monarch's court.[3] We may lay the scene at Balkh. The first interview between Zarduhsht and Gushtásp seems to have taken place on the riding-ground. At first, as the expression "terrible conflict" implies, the Prophet came off badly. The king, it is true, was inclined to give ear to him, but his opponents, fearful lest he should prevail with Gushtásp, induced the latter to imprison him and leave him to starve to death.[4] At this moment, however, Providence intervened with regard to a transaction, the account of which exists only in fragments and allusions in the older authorities. Here, therefore, we have to turn for a consecutive narrative to the Zartusht-náma, a poetical version of the life of the Prophet, written by one of the faithful, Zartusht Bahrám Pazhdú by name, apparently at Rai, near Tihrán, and finished on August 12th, A.D. 1278.[5] We learn from this that Zarduhsht's opponents, worsted by him in argument at a three days' conference held before the king, concealed abominations in his house and then accused him of sorcery. Gushtásp ordered search to be made, the incriminating articles were found, and Zarduhsht was cast into prison. Now, while he was languishing there, a mysterious and unprecedented event occurred. The legs of the king's favourite black horse were drawn up into the animal's body, and king, court, and people were all in consternation. Zarduhsht heard of the matter through the keeper of the prison, and offered to heal the steed on four conditions. Gushtásp accepted them *seriatim*, and, as he did so, Zarduhsht drew forth from the body of the horse its four legs one by one. The conditions were, that Gushtásp should acknowledge

[1] WPT, v. 62. [2] *Id.* 73. [3] *Id.* 64. [4] *Id.* 64 *seq.*

[5] *Id.* xx. *seq.*, where a summary is given of the work, the whole of which, translated by Eastwick, is to be found in Wilson's "Pársí Religion," referred to as WPR.

Zarduhsht to be a true prophet; that Asfandiyár should become the champion of the true religion; that Zarduhsht should have facilities for converting the queen; and that his false accusers should be punished. It need hardly be added that with the restoration of the fourth leg the steed became as well as ever.[1] We learn from the same authority that Gushtásp, eager perhaps to avail himself to the utmost of such a unique opportunity, made in his turn four requests of Zarduhsht. These were, that the king's future doom should be revealed to him; that he should become invulnerable; that he should know both the past and the future; and that he should be undying till the Resurrection. Zarduhsht said that he would pray that these boons should be granted, but that the king must be content to ask only one of the four, whichever he preferred, for himself, and leave the other three for others. Gushtásp agreed to this; Zarduhsht withdrew to his own abode, and spent the night in prayer. The next morning a great marvel happened. Four heavenly messengers, two of them being ameshaspentas, sent by Urmuzd, arrived at court and exhorted Gushtásp to be firm in the Faith proclaimed to him by Zarduhsht, to cherish that Prophet, and to obey him in all things. The king swooned on his throne, but on his recovery promised full obedience to the divine injunctions, and the angelic band departed. Zarduhsht then prepared to perform the Darún. In the present day this is a ceremony held on behalf of some particular person, who is mentioned by name in the course of it, at the end of which the ceremonial wafer-bread—the Darún—is broken into pieces and partaken of first by the celebrant and the other priests present, and then by the rest of the congregation.[2] Zarduhsht, however, on the occasion of which we write, prepared four things—wine, perfumes, milk, and a pomegranate. Gushtásp drank of the wine and slept. In his sleep he had a vision of Paradise, and saw his own place therein—the boon that he had desired. Bishútan drank of the milk, and became immortal. Jámásp smelt of the perfumes, and immediately became possessed of all knowledge. Asfandiyár ate of the pomegranate, became invulnerable, and thus acquired the title of "the brazen-bodied."[3] From this point, as easily may be imagined, the cause of the good religion began to prosper; but the serious opposition known as "The War of the Religion" was still to come, and this we shall find set forth in the Sháhnáma itself.[4]

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[1] WPR, 499 *seq.* [2] HEP, 396, 407. [3] WPR, 509 *seq.*

[4] The reader that desires farther information about the Prophet of Írán should consult Professor A. V. Williams Jackson's "Zoroaster," referred to in the notes as JZ.

PART I

THE COMING OF ZARDUHSHT AND THE WAR WITH ARJÁSP

ARGUMENT

Firdausí describes how Dakíkí appeared to him in a dream, and begged that the thousand couplets which he (Dakíkí) had composed might be incorporated in the Sháhnáma. Firdausí accordingly gives Dakíkí's couplets. They deal with the advent of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), the conversion of Gushtásp, the religious war with Túrán, which ensued, the defeat of Arjásp, king of Túrán, by Asfandiyár, Gushtásp's heroic son, the differences that arise between Asfandiyár and his father, the temporary disgrace and imprisonment of the former, and Arjásp's preparations for a fresh campaign. At the conclusion of Dakíkí's couplets, Firdausí proceeds to criticise them, and then takes up the thread of the story himself. Arjásp again invades Írán, storms Balkh, slays Luhrásp and Zarduhsht, and carries off Asfandiyár's sisters. Gushtásp is forced to appeal for assistance to Asfandiyár, who at first refuses, but finally assents, in order to avenge his brother Farshídward, who has been slain in battle by the Túránians, and on the understanding that his father will resign the throne in his favour. Arjásp is defeated, but Gushtásp refuses to carry out his part of the bargain till Asfandiyár has rescued his sisters from captivity.

NOTE

§§ 1–26. This passage, with the exception of the preface in § 1 and the postscript in § 26, which were written by Firdausí and will be referred to later, is by another poet—Dakíkí—of whose life, as Professor Nöldeke says,[1] we know very little, and nothing with certainty. The name Dakíkí, like Firdausí, is a mere *nom de plume*.

[1] NIN. § 16.

He appears, however, to have flourished during the reign of the Sámánid ruler, Mansur I. (A.D. 961-976), to whom and to his successor, Nuh II. (A.D. 976–997), he wrote eulogies still extant.[1] Doubtlessly he was a Persian by birth, and, if we can trust his own statement, a Zoroastrian as well.[2] He had a considerable reputation, not undeserved, as a poet in his own day,[3] and died, murdered by one of his own slaves, early, it would appear,[4] in the reign of Nuh II. The similarity of the work of Dakíkí and Firdausí is remarkable. They use the same metre and pretty much the same vocabulary, have a similar style, and affect the same figures of speech. In fact, it might be maintained that in most of the above respects Firdausí carefully copied his predecessor; but the better opinion seems to be that the features above mentioned were the common property of the poets of the time, and would be used by them as a matter of course when dealing with similar subject-matter. Still it is possible to detect differences and discrepancies in the work of the two poets. With regard to the former, for instance, Professor Nöldeke points out that the presentation is more formal in Dakíkí's hands. When a new hero enters, and when he falls, the account is given in the same manner, almost in the same words, and is not varied as Firdausí knew how to vary such things; and further, that the treatment of the subject-matter is less adroit, Gushtásp, for instance, being represented as twice on the point of joining in the fray and each time easily dissuaded from so doing.[5] Again, Dakíkí uses certain words [6] that apparently, though this is stated with all reserve, Firdausí does not. With regard to the discrepancies, an attentive reader even of the present translation might note some. For instance, when, in the reign of Kai Khusrau, we heard last of the political relations between Írán and Túrán, the latter, left kingless by the destruction of Afrásiyáb and all his house, was represented as being in a state of complete subjection to the former. Then comes the reign of Luhrásp, in which we hear nothing on the subject, after which, at the beginning of that of Gushtásp, an entirely new political situation is sprung upon us.[7] Írán is represented

[1] They may be found translated, with others of Dakíkí's short poems, in BLHP, i. 461.

[2] *Id.* 459. See too Vol. i. p. 69.

[3] BLHP, i. 460, ii. 127.

[4] See Vol. i. p. 28.

[5] NIN, § 17. See pp. 64, 68.

[6] *E.g.* "Paighú"=Turkman, and "tigín"=brave.

[7] Can it be that a legend now lost dealt with the fortunes of some viceroy, appointed by Kai Khusrau to administer Túrán, and the descendants of such viceroy? He or they in the days of Luhrásp may have obtained the predominance and been handed down by tradition

as tributary to Túrán, and the latter is under the rule of a powerful king. This was all right from Dakíkí's point of view, because he started on that assumption, but it is hard to believe that Firdausí, looking before and after as he must have done, would have rendered no explanation of, or made no reference to, the new state of affairs if he had been the author of this part of the poem. Again, in Dakíkí, who doubtlessly follows his authorities, Asfandiyár marries his sister Humái. Firdausí ignores this, and deliberately prefers to make a fine scene of his own less convincing in consequence. Gushtásp, having imprisoned Asfandiyár owing to the charge made against him by the envious Gurazm, is defeated and hardly pressed by Arjásp. He sends Jámásp to persuade Asfandiyár to forget his ill-treatment and furnish much needed help. Jámásp urges various pleas, and among them the captivity among the Turkmans of Asfandiyár's sisters—Humái and Bih Áfríd—but the resentful captive remains obdurate till Jámásp falls back upon the case of Farshídward, who is represented as being the only member of Asfandiyár's family that felt concern for him in his disgrace. The plea of the captivity of Humái—his wife as well as sister—was ready at hand to be put into Jámásp's mouth had Firdausí so desired, but he refrained, and in this portion of the Sháhnáma represented the brother and sister as being wholly indifferent to each other. Again, the formal introduction of Rustam,[1] after all that has gone before, might strike the reader as somewhat curious.

If the fact of Dakíkí's authorship had been unknown, it is not impossible that some critic might have based a theory of difference of authorship on some such considerations as those mentioned above; but it would have been sufficient to reply that Firdausí's own style is not uniform throughout the Sháhnáma,[2] and that the passage in question reads like a first draft, which, owing to some accident or oversight, had been left unrevised. This is precisely what it is, and for the best of reasons in Dakíkí's case, inasmuch as

> "death approaching unexpectedly
> Imposed its gloomy helmet on his head,"

as Firdausí put it on another occasion.[3] Lack of opportunity for revision, too, is the best answer to Firdausí's somewhat severe criticisms of his predecessor's work.[4] Why, then, did he insert it?

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as "Arjásp." This would account for the Íránian character of that word, and explain and justify the outbreak of the War of the Religion.

[1] See p. 85. [2] *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 285. [3] *Id.* i. 109.
[4] See p. 87.

Several reasons may be given. First, by so doing he paid off his debt :—

"He was my pioneer, and he alone."[1]

Secondly, it got Firdausí himself out of a difficulty. The epoch of the advent of Zarduhsht was a dangerous one to treat in those days of fanaticism. The dead poet was beyond the reach of offended Muhammadan orthodoxy, so his work, the insertion of which was justified on the plea of a dream—a portent not lightly to be disregarded in those days—was substituted for what the living poet would have had to write or leave a serious omission in the poem. Thirdly, Firdausí's real opinion of Dakíkí's literary ability was in all probability higher than he thought it politic to accentuate in close proximity to such a dangerous topic. When he wrote the Prelude to the Sháhnáma he expressed himself much more favourably. Fourthly, Dakíkí's alleged inferiority might serve as a foil. If his feeble strain won him honour and emolument from the great, whose praises he sang, how much more should the fluent and refined work of his successor gain substantial recognition.[2] Lastly, the ostensible reason after all may have been the real one. To have a vivid dream is not uncommon ; to act upon it is rarer no doubt ; but instances have been known, and Firdausí's case may be one in point ; at all events, he says so. Like other great poets he was, we may assume, highly strung ; and Dakíkí's death, its tragic suddenness, and the vista that it opened, cannot fail to have impressed him. Be this as it may, he adopted Dakíkí's literary orphan, but, having provided permanently for it, did not allow it to interfere further with his own poetical progeny. Without disparaging Dakíkí, we may congratulate ourselves, on the whole, upon the course that events took. Whatever he may have been, he was not a Firdausí. Apart altogether from the literary side of the question, there must have been a regularity of life, a steadfastness of purpose, and a moral elevation in the latter's case which seem to have been only too lacking in the former's. Had Dakíkí's life been prolonged for a season, he might, unintentionally of course, have played the part of the dog in the manger, obstructing Firdausí without having the needful qualities or opportunities for the accomplishment of a task of such magnitude himself. The two poets, however, *par nobile fratrum* as they were in genius and in enthusiasm, had one other excellent point in common. They followed their authorities in all essential particulars, and did not

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[1] p. 88. [2] *Id.*

invent on their own account. So far as Dakíkí is concerned, this will be shown in what follows.

The Sháhnáma may be described as a great river—the outcome of many tributaries. The greatest of these undoubtedly is the prose compilation of ancient legend known as the Bástán-náma, or Khudai-náma, of which some account has been given already.[1] This in its turn had its affluents, some of which we may conceive of as passing into it in their primitive form while others entered it in an already mingled stream. Some affluents again wholly merged and thus lost their independent existence entirely, while others only partially did so and thus preserved their own identity. Of these latter again one at least passed out of sight for a time only to reappear in a somewhat altered but still recognisable form later on. In the interval, however, between its disappearance and reappearance, it is evident that its contents became tinged with that of other sources. The result, as we now possess it, is a little Pahlaví Text known as the Yátkár-i-Zarírán. This gives us a very good notion of what the original affluent must have contained, and as it deals with the same matters as are dealt with by Dakíkí in §§ 2–19, we are in a position to check his work. It should be understood clearly that the Yátkár-i-Zarírán was not the actual authority followed by him, but stands collaterally related to the version of the original affluent which, mingled with the Bástán-náma, passed, after further vicissitudes and centuries later, into his hands. The following is a summary of the main points of resemblance and difference between the Yátkár-i-Zarírán and Dakíkí, the former being referred to as Z and the latter as D. First, for the resemblance. Most of the names appear in both, the only difference being that in Z we have some of them in the Pahlaví, and in D all of them in the modern Persian, form. Thus in Z we have Vishtásp and in D Gushtásp, in Z Spand-dát and in D Asfandiyár, in Z Garámík-kart and in D Girámí. In both, Arjásp hears that Gushtásp has adopted the Faith of Zarduhsht, and sends envoys to bid him recant or take the consequences. The envoys' names are Vídrafsh and Nám-khást, son of Hazár, in Z; Bídirafsh and Námkhást, son of Hazárán, in D. In both, Zarír, the captain of the Íránian host, obtains Gushtásp's permission to answer Arjásp's letter, and does so, accepting the arbitrament of war; the envoys return to Arjásp, and the monarchs prepare for battle. In both, Gushtásp calls upon Jámásp, his chief minister, to foretell the issue of the coming fight; under protest Jámásp does so, and the king is so perturbed that he

[1] Vol. i. p. 66 *seq.*

announces his intention of not allowing his nearest and dearest to go upon the battlefield; but when Jámásp points out the ills which in that event will befall Írán, he resigns himself to the inevitable. In both, Arjásp and Gushtásp take up their posts of survey, and the fight begins; Zarír displays great valour; Arjásp in alarm offers his daughter's hand and high office to any one who will fight Zarír; Bídirafsh volunteers, and kills Zarír from behind. In both, Gushtásp on the hill-top forebodes the death of Zarír, and offers his daughter Humái in marriage to any one that will avenge him; Zarír's son (Bastvar in Z, Nastúr in D)[1] obtains a steed from the master of the horse, goes forth to the battlefield, finds his father lying dead, laments over him, fights and returns to Gushtásp, who equips and sends him forth again. In both, he fights so bravely that Arjásp compares him to Zarír, dispatches Bídirafsh to encounter him, and Bídirafsh is slain. In both, Asfandiyár and Nastúr totally defeat the enemy, and Arjásp gets back to his own realm.

In addition to these general points of resemblance, there are others in matters of detail, as where, both in Z and D, Girámí is represented as fighting while holding the royal standard between his teeth, but these need not detain us. It remains to point out the difference. In Z Arjásp is the ruler of the Khyóns;[2] in D of the Turkmans and of Chín. In D the war begins with Gushtásp's refusal, prompted by Zarduhsht, to continue the payment of tribute to Arjásp. This is not in Z. Except for the mention of the death of Zarír, and the defeat of Arjásp by Asfandiyár, Jámásp's prophecy differs in Z and D. In Z Zarír begins the battle; in D there is fighting for two weeks, during which several of Gushtásp's sons distinguish themselves, and are slain, before Zarír takes the field. In D Asfandiyár hears of Zarír's death. He also hears his father swearing to surrender the crown to him if the Turkmans are defeated—an important addition, and the keynote of the whole reign. In D it is Asfandiyár, and not Nastúr, that kills Bídirafsh. In Z all the Khyóns are slain with the exception of Arjásp himself, whom Spand-dát takes prisoner, mutilates, and sends back on a docked ass to Túrán. In D Asfandiyár makes a great slaughter, puts Arjásp to flight, and gives quarter to the rest of the Turkman host. In general, we may say, Z is on a much smaller scale than D, by whom letters, speeches, and descriptions of battles are given at much greater length. The differences in matters of detail also are important and suggestive. For instance, in Z Jámásp, after

[1] *Cf.* p. 12. [2] See p. 13.

prophesying that Zarír will be killed by Vídrafsh, adds that Nám-khást will slay Pát-khusrau, another brother, and Frashókart, a son, of Gushtásp's, and further, that twenty-two of his other sons and brothers will perish. In the account of the actual fighting, however, only the death of Zarír is recorded. In D, though all reference to Pát-khusrau and Frashókart is omitted, Jámásp's prophecy is considerably expanded. He tells of the prowess and death of three of Gushtásp's sons—Ardshír, Shídasp, and Nívzár—and of his own son Girámí, who does not die in Z, as well as of the success of Zarír's son Nastúr, before dealing with Zarír himself. All these heroes are mentioned again in the description of the fight, and mostly at greater length than in the prophecy; while the exploits of another of Gushtásp's sons—Shírú—are commemorated between those of Ardshír and Shídasp. It seems, therefore, that fragments of another legend, and those not the same fragments, must have found their way by different routes both into Z and D. That legend must have been one commemorating collectively and in detail the prowess of the Íránian heroes, especially those of the royal house, in the War of the Religion. This is the more likely because in the circumstances they would be regarded as martyrs and confessors of the Faith. In addition to a collective commemoration, some of the more important of these heroes must have had their own separate náma or legend. Even if Z were not extant, we should be justified in assuming the existence of such a náma in Zarír's case, and this must have had at least two branches—a Love-story and a Death-story. The account given of him in the Sháhnáma, and elsewhere under the name of Zariadres,[1] is sufficient to show this. In later times he became overshadowed partly by Gushtásp and partly by Asfandiyár. The Love-story from which he was ousted by Gushtásp will be found in the reign of Luhrásp.[2] As regards the Death-story, even in Z we find Spand-dát already dominant, and in D he is still more so. He and Jámásp are associated with Zarír in the reply to Arjásp's letter, the promise of bestowing the kingship upon him is made by Gushtásp, and it is he, and not Nastúr, who avenges Zarír. To account for this predominance, therefore, we must assume still another source—an Asfandiyár-náma, or, as it would be called in Pahlaví, a Spand-dát-náma—with at least three branches, all represented in their latest forms in the Sháhnáma. To sum up and illustrate what has been said above, a diagram is appended,

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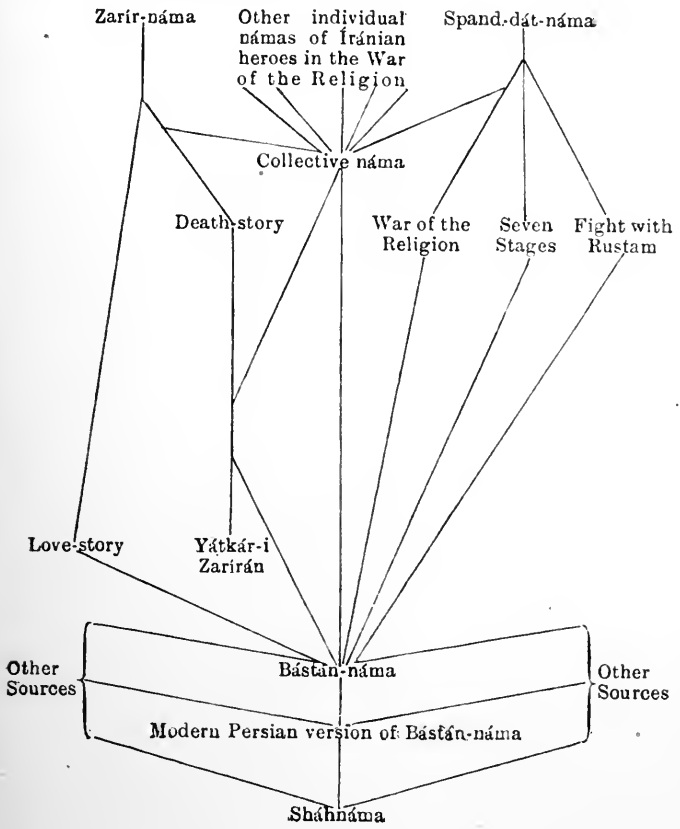
[1] See Vol. iv. p. 314. [2] *Id.* and 329 *seq.*

which, however, in view of the ravages wrought by time, must be regarded as somewhat theoretical.[1]



§ 3. For Zarduhsht (Zoroaster) see p. 13 *seq.* Whether the planting of a cypress at Kishmar by him was an actual fact, or whether it is an instance of a people being misled by one of their own metaphors, it is impossible to say. To plant a tree to commemorate some important event is not unusual. Metaphorically to plant a tree, in the sense of instituting some new custom or

[1] See on the Yátkár-i-Zarírán generally, GYZ, without the help of which the latter portion of this note could not have been written.

making a new departure in policy, *etc.*, is common enough in the Sháhnáma. We have an instance at the beginning of this section. At all events, the Cypress of Kishmar rivals Gushtásp's Black Horse[1] in fame, and, after living for some fourteen centuries and a half, is said to have been cut down by the orders of the Khalífa Mutawakkal (A.D. 846-860). The following is the account of it given in the Dabistán:—"The professors of the excellent faith and the Moslem historians agree, that in . . . Kashmar . . . a dependency of Naishapur, there was formerly a cypress planted by Zardusht for king Gushtasp, the like of which was never seen before or since, for beauty, height, or straightness: mention of this tree having been made at the court of Mutawakkal when he was engaged in building the *Sarman raï*, or *Samarah* palace in the Jáafriyah, the Khalif felt a great desire to behold it: and as it was not in his power to go to Khorasan, he wrote to *Abdallah Táhir Zavalimin*, 'possessor of happiness,' to have the tree cut down, fastened on rollers, and sent to Baghdád. When intelligence of this came to the people of the district and the inhabitants of Khorasan, they assembled at the foot of the tree, imploring for mercy with tears and lamentations, and exhibiting a scene of general desolation. The professors of the excellent faith offered the governor fifty thousand dinars to spare the tree, but the offer was refused. When the cypress was felled, it caused great detriment to the buildings and water-courses of the country; the birds of different kinds which had built their nests on it issued forth in such countless myriads as to darken the air, screaming out in agony with various tones of distress: the very oxen, sheep, and other animals which reposed under its sheltering shade, commenced such piteous moans of woe that it was impossible to listen to them. The expense of conveying the trunk to Baghdad was five hundred thousand dinars; the very branches loaded one thousand and three hundred camels. When the tree had reached one station from the Jáafriah quarter, on that same night, Mutawakkal the Abasside was cut in pieces by his own guards, so that he never beheld the tree."[2] According to other accounts, Zarduhsht brought down two cypress-shoots from Paradise, one of which he planted at Kishmar and the other in the neighbourhood of Tús.[3] The statement in the text that Gushtásp raised over the Cypress of Kishmar a lofty palace has been interpreted to mean that he built himself a summer-house among its boughs, or rather that Zarduhsht built it for him: "in hujus Arboris summitate erexit Aestivarium."[4] In villages in

[1] See p. 18. [2] STD, i. 306 *seq.* [3] HRVP, p. 332. [4] *Id.* 324.

Persia at the present day a semi-sacred character is attached to some of the large trees, which have platforms built round them where the villagers sit and smoke in the evenings.[1]

§ 8. The Kuhram mentioned here and in § 11 is no doubt the same person, though variously described as the brother and son of Arjásp. Firdausí makes him the latter. A Kuhram and an Andarímán appear among the Túránian heroes as far back as the reign of Kai Káús,[2] and are among those slain in "The Battle of the Twelve Rukhs."[3] Probably the same legendary characters are intended throughout. Death is no bar to the reappearance of a hero in the Sháhnáma.[4]

§§ 11–19, 27–32. The War of the Religion between Gushtásp and Arjásp is divided into two campaigns, separated by a considerable interval, during part of which Asfandiyár was a prisoner in the stronghold of Gumbadán. In the first campaign the fighting consisted of a series of engagements extending over two weeks, and in the end the Íránians were completely victorious, but we have no very definite information as to where it took place. In the Yátkár-i-Zarírán the Íránian reply to Arjásp's ultimatum proposes the neighbourhood of Marv as the meeting-ground, "where there is no high mountain, nor any deep ravine, but where on the plateau of the steppe horses and the valiant men-at-arms can move freely."[5] The Sháhnáma, in partial accord to this, makes Gushtásp advance to the Jíhún (Oxus),[6] but we do not hear of the river being crossed by either host. In the second campaign Arjásp, taking advantage of Gushtásp's absence in Sístán, suddenly invaded Írán. Several distinct battles were fought. In the first, outside the walls of Balkh, Luhrásp, the ex-Sháh, was defeated and slain, and the city stormed. In the second, Gushtásp was defeated and beleaguered on a mountain, and in the third he was rescued from his dangerous position by Asfandiyár. It would seem from the Sháhnáma[7] that the second and third battles were, like the first, fought in the neighbourhood of Balkh, but other tradition points to a different locality. According to this view, we must imagine the opposing hosts encountering in the region about Nishápúr, Arjásp advancing westward from Balkh and Gushtásp northward from Sístán. The scene of the conflict therefore would lie about and between the Binalúd and Jagatai ranges, some part of which was known in old times as "the Ridge of Gushtásp"; and there is a tradition that when the Íránians were hard pressed they were helped by a land-slip from one of the

[1] WLS, p. 364. [2] Vol. ii. pp. 264, 349. [3] *Id.* iv. 104, 105.
[4] *Id.* ii. 119. [5] GYZ, p. 50. [6] p. 48.
[7] See p. 94.

adjacent mountains which received in consequence the name of "Madófryát" or "Come-to-help."[1]

§ 21. The Gloom, or Land of Darkness, here referred to, will be met with again in the next volume under the reign of Sikandar (Alexander the Great), who entered it in quest of the Water of Life.

§ 24. The stronghold of Gumbadán, in which Asfandiyár was imprisoned, appears to have been situated on a mountain which became known in consequence as Mount Spe*n*tó-dáta in the Zandavasta[2] and as Mount Spendyád in the Pahlaví Texts.[3] It seems, moreover, to be identical with Mount Sipand—the scene of one of Rustam's youthful exploits[4]—and with Mount Sapad which comes into prominence in the story of Farúd.[5] Mount Spe*n*tódáta has been located in the neighbourhood of the Bár Mountains to the north-west of Nishápúr.[6] This is, of course, inconsistent with Malcolm's identification of the stronghold on Mount Sipand with the "White Castle," of which he gives a description already quoted.[7] According to Mirkhond Asfandiyár was confined in the fortress of Girdkuh in the district of Rúdbár.[8] This was situated in the neighbourhood of Kaswín, and in later times was one of the strongholds of 'Umar Khayyám's contemporary and fellow-student, Hasan Sabbáh, better known as "The Old Man of the Mountain," to whom we are indebted for the vogue of the word "assassin."

§ 1

How Firdausí saw Dakíkí in a Dream

V. 1495 Thus was it that one night the poet dreamed:—
He held a cup of wine whose fragrance seemed
Rosewater-like. Dakíkí from his stead
Appeared and, speaking of that wine-cup, said
Thus to Firdausí: "Quaff not save thou choose
The fashion of the days of Kai Káús,
For he that is the monarch of thy choice,
In whom crown, throne, and fortune all rejoice,
Mahmúd, the king of kings and conqueror,

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[1] JZ, p. 216.
[2] DZA, ii. 289.
[3] WPT, i. pp. 34, 39.
[4] Vol. i. p. 330.
[5] *Id.* iii. pp. 52, 54, 58, *etc.*; NIN, § 30, and *note.*
[6] JZ, p. 215.
[7] Vol. i. p. 236.
[8] SM, p. 290 and *note.*

Who giveth all a portion of his store,
Shall from today for fourscore years and five
Behold his travail wane, his treasury thrive,
Shall lead to Chín hereafter his array,
And every chief shall ope for him the way.
He will not need to speak an angry word,
All crowns will come to him with one accord.
If o'er this story thou hast somewhat striven
Now all that thou didst wish to thee is given.
I too told somewhat of this history,
And if thou findest it be kind to me.
I sang a thousand couplets of Gushtásp,
Before my day was done, and of Arjásp,
And if my work shall reach the king of kings V. 1496
My soul will soar o'er sublunary things."
So now the verses that he wrote I give,
For he is gathered to the dust; I live.

§ 2

How Luhrásp went to Balkh and how Gushtásp sat upon the Throne

Now when Luhrásp, descending from the throne
Resigned it to Gushtásp, he made him ready
To go to Naubahár in cherished Balkh,
Because he had become God's votary,
And men then held that fane in reverence,
Just as the Arabs reverence Mecca now.
He reached the fane, the Sháh, that man of God,
Dismounted there, and there at last he died.
He shut the portal of that glorious fane,
And let no alien enter it, assumed
The woollen raiment of a devotee—
The garniture wherein to worship wisdom—
Put off his armlets, let his hair grow long,

And set himself to serve the all-just Judge.
Upstanding in His presence thirty years,
Such is the way that men should serve the Lord,
He offered supplication to the sun,
According to the custom of Jamshíd.

Gushtásp, succeeding to his father's throne,
His Grace, and fortune, donned his father's gift,
The crown, fit ornament of noble men.
"I am," he said, "a Sháh that serveth God,
And holy God hath given me this crown
That I might keep the wolves apart the flock.
V. 1497 Toward God's way will we stretch forth our hands,
And to the noble straiten not the world,
But, as hath been the custom of the Sháhs,
Convert ill-doers to the Faith of God."

He spread abroad his justice in such wise
That wolf and sheep drank of the stream together.
At length Náhíd, illustrious Cæsar's daughter,
She whom the noble Sháh named Katáyún,
Bare him two sons, each like the moon in splendour,
One, famous, glorious Asfandiyár,
A warlike prince and doughty cavalier,
The other, Bishútan, the valiant swordsman,
A famous prince, a shatterer of hosts.

The new Sháh, when acknowledged by the world,
Was fain to be another Farídún.
All other kings paid tribute, and the heart
Of every liege was well disposed to him,
Save King Arjásp, the ruler of Túrán,
Who had the dívs for servants and admitted
No claim for tribute, would not hear advice,
And since he would not hear was doomed to chains.
He took too tribute from the Sháh each year,
But why should one pay tribute to his peer?

§ 3

How Zarduhsht appeared and how Gushtásp accepted his Evangel

Thus passed a while, and then a Tree appeared
On earth within the palace of Gushtásp,
And grew up to the roof—a Tree whose roots
Spread far and wide, a Tree with many branches,
Its leafage precept and its fruitage wisdom:
How shall one die who eateth of such fruit?
A Tree right fortunate and named Zarduhsht—
The slayer of malignant Áhriman.
Thus said he to the monarch of the world:—
"I am a prophet and thy guide to God."
He brought a censer, filled with fire, and said:— V. 1498
"This have I brought with me from Paradise.
The Maker of the world said: 'Take thou this,
And look upon the heaven and the earth,
Because I made them not of dust and water:
Behold herein how I created them.
See now if any one could do this thing,
Save I that am the Ruler of the world?
If thou acknowledgest My handiwork
Thou must acknowledge Me to be the Lord.'
Receive His good religion from the speaker,
And learn from him His usage and the way.
See that thou do as he directeth thee,
Choose wisdom, recognise this world as vile,
And learn the system of the good religion,
For kingship is not well when Faith is lacking."
When that good Sháh had heard of that good Faith,
And had accepted it and its good customs,
His valiant brother, glorious Zarír,
Who used to vanquish mighty elephants;
The Sháh, his father, now grown old at Balkh,

To whose heart worldly things were bitterness;
The mighty chiefs from all the provinces,
The wise physicians and the men of war,
All gathered to the monarch of the earth,
Assumed the cincture and received the Faith.
Then was the Grace of God made manifest,
For evil left the hearts of evil men,
The charnels were fulfilled with light divine,
And seeds were freed from all impurity.
Then mounting to his throne high-born Gushtásp
Dispatched his troops throughout the provinces,
Distributed archmages through the world,
And set up Fanes of Fire. He first established
V. 1499 The Fire of Mihr Barzín; consider well
The system that the realm received from him.
Zarduhsht then planted him a noble cypress
Before the portal of the Fane of Fire,
And wrote upon that noble, straight-stemmed tree:—
"Gushtásp is convert to the good religion";
Thus did he make the noble cypress witness
That wisdom was disseminating justice.
When in this manner many years had passed
The cypress-tree increased in height and girth,
Until that noble tree had grown so great
That e'en a lasso would not compass it.
When it had sent aloft full many a bough
Gushtásp raised over it a goodly palace,
Whereof the height and breadth were forty cubits;
He used no clay or water in the building.
When he had reared the palace of pure gold,
With silvern earth and dust of ambergris,
He painted there a picture of Jamshíd,
Engaged in worshipping the sun and moon,
Commanded too a picture to be drawn
Of Farídún armed with the ox-head mace,
And limned there all the potentates. Consider

If other ever had such puissance.
When that famed hall of gold had grown thus goodly
He had its walls inlaid with precious stones,
And set an iron rampart round about.
The king of earth made it his home. He sent
This message through the realm: "In all the world
What equalleth the cypress of Kishmar?
God sent it down to me from Paradise,
And said: 'Ascend to Paradise therefrom.'
Now hearken, all of you, this rede of mine:
Go to the cypress of Kishmar afoot;
Adopt ye all the pathway of Zarduhsht,
And, turning from the images of Chín,
Gird round your loins the cincture in the Grace
And greatness of the monarch of Írán.
Heed not the usance of your predecessors, V. 1500
Trust in the shadow of this cypress-tree,
And fix your gaze upon the Shrine of Fire,
As bidden by the Prophet of the Truth."
He spread abroad his words throughout the world
Among the men of name and potentates,
And at his bidding all that wore the crown
Turned them toward the cypress of Kishmar;
This holy shrine a paradise was found
Wherein Zarduhsht the Dív in fetters bound.

§ 4

How Gushtásp refused to Arjásp the Tribute for Írán

Time passed. The monarch's star was blessed.
Zarduhsht,
The old, said to the ruler of the world:—
"'Tis not accordant to our Faith for thee
To pay a tribute to the prince of Chín,
Nor consonant with custom and religion.

Moreover I can not assent thereto,
For no one of our Sháhs in days of yore
Hath yielded tax and tribute to the Turkmans,
Who all were impotent against Írán."
Gushtásp assented, saying: "I will order
No tribute to be paid."
A valiant dív,
On hearing this, went to the king of Chín,
And said to him: "O monarch of the world!
Throughout it all the people great and small
Agree in executing thy commands,
And not one cometh forth against thy spearpoint
v. 1501 Excepting Sháh Gushtásp, son of Luhrásp,
Who leadeth out a host against the Turkmans,
Hath made his hostile purpose clear, and wrought
His devilry against a king like thee.
More than a hundred thousand cavaliers
Are mine, and I will bring them if thou wilt.
Go to then, let us follow up his doings;
See that thou fear not to contend with him."
Arjásp, when he had heard the dív speak thus,
Descended from the royal Turkman throne,
And, having summoned all the priests, announced
What he had heard to them. "Know ye," said he,
"That God's Grâce and pure Faith have left Írán,
Where some old dotard hath appeared who claimeth
To be a prophet, and his words are these:—
'I have come down from heaven, I have come down
From Him who is the Master of the world.
I have beheld the Lord in Paradise,
And all the Zandavasta is His writing;
I saw, moreover, Áhriman in Hell,
But dared not venture near; the Lord then sent me
To teach the monarch of the earth the Faith.'
The chief among the nobles of Irán,
The most illustrious son of Sháh Luhrásp,

He whom the Íránians call Gushtásp, hath bound
The cincture round his loins, as hath withal
His brother, that courageous cavalier,
The general of Írán, Zarír by name.
All gather to Zarduhsht to be instructed, V. 1502
And are befooled by that old sorcerer.
All have with one consent embraced his Faith:
His cult and ritual fulfil the world.
By such fond methods and buffoonery
Hath he become a prophet in Írán.
Needs must I write a letter to that rebel,
Give him great gifts, for gifts unasked are pleasant,
And say to him: 'Abandon this ill course,
Be awed before the God of Paradise,
Put far from thee that ancient miscreant,
And hold a feast according to our customs.'
If then he will accept of our advice
Our bonds will not prove galling to his feet;
If he reject it and revive old feuds
We will assemble our disbanded troops,
And, mustering a goodly host, invade
Írán in consequence of these his doings,
And, fearing not the pains and his resistance,
Will bring him to contempt, before us drive,
Put him in chains, and gibbet him alive."

§ 5

How Arjásp wrote a Letter to Gushtásp

The warriors of Chín agreed thereto,
And chose, moreover, from themselves two envoys,
The one a mighty man hight Bídirafsh,[1]
Advanced in years, a warlock stout of heart,
The other named Námkhást[2]—a sorcerer— V. 1503

[1] *i.e.* Without a banner. [2] *i.e.* Covetous of honour.

Whose thoughts were ever bent upon destruction.
The monarch wrote a fair and goodly letter
To that illustrious sovereign and convert:—
"First, I have written in the World-lord's name,
Who knoweth what is manifest and hidden,
This royal letter, worthy of a king.
To brave Gushtásp, the monarch of the earth,
The worshipful and worthy of the state,
The elect, the eldest son of Sháh Luhrásp,
Lord of the world and warden of the throne,
This from Arjásp, prince of the mighty men
Of Chín, a world-subduing cavalier,
And chosen hero."
In that royal letter
He wrote fair greetings in the Turkman[1] script:—
"O famed son of the monarch of the world,
Who brightenest the throne of king of kings!
Fresh be thy head, thy soul and body hale,
Thy royal loins tight-girded. I have heard
That thou hast taken to disastrous courses,
And turned bright day to darkness for thyself.
A cozening old man hath come to thee,
Hath filled thy heart with terrors and alarms,
And with his talk of Hell and Paradise
Hath sown the seeds of folly in thy heart.
Thou hast accepted him and his religion,
Hast glorified his doctrine and his rites,
Hast flung aside the customs of the Sháhs—
The mighty of the world, thy predecessors—
And wrecked the Faith professed by paladins.
Why dost thou disregard the past and future?
Thou art the son of him on whom of all
The folk the glorious Sháh[2] bestowed the crown,
And he chose thee among his choicest ones
In preference to the offspring of Jamshíd,

[1] Paighú. [2] Kai Khusrau.

So that, like Kai Khusrau—the man of vengeance— V. 1504
Thou wast more glorious than the other Kaians.
Thou hadst, famed monarch! royal might and lustre,
Grace, power, and magnificence, with standards,
Vast armies, elephants caparisoned,
And treasuries fulfilled with goodly havings,
While every chief was well disposed toward thee,
And thou didst shine resplendent in the world—
Ardíbihisht with Sol in Aries.
God gave to thee the kingship of the earth,
And all thy chieftains stood before thee. Thou
Didst err, ungratefully, despite His care,
While even after He had made thee Sháh
An ancient sorcerer misled thee. When
The news arrived I saw the stars by day!
Now have I written thee a friendly letter,
For I am both thy friend and good ally.
When thou hast read it make complete ablution,
And countenance no longer that impostor;
Put off the cincture that is round thy loins,
And quaff with joy the sparkling wine once more.
Cast not aside the usage of the Sháhs,
The mighty of the world, thy predecessors.
Now if thou wilt accept this goodly counsel
Thy life shall not be injured by the Turkmans,
Their territory, with Kashán and Chín,
Shall be to thee e'en as Írán itself,
I will bestow on thee the boundless treasures
That I have gotten me by mine own toils,
Fair-coated steeds[1] bedecked with gold and silver,
And trappings all inlaid with gems, and I
Will with the treasures send to thee boy-slaves
And handmaids—pictures all—with crispy locks.
But if thou wilt accept not this my counsel,
Then shalt thou feel my heavy iron bonds,

[1] "des chevaux aux couleurs de bon augure" (Mohl).

V. 1505 For I will follow in a month or twain
This letter and will desolate thy realm,
Lead from the Turkmans and from Chín a host,
Whose tents the earth itself will not support,
Will fill the channel of Jíhún with musk,
And stanch therewith the waters of the sea,
Consign thy pictured palace to the flames,
And raze thee utterly, both root and branch,
Will set your land on fire from end to end,
And skewer you all together with mine arrows.
Those that are old among the Íránians
Will I make prisoners, will behead the worthless,
And carry off the women and the children
As slaves to mine own land; I will lay waste
Your country and uproot the trees. So much
I had to say. See that thou do thy part,
And lay this letter's counsel to thy heart."

§ 6

How Arjásp sent Envoys to Gushtásp

Now when the monarch's minister had finished
The letter, all the captains being present,
Arjásp rolled, sealed, and then delivered it
To those old sorcerers, instructing them:—
V. 1506 "Be prudent, go together to his palace,
And, when ye see him on the throne of state,
Both bow yourselves forthwith, and proffer him
The worship that pertaineth unto kings,
With eyes upon the ground. When ye are seated,
Look steadfastly upon his shining crown,
Deliver mine enlightening embassage,
Attend to what he sayeth in reply,
And, having heard the answer every whit,
Kiss ye the ground before him and depart."

Then Bídirafsh, the vengeful, left the presence,
And bare his banner forth toward famous Balkh,
While with him fared Námkhást, his headstrong comrade—
One to be shunned by all that seek for fame.
Arrived at Balkh they went toward the court
Afoot and, drawing nearer to Gushtásp,
Bowed down themselves before him on the threshold.
When they beheld his visage o'er the throne,
As though it were the sun above the moon,
They did obeisance, such as slaves would do,
Before the Sháh—the monarch of the happy—
Then gave to him the letter of the king,
The letter written in the Turkman[1] script.
The Sháh, on opening the letter, raged V. 1507
And writhed. He called his counsellor Jámásp,
The chosen chiefs, the captains of the host,
The experienced magnates and the archimages,
Then spread the Zandavasta out before him.
He called his Prophet and archmage, he called
Zarír, his well beloved, his general,
Who was his brother and the chief of all
The warriors, and then world-paladin
Because Asfandiyár, the cavalier,
Was still a youth. Zarír was leader, warden,
The refuge of the world, the horsemen's stay:
'Twas his to clear the earth of evil doers,
And couch his lance in battle. Said Gushtásp:—
"Arjásp, the ruler of Túrán and Chín,
Hath written unto me in terms like these!"
And he informed them of the scurrile words
Addressed to him by the Túránian king.
"What are your views herein," he said to them,
"What do ye say? How will the matter end?
How very ill-advised was amity

[1] Paighú.

With one who hath so small a stock of wisdom!
My race is from Íraj of holy birth,
While he is sprung from Túr, the sorcerer.
How then can there be peace betwixt us twain,
Although I used to deem it possible?
And now let him that is the most possest
Of reputation speak before the rest."

§ 7

How Zarír made Answer to Arjásp

V. 1508 Whenas the sovereign had spoken thus,
Zarír, the leader, and Asfandiyár
Unsheathed their scimitars forthwith, and cried:—
"If there be any one in all the world
Who holdeth not Zarduhsht to be a prophet,
Is disobedient and approacheth not
The courtgate of the glorious Sháh, nor girdeth
His loins before the splendid throne, rejecting
The way and good religion, and refusing
To be a slave thereto, his life will we
Part from his body with our scimitars,
And set his head upon a lofty stake."
He that was hight Zarír, the Íránian leader,
A hero valiant as the rending lion,
Said to the world's king: "O illustrious!
If I may have permission from the Sháh
To give Arjásp, the sorcerer, his answer. . . ."
And Sháh Gushtásp approved thereof: "Go to,"
He said, "arise then, give him his reply,
And make his warriors[1] of Khallukh like gleeds."
Zarír, with glorious Asfandiyár,
And with that prosperous minister, Jámásp,
Departed with stern hearts and frowning looks,

[1] tigín.

And wrote a letter to Arjásp the foul—
A fit response. Zarír, chief of the host,
Took it still open, bare it to the Sháh,
And read it out to him. The world-lord marvelled
At that sage general and cavalier,
And at Jámásp, and at Asfandiyár,
Then fastened up the letter, wrote thereon
His name, and called to him the ambassadors.
"Take this," he said, "and bear it to Arjásp.
Henceforth perchance ye will not tread my roads.
Were not safe-conduct for ambassadors
Enjoined expressly in the Zandavasta,
I would have wakened you from drowsihead, V. 1509
And hung you all alive upon the gibbet,
In order that yon worthless one might learn
That he may not exalt his neck with kings."
He threw the letter at them, saying: "Take it,
And bear it to the Turkman sorcerer.
Say: 'Thy calamity is drawing nigh,
The need for blood and dust hath come upon thee.
Be thy neck smitten and thy spirit wounded,
And may thy bones be scattered on the ground.
Next Dai, God willing, I will habit me
In heavy iron mail, lead forth the host
Against the country of Túrán to war,
And ruinate the realm of the Gurgsár.'"[1]

§ 8

How the Envoys returned to Arjásp with the Letter of Gushtásp

The monarch of the earth, when he had ended
His speech, sent for his general, greeted him,
Put in his charge the ambassadors, and said:—

[1] Of the Wolf-heads—the name of a tribe.

"See them beyond the borders of Írán."
The envoys left the presence of Gushtásp,
And went their way with dust upon their heads,
The Sháh dismissing them with ignominy.
From glorious Írán they reached Khallukh,
But in Khallukh were still inglorious.
As soon as they perceived the monarch's palace
Afar, surmounted by the sable standard,
They lighted from their proudly pacing steeds,
Their hearts were broken and their eyes were dim.
They went afoot before their sovereign,
With souls all darkness and with livid cheeks,
And gave to him the letter of the Sháh—
The answer of Zarír the cavalier.
V. 1510 The letter was unfolded by a scribe,
Who read it to the king of Turkman[1] race.
The writing in the letter of the prince,
The leader of the brave, the warrior-horseman,
Ran: "Thine insulting letter to the Sháh
Arrived, and I have listened to and marked
Words that were not becoming thee to utter,
Words that should not be written or divulged,
Not fit to be read out and hearkened to.
Thus spakest thou: 'I will lead forth anon
A host against that jocund land of thine.'
For my part I need not four months or twain
Ere I lead forth my Lions of the fray.
Bring not upon thyself increase of toil,
Because I shall unlock my treasury,
And lead a thousand thousand warriors,
All men of name, all veterans in fight,
All offspring of Íraj, the paladin,
Not of Afrásiyáb, or of the Turkmans,[2]
All moon-faced men, all kings to look upon,
All upright in their stature and their speech,

[1] Paighú. [2] *Ibid.*

All worthy of the empire and the throne,
All worthy of the treasure, crown, and host,
All spearmen and all swordsmen, all of them
The leaders and the shatterers of armies,
All brandishing their lances as they ride,
All with my name inscribed upon their signets,
All converts to the Faith, all men of wisdom,
All worthy of the earring and the armlet.
When they are ware that I have bound the drums V. 1511
Upon the elephants their horses' hoofs
Lay low the heights, and when they arm for battle
They send the dust-clouds flying to high heaven.
Firm as a mountain are they in the saddle,
The hill-tops shatter at them, while among them
For choice there are two warrior-cavaliers—
Zarír, the leader, and Asfandiyár—
Who, when they don their iron panoply,
Bestride the sun and moon, and, when they shoulder
The crashing mace, their Grace illumineth
The Grace and form of others. As they stand
Before the host thou must perforce observe them.
They with their crowns and thrones are like the sun,
Their countenances shine with Grace and fortune.
The other troops and chiefs are like myself—
Approved and chosen of the archimages—
So never fill up the Jíhún with musk,
For I will open thy parched treasuries,
And, if it pleaseth God, will trample down
Thy head in fight upon the day of battle."
Arjásp descended from his throne, amazed
At reading this, and bade his generals :—
"Call out the whole host at tomorrow's dawn."
The warriors[1] of the army, chosen men
Of Chín, came to Túrán from every quarter.
The monarch had two brothers—Áhrimans— V. 1512

[1] tigín.

One hight Kuhram, Andarímán the other,
Who both received drums, elephants, and standards,
Bedecked with yellow, red, and violet.
He gave to them three hundred thousand men,
Selected and courageous cavaliers.
He oped the treasury-doors and paid the troops,
Bade blow the trumpets and load up the baggage.
He had Kuhram, his brother, called in haste,
And gave him charge of one wing of the host.
He gave the other to Andarímán,
And took his own position in the centre.
There was an agèd Turkman named Gurgsár,
To whom the king gave the command in chief:
Thou wouldst have said: "He knoweth naught but ill."
To Bídirafsh, the brother of this man,
He sent a banner blazoned with a wolf.
There was a valiant man by name Khashásh,
Who fought afoot with lions; him the king
Made leader of the scouts and of the vanguard:
They bore his flag as champion of the host.
There was a Turkman who was named Húshdív;
The monarch sent him to the rear, and said:—
"Keep guard behind the army and if thou
See one deserting slay him on the spot,
And take good heed herein."
Thus in fierce wrath
He fared with full heart and with eyes all tears.
V. 1513 He ravaged as he went, he set on fire
The palaces, and razed trees, root and branch.
That king of infidels led forth his host,
With vengeful heart, against the Íránian coast.

§ 9

How Gushtásp assembled his Troops

As soon as tidings came to Sháh Gushtásp:—
"The ruler of the Turkmans and of Chín
Hath made his preparations and set forth,
Dispatching to the front the brave Khashásh,"
He bade his general: "At dawn tomorrow
Array the elephants, lead out the host."
He wrote a letter to his marchlords thus:—
"The Khán hath left the pathway of the great.
Come to my court-gate, all! because my foes
Are at the border."
When the letter reached
Those nobles with this news: "There hath appeared
A foeman who ambitioneth the world,"
Troops gathered at the portal of the Sháh,
Out-numbering the grass-blades on the ground.
The warriors of the world girt up their loins
To aid the Kaian Sháh, the world-possessor,
And, as he had commanded, all the marchlords
Set forward to the court-gate of the king.
Anon a thousand thousand gathered round
The Sháh, that famous and benignant Kaian,
Who visited the camp, reviewed the troops,
And chose the fit. It joyed the glorious Sháh,
Whose heart was all astound at such a host.
Next day Gushtásp went with the archimages,
The chiefs, the great men, and the army-captains,
Unlocked the treasures hoarded by Jamshíd,
Gave to the soldiers two years' pay and then,
When he had given mail and rations, sounded V. 1514
The drums and trumpets, loaded up the baggage,
And ordered to be borne before the host
The conquering standard of the glorious Sháhs.

He led the troops to battle with Arjásp—
An army such as none had ever seen.
None could discern the daylight or the moon
For murk of flying dust-clouds, troops, and steeds
Whose neighing and the war-cries drowned the drums.
A multitude of banners were displayed,
And spearheads pierced the clouds like trees that grow
On mountain-tops or like reed-beds in spring.
Upon this wise by Sháh Gushtásp's command
The army made its way from land to land.

§ 10

How Jámásp foretold the Issue of the Battle to Gushtásp

When he had reached Jíhún from famous Balkh
The captain of the army made a halt.
The Sháh departed from among the troops,
Alighted from his steed and, having mounted
Upon the throne, called unto him forthwith
Jámásp his counsellor, the chief archmage,
The first among the nobles, and the lustre
Both of the great men and the generals.
So pure in person was he, so devout
Of soul, that mysteries were revealed to him.
He was a mighty reader of the stars,
And who in point of knowledge had his standing?[1]
Of him the Sháh inquired: "God hath endowed thee
With honest counsel and the good religion.
There is none like thee in the world; in short
The Ruler of the world hath given thee knowledge;
So make thy calculations of the stars,
And tell me all the aspect of affairs.
How will the battle go from first to last,
And which of us will meet disaster here?"

[1] See p. 19.

The old Jámásp was grieved, with rueful looks V. 1515
He said: "I would to God that He, the Just,
Had not bestowed on me this skill and wisdom,
For then the Sháh would not have questioned me;
Yet will I speak for, if I answer not,
The king of kings will have me put to death."
The world-lord answered: "By the name of God,
By his—the holy bringer of the Faith—
And by the life of that brave cavalier,
Zarír, and that of great Asfandiyár,
I will not ever do thee injury,
Myself, or bid another so to do.
Say what thou knowest touching this affair,
For thou canst give, and I am seeking, help."
The sage made answer: "O illustrious Sháh!
May thy crown flourish everlastingly.
Know, Kaian warrior, seeker of renown!
When fight shall bring the heroes face to face,
When they shall raise their shouts and battle-cries,
And thou wouldst say: 'They tear up all the mountains,'
The mighty men of valour will advance,
And air grow pitchy with the dust of battle;
Then will the world be darkened in thine eyes,
Fire will fulfil the earth and reek the air,
While mid the blows struck and the massive maces,
Descending like smiths' hammers on the steel,
The twang of bowstring will oppress the brain,
And air re-echo with the charger's neigh;
The heavens will be broken, spheres and vaults, V. 1516
The standards drenched with gore. Full many sons
Wilt thou see fatherless and fathers sonless!
First will Ardshír, that Kaian, the king's son,
The famed and gallant, urge his charger forth,
And fling whoe'er opposeth in the dust,
Unhorsing of the Turkman cavaliers

A number greater than the tale of stars,
Yet in the end be slain and his good name
Erased. The monarch's son, the great Shídasp,
In vengeance then will urge his sable steed,
Rage, draw his sword, and charging slay full many
A horse and man, but in the end his fortune
Will be abased, and his crowned head be bare.
Then my son will come forward with his loins
Girt with my girdle for Shídasp's avengement,
And go, like Rustam, in between the hosts.
How many men of name and warriors
Of Chín will that brave Lion bring to earth,
And undergo much travail in the fray!
I tell the king of kings that Girámí,
What time the Íránians drop the glorious flag
Of Káwa, will behold it from his charger,
All dust and blood, and leaping to the ground
Will raise it bravely, with the scimitar
In one hand and the standard in the other—
The violet standard—and while thus bestead
Will overthrow the foe and root the life
Out of those Áhrimans; then suddenly
An enemy vindictively will strike
One hand off with the trenchant scimitar,
v. 1517 And Girámí will seize the violet flag
Between his teeth and hold it therewithal,
While with one hand he maketh foes to vanish:
No man hath seen a feat more wonderful;
Yet will a Turkman with an arrow smite
His breast and bring his head and crown to dust.
Next nobly born Nastúr, son of Zaríر,
Will urge his charger forward like a lion,
And when at last he shall return in triumph,
With hands that have been stretched out o'er the foe,
Nívzár, the chosen horseman, will go forth,
The world-lord's son, will overthrow three score

Of foemen, and display the mastery
Of paladins; but in the end the Turkmans
Will smite him with their arrows and will fling
His elephantine body to the dust.
Next to advance will be that valiant Lion,
That warrior-horseman who is named Zarír.
He will go forth, a lasso in his hand,
Upon his Arab bay, arrayed in breastplate
Of gold resplendent as the moon. The troops
Will be astonied at him. He will take
A thousand warriors of the Turkman host,
Put them in bonds, and send them to the Sháh,
And wheresoe'er that prince shall turn his face
He will pour forth his foemen's blood in streams.
No one will take that royal paladin,
Who will confound the monarch of the tents.[1]
Then will Zarír see great Ardshír o'erthrown V. 1518
With livid cheeks and form like turmeric,
Will bitterly lament him and, grown grim,
Urge his bay Arab onward and will set
In bitter wrath his face against the Khán:
Thou wouldest say: 'Ne'er hath he looked on flight!'
When he shall see Arjásp among the host
He will proclaim the praise of Sháh Gushtásp,
O'erthrow the battle of the enemy,
And, looking not to any one on earth,
Proclaim the Zandavasta of Zarduhsht,
And put his kingly confidence in God;
But in the end his fortune will be darkened,
The chosen Tree be felled, for there will come
One, Bídirafsh by name, and make his way
Toward the spear that hath the violet standard,
But, daring not to face the chosen champion,
Will lie in wait for him upon the road,
And bar it like a maddened elephant,

[1] "le roi *du peuple qui demeure sous* des tentes" (Mohl).

While grasping in his hand a venomed sword.
As prince Zarír returneth from the fight,
And thou wouldst say: 'He cometh from a feast,'
That Turkman will let fly at him an arrow,
Not daring to assail him openly,
And thus the chief of nobles will be lost
Through loathly Bídirafsh, who will bear off
His charger and his saddle to the Turkmans.
What man will then be foremost to avenge him?
Anon this famous, mighty host will close,
Like wolves and lions, on the foe, and earth
Will in the mellay blush with warriors' blood,
Their faces all be wan, the bravest tremble,
The army's dust will hide the sun and moon,
While flashes from the spearheads, swords, and arrows
Will glisten as the stars among the clouds.
V. 1519 Then Bídirafsh, that valiant miscreant,
Will go forth like a wolf that raveneth,
And, holding in his hand the envenomed glaive,
Will urge his steed like some mad elephant.
By his hand will a multitude of troops,
And those the choicest of the Sháh's, be slain.
Then will the glorious Asfandiyár,
With troops behind and God to succour him,
In blood-stained raiment and with soul fulfilled
By hate bring Doomsday down on Bídirafsh,
Smite with an Indian sword a single blow,
And hurl down half his body from the saddle.
Then with his iron mace in hand the prince
Will illustrate his Grace and majesty,
Will break the foemen with a single charge,
And shall he let them go when they are broken?
Nay, with a spearpoint will he gather them,
And scatter them abroad in utter ruin,
While in the end the king of Chín will flee
Before Asfandiyár, that glorious Kaian,

And in his flight will make toward Túrán,
Heart-broken and in tears, and cross the waste
With but a scanty following, while the Sháh
Will be triumphant and the foe destroyed.
Know, O thou chosen chief of sovereigns!
What I have said will not be otherwise.
From me thou wilt hear nothing more or less;
Regard me not henceforth with louring looks.
I have not said the things that I have said
Save at thy bidding, O victorious Sháh!
And as for what the glorious Sháh hath asked
Of that deep sea and dark abysm of fate,
I have not kept back aught that I have seen, V. 1520
Else why should I have told the Sháh these secrets?"

Now when the Sháh, the master of the world,
Heard this revealed he sank back on his throne,
And dropped the golden mace; thou wouldst have said:—
"His Grace and majesty alike are gone."
He fell upon his face and swooned away,
He spake no word and uttered not a sound.
The monarch when his sense returned to him
Descended from his throne, wept bitterly,
And "What to me," he said, "are throne and kingship
When all my day shall have been turned to gloom,
My Moons, brave cavaliers, and princes gone?
What need have I for empiry and fortune,
For puissance and host, for crown and throne,
When those that I love best, the most renowned,
The chosen of the host, shall have departed,
And from my body pluck my wounded heart?"

Then to Jámásp he said: "Since things are so,
When it is time to go forth to the battle,
I will not call upon my valiant brother,
I will not burn mine agèd mother's heart.
I will forbid his going to the fight,
And give the host to glorious Gurazm.

Those of blood Kaian with my youthful sons,
Who all are as my body and my soul,
Now will I call before me, will prevent
Their arming and will seat them in my presence.
How can the points of poplar arrows reach
These rocks and mountains higher than high heaven?"
The sage replied: "Most gracious, glorious Sháh!
If these be not before the army, helmed,
Who will dare face the warriors of Chín?
Who will retrieve the Grace and holy Faith?
Rise from this dust, be seated on the throne,
And ruin not the Grace of sovereignty,
For 'tis God's purpose which no shift can stay;
The Maker of the world is not a tyrant.
V. 1521 Thou wilt not profit by indulging grief,
For that which shall be is as good as done.
Distress thy heart no more then but acknowledge
The justice of the Maker of the world."
He gave much counsel while the Sháh gave ear,
Grew like the sun, and mounted to his throne,
And as he sat his purpose was confirmed
To fight the ambitious monarch of Chigil;
Oppressed with thought he gat no sleep that night,
And was all eagerness for war and fight.

§ 11

How Gushtásp and Arjásp arrayed their Hosts

Gushtásp, according to Jámásp's advice,
When morning breathed and starlight disappeared,
Led down his chosen warriors to the field,
And, at the season when the scent of roses
Is wafted houseward by the breath of dawn,
Dispatched according to the Íránian custom
His scouts on every side. A cavalier

Approached and said: "O monarch of the world!
The enemy is nigh. So great a host
Ne'er came before from Turkistán or Chín.
They have encamped hard by and pitched their tents
On mountains, dales, and plains. Their general
Hath sent out scouts, and his and thine have met."
Thereat high-born Gushtásp, the valiant Sháh,
Called for his general—glorious Zarír—
And gave to him the standard, saying: "Haste:
Array the elephants and arm the troops."
The general went forth and ranged his host,
All fain to battle with the king of Chín.
Gushtásp gave one wing to Asfandiyár,
With fifty thousand chosen cavaliers,
Because he had an elephantine breast
And lion's heart. Upon the other wing
He stationed a select and goodly band,
And gave it to the cherished warrior, V 1522
Who was the son and equal of the Sháh,
The high, exalted, and exultant prince,
To whom the Sháh had given the name Shídasp;
While fifty thousand valiant cavaliers
He gave to glorious Zarír, the leader,
Assigning him the centre, for he was
A savage Lion and the Sháh's own equal.
The rearguard he entrusted to Nastúr,
Of glorious race, the Lustre of Zarír.
The army thus arrayed, the Sháh, o'ercome
With grief and spent with labour, sought the height,
Sat down upon his fair, resplendent throne,
And thence surveyed the army.
Then Arjásp,
The monarch of the cavaliers of Chín,
In like wise ranged his forces and dispatched
A hundred thousand horsemen of Khallúkh,
All brave and tried, to Bídirafsh, who had,

As general, the drums and golden standard,
Entrusting one wing of the host to him,
Whom not a lion loose would face. He gave
The other to Gurgsár, and gave withal
A hundred thousand chosen cavaliers.
In like wise in the centre of the host
He posted a select and goodly band,
And gave them to that stubborn sorcerer,
Námkhást by name, the son of Hazárán.[1]
With chosen horsemen five score thousand strong,
Whose prowess was renowned throughout the world,
He took his own post rearward in reserve,
O'erlooking every portion of his powers.
He had one son, a man of high repute,
A veteran and pre-eminent in war,
A noble cavalier by name Kuhram
Above whose head much heat and cold had passed;
This son of his he set to oversee
The army and direct the strategy.

§ 12

The Beginning of the Battle between the Íránians and Túránians, and how Ardshír, Shírú, and Shídasp were slain

v. 1523 Now when that night had passed and it was day,
And when the world-illuming sun shone forth,
The troops of both hosts mounted on their saddles,
While Sháh Gushtásp observed them from the height.
What time the glorious Sháh saw from the mountain
The warriors in their saddles he desired
Bihzád, his sable charger, to be brought:
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis surely Mount Bístún!"
They put the bards thereon, and then he mounted.

[1] Reading with P.

Whenas they set the battle in array,
And champion challenged champion, first they sent
A shower of arrows like a springtide hail,
Such that the sun's course was invisible!
Who will believe that hath not seen that marvel?
The fountain of the sun was garnitured
With javelin-heads that sparkled like a river!
One would have said: "The sky is overcast,
And from the clouds are raining diamonds,"
While through the mace-men and the javelin-men,
Who charged on one another, all the air
Assumed the hue of night and all the earth
Was inundate with gore. First came Ardshír,
That goodly horseman and the world-lord's son,
Like some mad elephant upon the field;
Thou wouldst have said: "Can it be Tús the chief?"
Thus wheelèd he before the host, not knowing
What sun and moon decreed. An arrow struck him
Upon the loins, transfixed his Kaian mail,
And that prince tumbled headlong from his bay,
His stainless form defiled and smirched with blood.
Woe for that fair face radiant as the moon,
Which never more the wise Sháh looked upon!
Then came like flying dust high-born Shírú, V. 1524
Whose heart was full and visage wan, before
The line of battle, bearing in his hand
A venomed sword; he roared as 'twere a lion,
Brought down like onager full many a foe,
And in his vengeance for that royal horseman
Slew fifty score of hostile cavaliers;
But as he was returning from the fray,
When thus he had incarnadined the earth,
There came an arrow at his nape; the prince
Fell. Woe for that brave, noble warrior,
Who died and nevermore beheld his sire!
The next to sally forth was prince Shídasp,

One like the moon, a man of royal mien.
He, seated on a steed like indigo,
Fleet as gazelle and huge as elephant,
Rushed on the field of battle, whirled and brandished
His lance as 'twere a twig, held in his steed,
And shouted, saying: "Which is bold Kuhram,
Whose look is as the look of wolf and tiger?"
A dív advanced, exclaiming: "I am one
To bite the famished lion."
Then they wheeled
With lances, and the Sháh's son speared the Turkman,
Dismounted him, and, cutting off his head,
Flung down his goodly girdle to the dust;
Then wheeled before the warriors of Chín,
As though he were a mountain on the saddle.
In sooth eye never saw a man so goodly;
His beauty drew all eyes. Howbeit a Turkman
Let fly at him an arrow, and that prince,
That offspring of the Sháh, went to the winds.
Woe for that lost one reared so daintily,
Whose face his father was no more to see!

§ 13

How Girámí, Jámásp's Son, and Nívzár were slain

Then of the leaders of the host went forth
The brave son of Jámásp the minister,
V. 1525 A valiant horseman, Girámí by name,
Like to the son of Zál, the son of Sám.
Upon a chestnut charger fleet and trusty
He stood before the battle of the men
Of Chín, and, having prayed to God the Judge,
"Who of you," said he, "is of lion-heart
To come against my life-destroying spear?
And where is that o'erweening sorcerer,

Námkhást by name, the son of Hazárán?"[1]
Námkhást went forth to him: thou wouldst have said:—
"That charger hath a mountain on its back!"
Those two accomplished horsemen wheeled about
With mace and lance, with shaft and scimitar,
But gallant Girámí had lion's strength;
That valiant cavalier could not withstand him,
And, though a man of battle, took to flight
On seeing that Kaian puissance and keen sword;
Then Girámí rode onward in fierce wrath,
With heart all raging to avenge the fallen,
And fell upon the centre of the foe.
Anon a blast rose from the mountain-skirt
As those two armies mingled in the mellay
And sent the dark dust flying. In the turmoil
That followed 'twixt the hosts, amid the strokes
Of scimitars and sable clouds of dust,
Fell from the Íránians' hands the splendid standard
Of Káwa. Girámí beheld that flag,
All indigo of hue, which they had flung
From elephant-back, dismounting lifted it,
Shook off the dust, and cleared the soil away.
Now when the warriors of Chín beheld him
Raise from the ground that flagstaff famed and dear,
And, after having cleansed it, bear it off,
Their bravest warriors surrounded him,
And, thus assailing him on all sides, struck
One hand off with a scimitar. He seized
The flag of Farídún[2] between his teeth
And, strange to tell, plied with the other hand
His mace! At last they slew him wretchedly, V. 1526
And flung him vilely on the burning dust.
Alas for that brave, warlike cavalier!
That ancient sage[3] beheld him not again.

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 157. [3] Jámásp.

Immediately went forth Nastúr, the Lion,
A warrior, Kaian-born, son of Zarír.
He slew a countless multitude of foes,
For he had learned to battle from his father,
And in the end returned victorious
And glad, and stood again before his sire.
Next there went forth the chosen cavalier,
Nívzár, son of the monarch of the world.
He rode a charger fleet of foot—a steed
Of thousands—came to that dark battlefield,
And shouted, saying: "Chosen warriors!
What man of name is there among you all,
What valiant, veteran wielder of the spear?
Let him confront me now with lance in hand,
Because a man of mettle fronteth you."
The cavaliers of Chín rushed forth at him,
And strove to overthrow him. Brave Nívzár,
Who was the finest horseman in the world,
Like some wroth elephant and rending lion,
Kept wheeling round the warriors of Chín:
Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth up the earth!"
He slaughtered sixty warriors world-renowned,
And nurtured all upon the dust of battle,
But in the end an arrow from a bow
Struck him as it had been a flash from heaven.
He fell from that fleet steed of goodly hue,
And died. Behold the end of combating!
Alas! that noble cavalier and Lion,
Who fell in vain—the image of his sire—
And woe is me for that fair face and form!
Now when that goodly cavalier was slain
The myriad warriors that were around
Engaged in every quarter of the field,
And raised the dust-clouds from earth's face. Two se'n-nights
Passed in that fight for not a horseman slept,

The earths[1] were filled with slain and wounded men, V. 1527
The passage of the wind was barred by dust,
The dales and deserts were in tulip-dress,
And blood flowed over waste and wilderness.

§ 14

How Zarír, the Brother of Gushtásp, was slain by Bídirafsh

In these encounters two weeks passed away,
And all the while the fighting grew more fierce.
Then brave Zarír advanced before the host,
Bestriding his huge chestnut, threw himself
Upon the encampment of the enemy,
Like blazing fire and wind amid the grass,
Slew, and dispatched them to their last repose:
None that beheld withstood him. Then Arjásp,
Perceiving that the prince had slaughtered many
Of name, cried loudly to his warriors:—
"What! will ye let Khallukh go to the winds?
We have been fighting for two weary weeks,
And still I see no prospect of the end.
The warriors of Sháh Gushtásp have slain
Full many a man of name among our troops,
And now Zarír is in the midst of you,
As 'twere a fierce wolf or a rending lion,
And he hath slaughtered all my followers,
My noble Turkmans and my men of war!
We must devise a remedy for this,
Or trudge back to Túrán, for if this man
Continue thus he will not leave Áyás,
Khallukh or Chín. What man of you in quest V. 1528
Of fame will show among the troops, go forth
Man-like, alone, and compass world-renown?
I will bestow on him my daughter's hand,

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 15 and *note*.

And give to him the conduct of my host."
The soldiers answered not a word, for all
Feared that Wild Boar. Immediately Zarír
The chief, the paladin of paladins,
Advancing as he were a furious wolf,
Fell on them like a maddened elephant,
Or lion, slaughtering and overthrowing.
Arjásp, beholding this, was so astound
That day turned dark to him. Again he said —
"O great, brave[1] princes, warriors of Chín!
Regard ye not your kindred and allies,
Nor yet the wounded groaning 'neath the feet
Of one who is as a consuming fire,
With Sám's mace and the arrows of Árish,
Whose flames e'en now are burning up my host,
And scorching all my kingdom? Who is there
Among you all, one puissant of hand,
To go against yon maddened Elephant?
Whoever will attempt yon warrior-slayer,
And hurl him from his steed, upon that man
Will I bestow a treasury full of gold,
And raise his helmet higher than the sky."
Still no man answered him a word. Arjásp
Was in amazement and his cheeks grew pale.
He spake the third time to the troops, but when
No answer came to him he held his peace.
At last the lusty Bídirafsh advanced—
The foul, that dog, that warlock, that old wolf—
And spake thus to Arjásp: "O mighty Sun,
In root and stem like to Afrásiyáb!
V. 1529 Thee have I brought my life and I have made it,
Sweet as it is, thy shield. I will confront
Yon raging Elephant. If I shall seize,
And fling him to the dust before the king,
Let me be leader of this countless host."

[1] tigín.

Thereat Arjásp rejoiced, praised Bídirafsh,
Gave his own steed and saddle to that chief,
And therewithal a keen two-headed dart
Of steel that would have pierced an iron mountain.
That foul enchanter with the loathly form
Went toward Zarír, the leader of the folk,
But seeing from afar his fearsome fury,
His beard besoiled, his eyes fulfilled, with dust,
A mace like Sám the hero's in his hand,
And slain before him heaped up like a mountain,
Adventured not to face him openly,
But skirmished round him stealthily and hurled
Unseen at him the double-headed dart.
His royal mail was pierced, his kingly form
Bedrenched with blood. He tumbled from his steed.
Woe for that youthful, royal cavalier!
Foul Bídirafsh alighted, stripped the prince,
And bare off to the king the horse and girdle,
The standard and the goodly, jewelled crown,
While all the army shouted and paraded
The standard on an elephant. Gushtásp,
What time he looked forth from the mountain-top,
Saw not amid the dust that Moon of chiefs,
And said: "I fear me that the full-orbed Moon,
That ever gave a lustre to the host—
My valiant brother, glorious Zarír,
Who used to overthrow the angry lion—
Hath been dismounted, for the warriors
Have ceased from charging and the princes shout not!
Perchance that chief of nobles hath been slain.
Speed to the battlefield a mounted man V. 1530
Toward yonder sable standard and discover
My royal brother's case, because my heart
Is full and seared for him."

Thus fared the world's king
Till one, whose eyes poured blood-drops, came and said:—

"The Turkman horsemen wretchedly have slain
Thy Moon, the guardian of thy crown and host,
Him that was paladin of paladins—
Zarír the cavalier—for Bídirafsh,
The chief of all the warlocks of the world,
Hath overthrown him and borne off the standard."
The world's king, hearing of that slaying, felt
Death visible. Down to the feet he rent
His robe, strewed dust upon his jocund crown,
And said to sage Jámásp: "What shall I say
To Sháh Luhrásp? How can I send to court
A messenger? How tell mine ancient sire?
Alas! that royal warrior! Alas!
Gone like the bright moon midst the clouds! Bring hither
Luhrásp's Gulgún and set thereon my saddle."
He made him ready to avenge his brother,
And carry on his Faith and precedent,
But "Pause!" said his experienced minister,
"Thy going to revenge is ill-advised."
So, as that prescient minister enjoined,
The Sháh alighted and resumed the throne,
Thus saying to his troops: "What Lion is there
To take revenge for glorious Zarír,
And, urging forth his steed with that intent,
Retrieve my brother's saddle and his charger?
I swear before the Master of the world—
The oath of upright and of noble men—
V. 1531 That whosoe'er shall go forth from the army,
On him will I bestow Humái, my daughter."
But not a man came forward from the host,
And not a single warrior left his post.

§ 15

How Asfandiyár heard of the Slaying of Zaríir

Thereafter tidings reached Asfandiyár :—
" Zaríir, that princely cavalier, is slain.
Thy father, overcome by grief for him,
Now purposeth to take revenge himself."
The famous hero wrung his hands, and said :—
" What ill doth fortune spare us ? When I saw
Zaríir in fight I ever feared this day.
Woe for that horseman, warrior, and chief,
Whom fortune hath discrowned ! Who slew that prince,
That valiant Elephant ? Who plucked from earth
That iron Mount ? "
Resigning to a brother
Flag, troops, and his own station, he advanced
Himself and reached the centre, girt his loins,
And seized the royal standard. Now he had
Five brothers, the adornments of the throne,
All men of high renown, the Sháh's compeers.
They held Asfandiyár in reverence,
Because it was his wont to shatter hosts.
That Mainstay of the troops said to those nobles :—
" Ye men of name and scions of the Sháh !
Attend to what I say, observe it well,
And trust the Faith of God, the Lord of all.
Know then, ye princes ! that this is the day
Which will discern the false Faith from the true.
See that ye fear not death or anything,
For none will die but at his fated time,
And if so be that fated time hath come,
What is more glorious than to die in battle ?
Heed not the slain, seek not for further help,
And count not heads. Put not your trust in flight,
And be not terrified at combating.

V. 1532 In battle let your lances' points be low,
Strive for a space and quit you manfully.
If ye will do as I have bidden you
My soul will still be stayed within my body,
Your name will be renowned throughout the world,
And all the host of yon old Wolf will perish."
While matters fared thus with Asfandiyár
His father shouted from the mountain-top :—
"Ye men of name and warriors of mine,
Who are as mine own body and my soul!
Fear ye not arrows, swords, and javelins,
Because there is no fleeing from our fate.
By God's Faith and by brave Asfandiyár,
And by the soul of that loved cavalier,
Zarír, alighted now in Paradise,
Luhrásp the Sháh hath written unto me,
And I have pledged me to that ancient man,
That, if good fortune giveth me the day,
I will bestow, when I shall quit the field,
The crown and throne upon Asfandiyár;
I will bestow the royal crown on him
Just as my sire bestowed the realm on me,
While Bishútan[1] shall have the host, and I
Will crown him with a crown of royalty."

§ 16

How Asfandiyár went to battle with Arjásp

Asfandiyár, the elephant-bodied hero,
Lord of the throne and terrible of form,
Heard what his father shouted from the mountain,
And hung his head for sorrow. Spear in hand
He came, bent modestly before his sire,
And then, as 'twere a dív escaped from bond,

[1] One of Asfandiyár's brothers.

Bestrode a stately grey, like blast on rose-leaves
Fell on the foe, slew, and beheaded them,
While all that saw him died of fright. Nastúr,
Son of Zarír the horseman, left his tent,
Went to the keeper of the steeds and bade
To bring him forth one fresh and fleet and broad V. 1533
Of buttock, like a caracolling mountain.
He set a golden saddle on its back,
And harnessed it and put the bards thereon.
He bound a Kaian lasso to the straps,
Then mounted, after he had armed himself,
And spear in hand rode to the battlefield.
Thus faring till he reached the scene of strife
He sought to light upon his slaughtered sire.
He hasted, put his charger to its speed,
Exacting vengeance, slaying as he went,
And when he saw one of the Íránian race
Would ask that noble of the host, and say :—
"Where was it that Zarír, my father, fell—
That warrior, that doughty cavalier?"

There was a certain man, Ardshír by name,
A horseman, one of worth, a hero-taker,
Of whom the youth inquired. That warrior
Directed him to where his slain sire lay.
"He fell," so spake Ardshír, "amid the host,
Hard by yon sable standard. Thither haste,
And thou mayst look upon his face once more."

The prince urged on his steed and as he went
He slaughtered foes and dealt destruction round.
He rushed along until he reached his sire,
And, when he saw the corpse upon the dust,
All heart and reason left him. From his saddle
He threw himself upon his father's body,
And thus addressed it: "O my shining Moon,
The lustre of my heart and eyes and soul!
What toil and trouble hadst thou in my nurture,

And whom didst thou commit me to in dying?
Since Sháh Luhrásp bestowed the host upon thee,
And gave Gushtásp the throne and diadem,
Thou hast administered the troops and realm,
And battled with a will. Thy fame on earth
Is bright as thou couldst wish, yet thou art slain
While still unsatisfied; but I will seek
V. 1534 Thy brother, that auspicious Sháh, and say:—
'Descend thou from that goodly throne of thine.
Thy conduct is unworthy of my father;
Go forth then and avenge him on the foe.'"
Long while he mourned, then mounted. With exclaims
He sought the Sháh upon the goodly throne.
"Life of thy father," said the king of kings,
"Why hast thou filled thine eyes with tears?"
Replied
The Kaian-born: "O monarch of the world!
Go and avenge my sire, because my lord,
His black beard musk-perfumed, is left to lie
Upon the arid dust!"
Now when the Sháh
Heard, daylight blackened to him and the world
Loured on its lord; his elephantine form
Shrank, and "Bring forth," he said, "my sable steed,
My battle-mail, and casque, because today
In wreak for him will I pour warriors' blood
In many a stream and light a fire whose reek
Shall reach to Saturn!"
When the warriors
Saw from the field—the hosts' dark scene of strife—
Their sovereign arming, and that he would go
To seek revenge, they said: "The king of kings,
And master of the world, will not go forth
To battle, seeking wreak, with our consent,
Else what need is there to array the host?"
The noble minister addressed the Sháh,

And said: "Thou shouldst not go upon the field.
Give to Nastúr the steed that thou wouldst mount, V. 1535
And send him forth to battle with the foe,
For better than thou canst will he require
The vengeance that is owing for his sire."

§ 17

How Nastúr and Asfandiyár slew Bídirafsh

The Sháh then gave his steed Bihzád, his helm
Of steel, and sable breastplate to Nastúr,
The slaughtered prince's son who, armed and mounted,
Rode forth between the opposing hosts and, halting
Before the battle of the enemy,
Heaved from his breast a deep, cold sigh, and cried:—
"Nastúr am I, the offspring of Zarír:
The lion dareth not encounter me.
Where is that warlock Bídirafsh who holdeth
The flag of Káwa?"
As no answer came
He urged along night-hued Bihzád, and slew
Full many a valiant warrior of the host,
While no one went forth to encounter him;
On this side too the brave Asfandiyár
Slew of them past all counting and compute.
Whenas the king of Chín beheld Nastúr—
That youthful paladin of Kaian race—
He cried out to his troops: "What man is this,
This spearman so accomplished, who hath slain
My chiefs in numbers numberless, unless
Zarír, the cavalier, hath come to life—
He that came out against me at the first,
And urged his charger in this selfsame way?
Where is the chosen warrior Bídirafsh?
Ho! summon him before me, and right soon."

Then Bídirafsh went forth at once, he bare
The violet flag, was mounted on the charger
Of prince Zaríṛ, and wore the prince's mail.
v. 1536 Advancing in his pride toward Nastúr,
That royal youth, the lustre of the host,
He grasped the selfsame sword of watered steel
Wherewith he had o'erthrown Zaríṛ.[1] They wheeled—
Zaríṛ's son and that chief of Turkman warlocks—
Contending with their scimitars and arrows.
Men told the glorious Asfandiyár,
The Sháh's son, of their combating, who made
All haste to go to them. Now when that chief
Of sorcerers beheld this, and perceived
What man now was advancing to assail him,
He urged his charger from amid the fray,
And hurled his baneful weapon at the prince
To darken if he might that radiant face;
It missed the prince, who caught it in his hand
And pierced—a hero's stroke—his foeman's liver,
So that the point came out the other side.
Thus Bídirafsh fell from his steed and perished,
Experiencing the might of Kaian birth.
Asfandiyár dismounted from his steed,
And stripping off the armour of Zaríṛ—
The noble hero—from that ancient warlock,
Whose head he severed from its trunk withal,
He carried off the prince's glossy charger,
The flag, and head of worthless Bídirafsh.
The Kaian army raised a shout, all sent
Their clamour through the skies: "The prince hath triumphed,
Hath overthrown the foe, gone forth, and brought
The dun steed back!"

[1] The sword is mentioned in Jámásp's prophecy (p. 52), but elsewhere we are told that Zaríṛ was slain by a double-headed dart (p. 63). The discrepancy may be due to lack of revision (p. 22).

The prince, that valiant horseman,
Brought to the Sháh Zarír's horse and presented
The head of that old warlock. Thus he slew
The slayer as by law and wont is due.

§ 18

How Arjásp fled from the Battle

When great Asfandiyár had taken vengeance,
And saddled him the charger of Zarír,
He rode back proudly to the battlefield, V. 1537
Formed three divisions of the Kaian host,
And gave one to the warrior Nastúr
Of glorious birth—the lustre of the troops;
The second—all Íránian warriors
And chieftains—he entrusted to his brother,
And kept the third beneath his own command,
Whose voice was as it were a thundering cloud.
Nastúr of stainless birth, the exalted chief,
And Núsh Ázar, the valiant paladin,
Both bound themselves together solemnly:—
"Although the foeman's sword shall cleave the earth
We will not come back from the fight alive,
And let those miscreants escape our grasp."
When they had spoken thus and made secure
Their saddle-girths they went forth to the battle.
Now, as they urged their chargers from the lines,
The heroes and the young men of Írán
All came on too and decked the world with mail.
They slew so many horsemen that they cramped
The battlefield. The mill-wheels turned in blood
That streamed from hill and plain. Arjásp, beholding,
Advanced with his own chiefs and warriors.
Asfandiyár, the hero-slayer, couched
His lance against those dívs of Turkman race,

And sewed them breast to back till he had slain
Full many a haughty chief. Although the Khán
Saw none to aid, and none who dared oppose
V. 1538 Asfandiyár, but that his troops withdrew
Demoralised, he kept his post till eve
Amid the rout, then fled toward the waste.
The Íránians pressed the countless troops of Chín,
And slaughtered them in numbers everywhere,
For, strange to tell! not one showed pity there!

§ 19

How the Turkmans received Quarter from Asfandiyár

The Turkman troops saw that Arjásp had fled,
That swords were flashing on all sides of them,
And all the chiefs, alighting from their steeds,
Came to the presence of Asfandiyár,
The hero, flung away their Turkman bows,
And doffed their mail. They said to him in anguish:—
"If now the prince will give his servants quarter
We will accept his Faith, will seek instruction
Therein, and all do worship to the Fires."
The Íránian soldiery regarded not
Their words and smote and slaughtered till the world
Shone with their blood, but when Asfandiyár
Had heard the Turkmans' cries he granted quarter
For life and limb. That elephantine hero,
That princely scion of the royal race,
Made proclamation to his glorious host:—
"Íránian nobles! spare the men of Chín.
Now that our enemies have been o'erthrown
Restrain your hands from further massacre.
Give these dogs quarter, for they have enough
V. 1539 Of anguish, scorn, and strait, make no more prisoners,
Put none in bonds, and let all bloodshed cease;

Charge not, nor trample on the slain. Go round
And reckon up the wounded. By Zarír's soul,
Make no more prisoners, and tarry not
For long upon your battle-steeds."
The troops,
On hearing what their leader said to them,
Gave themselves up to tendering the wounded.
They went back to their camp, beat kettledrums,
Because they had returned victorious,
And all that night slept not for joy, for Rustam
Himself might own to such a victory.
When night had passed away, and blood still ran
On wilderness and waste, the famous Kaian,
Escorted by the captains of the host,
Went forth to look upon the battlefield.
He wandered midst the slaughtered, shedding tears
O'er any known to him, but when he saw
His brother's corpse flung vilely on the field
He rent the royal raiment that he wore
And, lighting from his glossy steed Shúlak,
Clutched at his beard with both his hands, and cried:—
"Prince of the warriors of Balkh! by thee
My whole life hath been turned to bitterness.
Alack! O gracious form! O chief! O prince!
O warlike cavalier! O chosen hero—
My column and the curtain of the realm,
The Kaian lustre and the army's crown!"
He came near, raised the body from the dust,
And with his own hands wiped the dead man's face;
Then placed the body on a golden bier:
Zarír, thou wouldst have said, had ne'er been born.
The Íránian nobles and his own young kinsmen
He laid upon their biers, and gave command
To count the slain and carry off the wounded.
They searched the battlefield, the plains, and mountains,

V. 1540 The waste and ways. Of soldiers of Irán
Were thirty thousand slain; of men of name
Eleven hundred and three score and six;
One thousand and two score of name were wounded,
And 'scaped the trampling of the elephants.
A hundred thousand of the enemy
Were slain, eight hundred of them chiefs and nobles;
The wounded were three thousand and ten score.
Shun, if thou canst, such ill scenes evermore.

§ 20

How Gushtásp returned to Balkh

The famous Kaian, the triumphant Sháh,
Went from the battlefield toward his throne,
And bade Nastúr: "Tomorrow at the dawn
Conduct the army toward our glorious realm."
That chosen chieftain had the tymbals sounded
At daybreak, and the army packed the baggage.
They turned back to the country of Írán,
Stout-hearted and prepared to fight again.
They passed by no one either killed or wounded,
But bore the wounded to Írán and gave them
To skilful leeches. Now on his return
The monarch of the world bestowed Humái,
His glorious daughter, on his eldest son,[1]
And gave illustrious Nastúr the host,
According to the usage of the Persians,
Gave him ten thousand of that noble race,
World-questing horsemen, wielders of the lance,
Gave him command, and said: "O gallant spearman!
Go forth against the monarch of the Turkmans,
Pass through Áyás and through Khallukh, and slay
All that thou takest to avenge thy sire."

[1] *I.e.* Asfandiyár. *Cf.* p. 22.

The Sháh supplied whate'er Nastúr required, V. 1541
Not taking either count or reckoning,
And thereupon Nastúr led forth the host,
While Sháh Gushtásp sat on his throne and state,
And, placing on his head the Kaian crown,
Gave audience unto all the host. He opened
His treasury and decked the troops with wealth,
Gave cities to the chieftains, sovereignties
And dignities to those deserving them;
He passed none over, gave to each his due,
And after that dismissed them to their homes.
Then mounting on his throne for secret conclave,
And sitting on the seat of king of kings,
He bade inaugurate a Fane of Fire,
And use for fuel Indian aloe-wood.
They made the floor thereof pure gold throughout;
The dust was ambergris, the fuel aloe.
He fashioned all by rules of art, he called
The place "The Mansion of Gushtásp," and made
Jámásp its archmage. To his governors
He wrote: "The Lord hath not abandoned us,
For He hath turned our night's gross murk to day,
And given us conquest to our full content.
Arjásp was shamed, we triumphed. Who can know
To do this save the Maker of the world?
On hearing of the victory of your Sháh
Present your tribute to the priests of Fire."
When Cæsar, King of Rúm, received the news:—
"The Sháh hath conquered and Arjásp is worsted,"
He sent an embassy with precious gifts
Of slave-boys and of steeds caparisoned;
The king of Barbaristán and kings of Hind
Sent tribute too as did the kings of Sind.

§ 21

How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár to all the Provinces, and how the Folk received from him the good Religion

One day the illustrious and fair-fortuned hero,
When seated on the glorious Kaian throne,
Gave audience to the elect of all his realm,
The magnates, and the princes of birth royal.
Asfandiyár, the hero, came before
The presence, ox-head mace in hand and wearing
A Kaian casque above that shining moon,
His face. He stood before the presence, slave-like,
With head depressed and folded arms. Gushtásp
Saw and esteemed his face o'er life and world,
And smiling said: "O brave Asfandiyár!
Dost thou not long for fight?"
That gallant swordsman
Replied: "'Tis thine to bid because thou hast
The kingship and the world."
The famous Kaian
Gave him a golden crown, unlocked for him
The treasures, and committed to his charge
The conduct of Írán, because he had
The might of paladins, gave standard, wealth,
And host, and said: "Thy season for the throne
Is not yet. Mount thy saddle and convert
All nations to the Faith."
The Sháh's son went—
A hero-slaying swordsman—with his host
To all the nations. Over Rúm he passed,
And Hindústán, passed ocean and the Gloom,
And published the evangel by command
Of God, the All-provider. When folk learned
About the good Faith they received its rites,
Adorned themselves therewith, and sought instruction.

They burned the idols on their thrones, they kindled
The Fire in stead thereof, and all dispatched
This letter to the Sháh: "We have accepted
The Faith delivered by Asfandiyár,
And donned the girdle.[1] He hath ordered all.
Thou shouldst not now ask tribute of us, we
Have been converted and profess the Faith.
Send us the Zandavasta of Zarduhsht."

When he had read the letter of the kings
He sat upon his throne and called his peers.
He sent the Zandavasta to each clime,
To every man of name and every chief,
And ordered that the famous paladin
Should go to all four quarters of the world.
Now no one, wheresoe'er that prince appeared
Dared to go forth to meet him in the fight,
But all folk placed themselves at his command,
While evil-doers vanished utterly.
Asfandiyár, when all had recognised
His sire, loosed from his loins the golden girdle,
Sat like a monarch on the royal seat,
And for a season rested with his host,
But called to him his brother Farshídward
And, having summoned troops and warriors,
Bestowed on him dínárs and drachms in plenty,
Gave Khurásán to him and so dismissed him.
Now when a while had passed, and when the world
Had grown all pure and convert to the Faith,
Asfandiyár thus advertised his sire, V. 1544
And said: "Illustrious and victorious Sháh!
By God's Grace I have purged the world, and spread
The shadow of the eagle through the climes;
Moreover men no longer fear each other,
And no one is in lack of gold and silver.
The world hath grown as bright as Paradise

[1] See p. 16.

And populous, and all the fields are tilled;
Our cavaliers have made it all their own,
The husbandmen are at their husbandry."
The world wagged on awhile with matters thus,
And evil was no longer obvious.

§ 22

How Gurazm spake Evil of Asfandiyár

Mine author saith that when the Sháh bestowed
A royal crown upon Asfandiyár
There was a certain noble hight Gurazm,
A famous war-worn warrior, who cherished
A secret enmity against the prince.
I know not why it was, but I have heard
That this man was a kinsman of Gushtásp's,
And always ill-disposed toward his son,[1]
And, when that prince's fame was noised abroad,
Was wont to slander and belittle him.
Once at the dawn of day the famous Sháh,
While sitting in the banquet-hall at ease,
Gave audience to the chosen of his host,
The magnates, kings, and others of high birth.
V. 1545 Gurazm sat, his visage passion-pale
And heart all black with hate, before the Sháh,
The glorious one. Now mark the villain's conduct
What time the converse turned upon the prince,
For thereupon he wrung his hands, and cried:—
"A wicked son is like an enemy,
And, being such, should win advancement never.
An archimage, a holy man, hath told us:—
'A puissant son, if he becometh great,
Will alter for the worse his sire's estate;
A slave that is disloyal to his lord
Should be beheaded as his just reward.'"

[1] *Cf.* p 12.

Gushtásp asked what the riddler meant, and said:—
"What is this riddle? Who doth know the answer?"
The slanderous Kaian said: "'Twere indiscreet
To tell it now."
The great king cleared the hall,
And said to that deceiver: "Come to me,
Reveal the whole to me and what my son,
That man of serpent faith, concealeth from me."
Gurazm, the ill-disposed, made answer thus:—
"To do the right thing is the part of wisdom.
The Sháh hath satisfied mine every wish,
And I must keep no secrets from the Sháh.
I will not keep my counsel back from him,
E'en though it proveth unacceptable,
I will in no wise keep it from my lord,
Though he should let me never speak again,
Because for me to speak, although he hear not,
Is better than to hide from him the secret.
Know then, O world-lord! that Asfandiyár
Is clearly bent on battle, troops have flocked
In multitudes, and all men turned, to him.
His purpose is to put thee into bonds; V. 1546
He cannot bear that thou shouldst be the Sháh,
And, when he hath laid hands on thee and bound thee,
Will make the whole world subject to himself.
Thou knowest that Asfandiyár is one
That hath no peer in battle, and when he
Hath coiled his lasso up the sun itself
Will not dare meet him. I have told thee truly
What I have heard; so now be well-advised;
To counsel and take action are for thee."
Now when Gurazm spake thus before the Sháh
That famous warrior was all astound,
And said: "Whoever saw a thing so monstrous?"
In dudgeon he began to hate his son;

He quaffed no wine withal, forwent his pleasures,
Refused the feast, and heaved deep, chilling sighs;
He could not sleep for thinking all that night,
Possessed by wrath against Asfandiyár.
As soon as dawn breathed from the mountain-tops,
And starlight disappeared, he called to him
Jámásp, that man of much experience,
His minister in chief, and said: "Approach
Asfandiyár, call him forthwith, conduct him
To me, and say: 'A great affair is toward,
And therefore come, O leader of the realm!
Thy presence is required, and for my part,
When thou art absent, nothing prospereth.'"
He wrote an urgent letter in these words:—
"O noble, glorious Asfandiyár!
I have dispatched the old Jámásp to thee,
Who can remember to have seen Luhrásp.
When thou beholdest him gird up thy loins,
And come with him upon swift-footed steeds.
If thou art lying down spring to thy feet,
And if thou shalt be standing tarry not."
Charged with the letter of the Sháh in haste
That wise man crossed the hills and trod the waste.

§ 23

How Jámásp came to Asfandiyár

V. 1547 Asfandiyár was in the desert hunting
When some one shouted that the Sháh had sent
Jámásp. He mused and laughed uneasily.
He had four noble sons, all fair of face
And doughty cavaliers, the eldest hight
Bahman,[1] the second Mihr-i-Núsh, the third

[1] The future Sháh.

Ázar Afrúz—a wary warrior—
The youngest Núsh Ázar; 'twas he that built
The Fane of Fire. Bahman said to his father,
That king of earth: "May thy head flourish ever!
My lord was laughing with a hollow laugh,
I know not why."
Asfandiyár replied:—
"My son! one cometh to me from the Sháh,
Who is displeased with me and hath some grudge
Against his slave."
The noble youth said: "Why?
What hast thou done against our sovereign lord?"
Asfandiyár made answer: "O my son!
I know of no offence against my father,
Unless it is that I have taught the Faith,
Have lighted sacred Fires throughout the world,
And purified it with my trenchant sword.
What can have made the Sháh's heart wroth with me?
In sooth the Dív must have seduced his heart,
For he is mad enough to wish to bind me!"
Now while Asfandiyár was thus engaged
The dust of the advancing troops appeared.
He saw it from the mountain-top afar
And, knowing that the messenger had come,
Went forth at once to meet him. When they spied V. 1548
Each other on the way they both alighted
Down from their prancing steeds, and warrior
And elder fared afoot. The glorious
Asfandiyár inquired: "How is the Sháh,
That hero-king?"
The sage Jámásp made answer:—
"He is both well and happy."
Then he kissed
The prince upon the head and gave the letter,
Informing him with frankness of the case,
And saying: "The Dív hath led the Sháh astray."

Asfandiyár said to that man of wisdom :—
"What seemeth to thee best for me herein?
If I set out with thee to go to court
My father will entreat me scurvily,
And if I go not with his officer
I shall no longer be a loyal liege.
Devise some remedy, thou ancient sage!
I may not rest in this bewilderment."
The sage replied: "O prince of paladins,
So young in body and so old in knowledge!
Thou knowest that the best love of a son
Is not so tender as a father's wrath.
Thou must set forward, that is mine advice,
For, whatsoe'er he doth, he is the Sháh."
This they agreed upon and went their ways,
The messenger and the exalted prince,
Who made Jámásp alight when they had reached
A goodly seat whereafter both drank wine.
Next day Asfandiyár sat on his throne
And, when he had brought forth the muster-roll,
Entrusted all the army to Bahman,
And setting forth with certain warriors,
His girdle girt, his crown upon his head,
Back to the court-gate of the great Sháh sped.

§ 24

How Gushtásp imprisoned Asfandiyár

The Sháh on hearing that Asfandiyár,
His son, had come, crowned with the Kaian casque,
V. 1549 Called to his presence high and low alike,
And spread the Zandavasta out before him.
He seated all the archmages and then summoned
The royal swordsman. With extended hands
The hero came, approached the presence, did

Obeisance, and stood slave-like with bent head
And folded arms. The king of kings addressed
The archmages, chiefs, and leaders of the host.
"Suppose," he said, "that any noble man
Shall rear a son with pains, provide him nurses
While needing suckling, crown him with a crown
Of gold, and guard him till he waxeth lusty,
Teach him till he becometh venturesome,
And undergo no little pains to make
That son a cavalier expert in war;
Suppose that noble youth attaineth manhood,
And is as bright as new gold from the mine,
That all that seek for favours ask of him,
And that he is the theme of every speaker,
Shall prove a good, victorious cavalier,
And foremost when folk meet for fight or feast,
Shall place the whole world underneath his feet,
And well deserve the royal diadem,
Shall, when victorious, spread forth limbs and boughs,
The while his father, then grown old, shall sit
Within his palace, keeping but one crown
And throne, and stay at home to mind the goods;
Suppose that son with world and flag and host
Shall grudge his sire e'en one gold crown and throne!
Hath any of you heard of such a thing
As that the son for that one throne and crown
Should purpose to cut off his father's head,
Should make an insurrection with his troops,
And whet his heart to fight against his sire?
What say ye, ancient men? What is the course
The father well may take with such a son?"
The chosen chiefs replied: "O monarch! never V. 1550
Have we to take account of such a case—
The father living and the son attempting
His throne! Call nothing more preposterous."
The world-lord answered: "Here there is a son

Who hath designs upon his father's life.
Him will I bind as well he hath deserved,
And on such wise as none hath bound another."
The son exclaimed: "O Sháh of noble race!
How ever could I hanker for thy death?
I do not know, O Sháh! of any wrong
That I have done to thee at any time.
By thine own life, imperious sovereign!
When ever did I harbour such designs?
But thou art Sháh; 'tis thine to order; I
Am thine, and bonds and prison rest with thee.
Bid them to bind or slay me as thou wilt;
My heart is honest and my mind submiss."
The king of kings exclaimed: "Bring hither chains;
Bind him, and falter not."
They brought in blacksmiths,
Yoke, chains, and heavy shackles, and then bound him,
Both hand and foot, before the king, the world-lord,
So straitly fettered him that all beholding
Wept bitterly. They brought an elephant,
Like indigo, and set Asfandiyár
Thereon. They bare him from his glorious sire,
With dust upon his head, to Gumbadán,
That stronghold on the mountain-top, conveyed
V. 1551 Four iron columns thither and there bound him
With rigour. They dethroned him; fortune changed.
The Sháh set many to keep guard upon him,
While seared and sore that gallant paladin
Lived for a space in straitest custody,
And ever and anon wept bitterly.

§ 25

How Gushtásp went to Sístán and how Arjásp arrayed his Host the second Time

Thus many days passed o'er Asfandiyár,
The while Gushtásp departed to Sístán
To make the Zandavasta current there,
And archimages testify thereto.
As soon as the illustrious Sháh arrived
There went to him the captain of the host,
The ruler of Nímrúz, whose name was Rustam,
A veteran cavalier, another Sám,
In company with agèd Zál, his sire,
With mighty men and those about the court.
They carried minstrels in their train withal,
And posted them with harps along the route.
Thus went they forth to greet the glorious Sháh
Right jubilantly, and it liked him well.
They brought him to Zábul to be their guest,
And stood before his presence as his slaves.
From him they learned about the Zandavasta,
Adopted it, and lighted sacred Fires.
Two years passed thus in hospitality;
Gushtásp kept feasting with the son of Zál.
Throughout the world, wherever there were kings
That heard about the doings of the Sháh:—
"He hath confined Asfandiyár in bonds,
Hath galled his elephantine form with iron,
And gone to preach the gospel in Zábul
To blast the idols with the Cult of Fire,"
They one and all refused to do his bidding,
And brake with him completely.

When Bahman V 1552
Heard that his sire was prisoned by the Sháh,
And for no fault, Asfandiyár's brave meiny

Came grieving to him with the Kaian princes,
Fulfilled with tribulation and dismay,
And raised his spirits with their minstrelsy,
Not letting him be lonesome in his prison.
Then tidings reached the king of Chín: "The Moon
Hath fallen from the Archer into ambush.
The Sháh, wroth with Asfandiyár, dispatched him,
Dishonoured, to the hold of Gumbadán,
And started for Zábulistán himself
From Balkh to stay with Rustam, son of Zál,
Whose guest he now is at Zábul, and thus
Two years have passed away. Of all the Íránians
And soldiery none, saving Sháh Luhrásp
With seven hundred devotees of Fire,
Is left at Balkh."

The monarch of Chigil
Called out his chiefs and heartened them to fall
Upon Luhrásp. "Know ye," 'twas thus he spake,
"That Sháh Gushtásp hath marched with all his host
Sístán-ward and abideth at Zábul:
No cavalier is left in all his realm.
Now is the time for us to seek revenge;
We must take order and prepare ourselves.
His son, illustrious Asfandiyár,
v. 1553 Is fast in heavy bonds. What man is there—
A searcher out of mysteries—prepared
To undertake the long and arduous road,
And, choosing bypaths, shunning public ways,
Obtain full tidings of the Íránians?"

There was a sorcerer, by name Sitúh,
A rover and explorer. "I," he said,
"Am one of tact and used to travelling.
What shall I do? Command me as thou wilt."

The king of Chín said: "Go thou to Írán,
Take heedful note, and roam through all the land."

The spy set forth upon his way and went

To chosen Balkh, the dwelling of the Sháh.
He saw not Sháh Gushtásp therein but found
Luhrásp, the devotee; he thereupon
Returned and, having done the Khán obeisance,
Told all. Arjásp grew joyful at the news,
And freed from longsome care, called all his chiefs,
And said: "Go, muster our disbanded host."
The chieftains of the army went their way
To mountains, desert-tracts, and pasture-lands,
And summoned to the king his soldiery,
The chosen horsemen of his sovereignty.

§ 26

The Words of Dakíkí being ended, Firdausí resumeth, praising Sháh Mahmúd and criticising Dakíkí

Now, man of eloquence and shrewd! again V. 1554
Take up the story in thy proper strain.
Dakíkí to this point had brought his lay
When fortune put a period to his day,
And, having dealt with him right grievously,
Bare off his spirit from this Hostelry,
So that these fleeting words of his are all
That now remain as his memorial.
He stayed not to complete the tale, he penned
It not from its beginning to its end.
Now give attention to Firdausí's part,
Whose words are chaste and pleasing to the heart.
What time within my hands this story fell
My hook was angling for the fish as well.[1]
I scanned the verses and esteemed them weak;
In many couplets there was much to seek,
But here have I transcribed them that the king
May know how inartistic verses ring.

[1] "Lorsque ce livre tomba entre mes mains, il me manquait un mois pour avoir soixante *ans*" (Mohl).

Both jewellers have each a gem to sell;
Now let the Sháh give ear to what they tell.
If thou canst speak but in Dakíkí's vein
Speak not at all and spare thy nature pain,
And, mindful of the bondage and the toil,
Ne'er dig in mines whence thou wilt win no spoil.
Unless thou art as fluent as a stream
Lay not thy hand upon this royal theme;
'Tis better that all food should be abjured
Than that thou shouldest spread a tasteless board.
A book fulfilled with legends met my view,
Its words possessed of character and true,
Its stories very ancient and in prose;
The wits had never thought of rhyming those,
No one had thought of linking line to line—
A fact that struck this gladsome heart of mine.
Two thousand years had passed the story o'er,
Two thousand years and haply countless more,
v. 1555 And I began his praises to rehearse,
Who showed the way to turn it into verse.
Although he only rhymed the veriest mite—
One thousand couplets full of feast and fight—
He was my pioneer and he alone,
In that he set the Sháhs upon the throne.
From nobles honour and emolument
Had he; his trouble was his own ill bent.
To sing the praises of the kings was his,
And crown the princes with his eulogies,
But still he uttered but a feeble strain,
And eld through him could ne'er grow young again.
I took the story for a lucky-sign;
For many a year the travail was all mine,
Yet found I no great patron of mine own
To shed a lustre on the royal throne—
A matter of much discontent to me,
But silence was the only remedy.

I had before mine eyes a garth of trees,
A dwelling-place for such as live at ease,
But not a portal opened on that same,
Save only what was royal but in name.
Fit for my garden must the portal be;
One that was narrow would not do for me.
For twenty years I kept my work till I
Should find one worthy of my treasury,
Until Mahmúd, the master of the earth,
Endowed with Grace and bounty, he whose worth
Both Moon and Saturn praise (Abú'l Kásim!
The crown of king of kings is fresh through him),
Till he, the world-lord, came and sat him here
Upon the throne of justice. Find his peer.
His name hath crowned my work, his Grace divine
Like ivory made this darkened heart of mine.
He passeth all the Sháhs that went before,
And counteth not as ill the breath of yore.
Dínárs to him are dust, and him dismay
Betideth not in festival and fray,
For he from one that seeketh doth withhold V. 1556
Not sword in war-time nor at feast-time gold.
May his throne flourish ever and still be
The rapture of the spirits of the free!

§ 27

How the Host of Arjásp marched to Balkh and how Luhrásp was slain

Now will we tell the warfare of Arjásp
Afresh and by our insight clear the garth
Of weeds:—Arjásp had tidings that the Sháh
Had set forth with his host toward Sístán,
And gave commandment that Kuhram, the swordsman,
Should lead the troops before him, for Kuhram

Was eldest-born to him and raised his head
O'er radiant Sol. Arjásp said: "Choose thee horsemen
War-worthy from the host and haste to Balkh,
Which hath embittered and o'ercast our days.
Those of our foes, those worshippers of Fire,
Those Áhrimans, whom thou shalt take, behead,
Burn up their homes, and turn their day to night.
Smoke from the palace of Gushtásp must rise
And lick the azure sky. If thou shalt find
Asfandiyár with fetters on his feet
Put thou an end to him; part instantly
His body and his head, and make the world
Re-echo with thy name. Throughout Írán
The cities have been left at thy disposal,
The foe—the scabbard—left for thee—the sword.
I shall not loiter in Khallukh but follow
Apace, recall our scattered troops, and lavish
My hoarded wealth."
Kuhram replied: "Thy bidding
Will I perform and pledge my life thereto."
When from its waist the sun drew forth its sword,
And darksome night drew back its skirts therefrom,
v. 1557 There gathered five score thousand of Khallukh
About Arjásp—choice cavaliers and swordsmen.
Kuhram led forth the army to Írán,
While earth grew like an Ethiop's face for gloom,
And coming to those marches spread his hands,
And overthrew whome'er he saw. The Turkmans
Had set their hearts on vengeance, were prepared
To pillage and to slay, and as they drew
Anear to Balkh spake much and bitterly.
Luhrásp heard of Kuhram, was grieved, and fared
With travail. Thus he prayed: "Omnipotent!
Thou art supreme o'er time's vicissitudes,
Thou art almighty, wise, and merciful,
The Master of the shining sun. Preserve

My Faith, my person, and mine energies,
My watchful heart and intellect withal,
So that I may not perish in their hands
A thrall, or in dismay cry out for succour."
There was no chief or mace-armed cavalier
At Balkh. A thousand came from the bázár,
But all unfit for war. Luhrásp assumed
His mail what time the Turkman host drew nigh,
He left the oratory for the field,
And donned the Kaian casque. Old as he was
He roared out like a maddened elephant,
Bare in his hand an ox-head mace, and dashed
To earth therewith a warlock of the chiefs
At every charge till all folks said: "This noble
Is dealing buffets like Asfandiyár!"
Where'er he spurred he mingled dust with blood;
The galls were split of all that heard his voice. V. 1558
Kuhram said to the Turkmans: "Fight no longer
Against him single-handed, strive amain,
Surround him, and roar out like mighty lions."
Arose the crash of bills, the shouts of horsemen
All eager to monopolize the fray,
Whereat Luhrásp, abandoned midst the foe,
Invoked in his resourcelessness God's name,
For old age and the burning of the sun
Oppressed him, and his fortune went to sleep.
That veteran, that worshipper of God,
Fell headlong, smitten by the Turkmans' arrows;
The head that wore the crown came to the dust.
Then many cavaliers surrounded him;
They hacked his Kaian harness into bits,
His body piecemeal with their scimitars.
They took him for a youthful cavalier,
But when they raised the helmet from his head,
And saw his ruddy cheek, his camphor hair,
And heavenly visage livid now with iron,

All marvelled at the miracle, exclaiming:—
"To think that one so old should sword it thus!
Had but Asfandiyár himself come hither
Our host would have been busy on this plain!
Why have we come here with such puny powers,
For we have come but as a flock to pasture?"
Then to his comrades said Kuhram: "The toil
And travail in the fight was due to this,
That he who wore the crown was Sháh Luhrásp—
Sire of Gushtásp, the master of the world.
As king of kings he had the Grace of God,
And passed his life in feasting and the field,
But in old age became a devotee,
And plucked his heart away from crown and throne.
Now will Gushtásp, whose throne is thus bereaved,
Quail for the diadem of king of kings."

V. 1559 The host reached Balkh, the world was wrecked with sack
And slaughter. Making for the Fane of Fire,[1]
For hall and palace decked with gold, they gave
Them and the Zandavasta to the flames.
The fane had eighty priests, God's worshippers,
And all before the Fire the Turkmans slew,
And swept that cult away. The Fire, that erst
Zarduhsht had litten, of their blood did die;
Who slew that priest himself I know not I.[2]

[1] Núsh Ázar. See p. 93.

[2] Reading with P. *Cf.* p. 15. Zarduhsht is said to have been seventy-seven at the time of his death on the day Khurshíd of the month Ardíbihisht, *i.e.* on May 1, 583 B.C. WPT, v. 165, and xxx.

§ 28

How Gushtásp heard of the Slaying of Luhrásp and led his Army toward Balkh

Gushtásp possessed a wife—a prudent dame,
Wise, understanding, and high-minded. She,
When she had dight herself in Turkman guise,
And mounted on a fleet steed from the stable,
Departed from the palace and set forth,
Aghast at what had happened, toward Sístán.
She tarried not to sleep at any stage,
And ran a two-days' journey into one.
Thus she continued till she reached Gushtásp
In grief with tidings of Luhrásp, and said:—
"Why hast thou tarried this long while and why
Didst thou depart from famous Balkh at all?
An army from Túrán hath reached the city,
And turned its people's day to bitterness.
All Balkh is full of sack and massacre;
Thou must return forthwith."
Gushtásp replied:—
"What grief is this? Why mourn a single raid?
When I march forth all Chín will not withstand me."
She answered thus: "Talk not so foolishly;
Things of great charge confront us now. The Turkmans
Have slain at Balkh Luhrásp, the king of kings, V. 1560
And turned our days to gloom and bitterness,
Proceeded thence to Núsh Ázar and there
Beheaded both Zarduhsht and all the archmages,
Quenched in whose blood the radiant Fire expired,
An outrage not to be accounted lightly.
Thereafter they led off thy daughters captive;
Take not so grave a matter easily.
If there were nothing but Humái's dishonour
'Twould stir a sage's heart, and furthermore

There is thine other daughter, Bih Áfríd,
Till then kept hidden from a breath of air,
Whom they have taken from her golden throne,
And plundered of her bracelets and her crown."
Gushtásp, on hearing this, was filled with anguish,
And showered from his eyelids gall of blood.
He called to him the great men of Írán,
And told before them all that he had heard,
Called for a scribe, put by his crown, avoided
His throne, sent cavaliers to every side
With letters to his paladins, and said:—
"Wash not your heads from soil, distinguish not
'Twixt up and down, and come ye all to court
In armour and with mace and Rúman casque."
They bore the letter to each paladin
That was a mighty man within the realm,
And, when from all the Sháh's realm there had gathered
The troops and valiant horsemen of his host,
He gave out pay and, marching from Sístán,
Proceeded on his road toward famous Balkh.
V. 1561 Arjásp, on hearing that Gushtásp, the world-lord,
Had come with army and with crown and throne,
Assembled from Túran so vast a host
That sun and moon were darkened with the dust.
From sea to sea that host extended, none
Could see the surface of the waste for troops,
And when the dust-clouds of the armies met
The earth grew dark and heaven azure-dim.
The opposing hosts drew up for battle, armed
With spears and swords and double-headed darts.
Upon the Íránian right prince Farshídward
Was posted—one that challenged rending lions;
Upon the left the warrior Nastúr,
Son of Zarír—the chief; while at the centre
Gushtásp, the world-lord, overlooked his powers.
Kundur was stationed on the Turkman right

With infantry behind him with the baggage;
Kuhram, the swordsman, on the left; Arjásp
Was at the centre with the main. The din
Of trump and drum ascended from both hosts,
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony.
Thou wouldst have said: "The heavens flee away,
And earth is cracking underneath the weight!"
The heights of flint bowed at the chargers' neighs
And crash of axes; all the waste was full
Of heads laid trunkless in the dust and battered
By massive maces; swords flashed; arrows rained;
The heroes shouted in the fray; the stars
Sought flight; the troops grew prodigal of life;
Shafts fell around like hail; the wilderness
Was all a-groan with wounded trampled down
In multitudes beneath the horses' hoofs, V. 1562
The lion's maw their shroud and blood their bier;
The trunks were headless and the heads were trunkless;
The horsemen were like elephants a-foam,
And fathers had no time to mourn for sons.
Thus for three days and nights the heavens revolved,
All onslaught and reprisal, war and strife;
The moon's face reddened with the splash of blood,
Such was that battlefield! Then lion-like
Strove Farshídward against Kuhram, the swordsman,
And was so sorely stricken that the life
Passed from his lion-body. Multitudes
Were slain amidst the Íránians, the land
Was wet with warriors' blood. Now Sháh Gushtásp
Had eight and thirty sons, bold mountaineers
And horsemen on the plain; all were laid low;
The Sháh's good fortune darkened at a blow.

§ 29

How Gushtásp was put to Flight by Arjásp

At length Gushtásp, when fortune had become
So ruggèd, showed his back. The enemy
Pursued him for two stages and were instant
To take him captive. In the way before him
There lay a mountain full of pasturage,
Wherein there were a mill-stream and a mill,
And having in its whole circumference
But one sole path: thereof Gushtásp was ware,
V. 1563 And heart-seared scaled the mountain with his troops,
But left a force upon the road behind him.
Arjásp, arriving with his host, went round
The mountain, but discovered not the path.
On all sides they laid leaguer. When the Sháh,
That noble man, was left without resource
His troops lit fires upon the mountain-top,
And burnt thorns on the flints;[1] each leader slew
A steed and pondered on his helpless plight.
The proud Sháh, compassed thus, was sore dismayed,
And called to him Jámásp, the veteran,
Held talk at large about the stars, and said:—
"Declare whate'er thou knowest of heaven's will,
And wait not to be asked. Thou needs must tell
Who is to succour me in this distress."
Jámásp, on hearing, rose and said: "Just king!
If now the Sháh will hearken to my words,
Confiding in the process of the stars,
I will discover to him what I know
If he will recognise my truthfulness."
The Sháh replied: "Whatever secret thing

[1] There is a play of words in the original between khár (thorns) and khárá (flint).

Thou knowest, tell it to me and be brief;
My head may touch the clouds, but heaven's changes
I cannot 'scape."
Jámásp replied: "O Sháh!
List to my words and let me have thine ear.
Asfandiyár, the glorious, by thy bidding
Is wearing chains in this his evil day.
If he were set at liberty the Sháh
Would not be left on this high mountain-top."
Gushtásp replied: "O trusty counsellor,
Who art a man of truth and of resource!
When in my wrath I put him into bonds— V. 1564
The heavy chains by blacksmiths riveted—
I was remorseful all the time and sought
With aching heart to find a remedy
For having bound him in the audience,
Though he was guiltless, at his foeman's charge.
I, if I see him on this day of battle,
Will give him crown and throne and signet-ring;
But who will dare to go to that beloved one,
And free the innocent?"
Jámásp said: "I
Will go, O king! because the case is urgent."
Gushtásp rejoined: "O thou fulfilled with wisdom!
Thy virtues are as music to my soul;
Depart forthwith by night, greet him at large
From me, and say: 'The man that did the wrong
Hath left this world with anguish in his heart,
While I, who acted as that little-wit
Desired, repent that I have done amiss,
And will prepare a goodly recompense.
Now if thou wilt put vengeance from thy heart,
And shalt bring down our foemen's heads to dust,
For else the realm and throne have reached their end,
And foemen will uproot the Kaian Tree,
On thee, if thou shalt come, I will bestow

Crown, treasure, and whate'er I have amassed
By toil, and will devote myself to prayer
Thenceforth as did my sire Luhrásp, the world-lord.
God is my witness to these words of mine,
As is Jámásp who is my counsellor.'"
Jámásp attired him in Túránian mail,
And came down from the heights without a guide.
v. 1565 Whenas that man of wisdom reached the plain
He passed the army of the foe by night;
To Gumbadán, the hold, he made his way,
Preserved from ill hands and his evil day.

§ 30

How Jámásp visited Asfandiyár

One of Asfandiyár's exalted sons,
Whom he named Núsh Ázar, was on the ramparts
To see who came forth from the Íránian host,
And advertise his sire. At sight of any
He used to hurry from the walls forthwith.
When he perceived Jámásp upon his way,
And on his head a fair Túránian helm,
He said: "A horseman from Túrán hath come:
I will descend and tell Asfandiyár."
He hastened downward from the castle-rampart,
And spake on this wise: "Noble paladin!
I see a horseman coming in the distance,
And on his head there is a sable helm.
I will go see if he is from Gushtásp,
Or from Arjásp, a foe. If he shall prove
A Turkman then will I cut off his head,
And fling his feckless body in the dust."
Said great Asfandiyár: "The traveller,
Since he is unattended, is but lowly.
In sooth he is a warrior from Írán,

And cometh unto us with some dispatch;
My sire hath put that helmet on his head
In apprehension of our valiant foes."
When Núsh Ázar, the paladin, had heard
He went in haste upon the castle-rampart;
He recognised Jámásp when close at hand, V. 1566
Descended, and informed his glorious sire:—
"Jámásp is at the gate."
He had it opened,
The sage came in, did reverence and, coming
Before Asfandiyár, repeated to him
The message of Gushtásp, his sire, in full.
Asfandiyár replied: "O Memory
Of this world's heroes, wise, courageous,
And of exalted rank! why bow to one
In chains, for one in irons, hand and foot,
Is not of man's seed, but an Áhriman?
Thou givest me greeting from the king of kings,
So that thy heart is not informed by knowledge,
Since it is for Arjásp to greet me now,
Because the plain is all Íránians' blood.
They bound me innocent. Gurazm forsooth
Must be the Sháh's son, I be fettered thus!
Mine irons are my witnesses to God
That I have had injustice from Gushtásp,
And that Gurazm's words pleased Áhriman.
Such was the recompense of all my toil,
While for my treasury 'tis stocked with irons.
Oh! may I ne'er forget this injury,
And stultify my wisdom through thy talk."
Jámásp replied: "O speaker of the truth,
World-taker, lion-thrower, bent on fame!
If thou art thus heart-wearied of thy sire
His throne is overturned; yet for the sake
Of pious Sháh Luhrásp, slain by the Turkmans
In battle, and of those God-fearing priests,

Who had the Zandavasta in their hands,
Of whom four score were slaughtered—archimages
And sages pure of heart, quenched in whose blood
The sacred Fire hath died within the fane—
Such ill deeds cannot be accounted lightly.
V. 1567 Possess thy heart with sorrow for thy grandsire,
Rise in thy wrath and let thy cheeks be pale,
For if thou art not stirred up to avenge him
Thou art not worshipful and well advised."
Asfandiyár made answer to him thus:—
"O famed, high-starred, heroic, and prevailing!
Reflect that for the old Luhrásp—that man
Of piety, the father of Gushtásp—
The son that sought erewhile his father's throne,
And his prerogative, will best seek vengeance."
Jámásp replied: "If thou wilt not avenge
Thy grandsire thou art void of principle.
The wise Humái and Bih Áfríd, whose faces
No breath of air had seen, are in Túrán
As prisoners, all misery and anguish,
And foot it wan of mien."
Asfandiyár
Thus answered: "Did Humái at any time
Remember me in my confinement here?
And, further, as for noble Bih Áfríd,
She never looked on me, as thou mightst say!
Why now should I distress myself for them?
No one from them hath ever come to me.
A father well may see to his own daughters,
A sire the better undertake for them."
Jámásp replied to him: "O paladin!
Thy sire, the world-lord, with his soul all gloom,
Is now upon a mountain with his chiefs,
With tearful eyes and unfed lips; the Turkmans
Beleaguer him; henceforth thou wilt not see
His head and crown. The Maker will condemn

Thy disregard of love and Faith. Thy brethren,
For thou hadst eight and thirty—Mountain-pards, V. 1568
And Lions of the plain—all couch in dust
And brick, because the foe let none escape."
Asfandiyár rejoined: "I used to have
Full many a noble brother, and while I
Lay bound they all made merry! No one thought
Of wretched me! If I take action now
What profit, seeing that the foe hath raised
The reek from them?"
Jámásp, on hearing this,
And noting how the captive's heart was seared,
Rose to his feet in sorrow and in anger,
With anxious heart and eyes fulfilled with tears,
And said to him: "O chief of paladins!
Although thy heart and mind are darkened thus,
What sayest thou of the case of Farshídward,
Who went so heavily on thine account?
Where'er he was, at fray or festival,
He was all pain and curses on Gurazm;
His body hath been slashed with scimitars,
Helm and cuirass are cloven, and his soul
Is breaking with his love for thee! Oh! pity
His weeping eyes."
When Farshídward was named V. 1569
Asfandiyár wept blood, his heart was grieved,
He cried: "O wretched, valiant warrior!
O lion-hearted hero, chieftain, prince!
I have been wounded by those wounds of thine,
And I have bathed my cheeks in my heart's blood."
When he became composed he asked Jámásp:—
"What was thy purpose in concealing this?
Give orders that some blacksmiths shall be brought,
And let them file the fetters from my feet."
Jámásp fetched blacksmiths, and they brought with them

Their heavy hammers and their files of steel.
They filed the rings, the rivets, and the chains,
And all the bridge-like fetters made in Rúm.
The bonds took long to file; the captive's heart,
Remiss no longer, grew impatient.
He said thus to a smith: "Thou awkward lout!
Thou bindest but thou canst not break the bonds!"
He drew his hands away, arose in dudgeon,
And, stretching out the chains to their full length,
Strained with his feet and struggled with his hands,
And brake in pieces fetter, ring, and chain.
The breaking of his bonds exhausted him,
The anguish overcame him and he swooned.
That reader of the stars who saw the marvel
Was full of praises of the noble prince.
Whenas the lusty hero had regained
His wits he ranged the bonds and chains before him,
And said: "These presents given by Gurazm
Have severed me from fight and festival."
V. 1570 With aching body galled and stiff with bondage
He went off to the bath. He then demanded
The raiment of a king and therewithal
The armour of a paladin, and bade:—
"Bring my fleet charger, helm, and scimitar."
Now when his eye fell on his steed he called
Upon the Giver of all good, and said:—
"If I did wrong I have been vexed with bonds,
But what hath this my prancing Barbary
Done to be starved? Go groom and feed him up."
He sent for smiths, the prowest in their trade,
Who came, repaired his arms, and hauberks made.

§ 31

How Asfandiyár saw his Brother Farshídward

Night came like vengeful Áhriman, the bells
Clanged at the gate, and Indian sword in hand V. 1571
Asfandiyár bestrode his royal steed.
He with Bahman and noble Núsh Ázar
Went forth on their long journey while Jámásp,
The minister of great Gushtásp, went first
As guide. Now when these warrior-cavaliers
Had come outside the walls, and reached the plain,
Asfandiyár, the chieftain, looked toward heaven,
And said: "O Judge whose words are true! Thou art
The Maker, the Almighty, and illumest
The spirit of Asfandiyár. If I
Prevail and make the world strait for Arjásp,
Take vengeance on him for Luhrásp, the Sháh,
And for the blood of all those blameless chiefs,
My very eyes—mine eight and thirty brothers,
Whose blood hath dyed the dust upon the plain—
I swear by God, the just Judge, to forego
Revenge upon my father for my bonds,
To build a hundred Fanes of Fire, and weed
The world of tyranny. None shall behold
A carpet 'neath my feet till I have built
A hundred hostels in the wilderness.
In parched wastes that no vulture traverseth,
And where no onager and other game
Set foot, will I have dug ten thousand wells,
And plant their mouths with trees. Out of my treasure
I will bestow a hundred thousand drachms
Upon the poor and every one that asketh.
I will convert the erring to the Faith,
And will lay low the heads of sorcerers,
While in God's presence will I stand and worship;

None ever shall behold me take mine ease."
He spake thus and urged on his battle-steed
Until he came to Farshídward, beheld him
Stretched on the dust in miserable case,
His prostrate form confounded by its wounds,
And, pouring from his eyes so many tears
As filled the wise physician with amazement,
V. 1572 Exclaimed: "O Lion, seeker of the fray!
From whom hath this disaster come upon thee?
On whom shall I avenge thee in the battle,
On Lion of the fray or Crocodile?"
Thus Farshídward replied: "O paladin!
It was Gushtásp that wounded me to death.
Could Turkmans, if he had not fettered thee,
Have wrought this scath and likewise overthrown
Luhrásp, the hoary-headed, and all Balkh?
None ever hath beheld or heard of ills
Such as Gurazm's words have brought upon us;
Yet murmur not, accept thy lot, and prove
A fruitful tree, for I shall pass away,
But needs must thou abide for evermore.
Remember me when I have gone, and glad
My spirit by thy bounty. So farewell,
Thou chief of paladins! For ever live,
And be of ardent soul."
He spake and wanned;
That noble Lion, Farshídward, was gone.
Asfandiyár clutched at his own cuirass,
Marred all the painted silk, and cried: "O Lord
Supreme and holy! lead me to take vengeance
For Farshídward, to send the dust-clouds flying
From stones and water, from Arjásp to set
The blood a-stream, and give Luhrásp's soul peace."
With heart all vengeance and with head distraught
He laid his brother's corpse upon the saddle,
Then mounted to the heights, his brother's body

Bound on the bay, and said: "What at this present
Can I achieve for thee, how raise thy charnel?
I have no gold, no silver, and no gems, V. 1573
No bricks, no water, none to build a wall,
Nor any tree where I may lay thee down,
O noble chief! to slumber in the shade."
He stripped his brother's armour off and used
His turban and his jerkin as a shroud,
And thence departing came where Sháh Gushtásp
Had fared so ill. He saw Íránians slain
In numbers that concealed the dust and stones,
And bitterly bewept those hapless ones
Whose fortunes were o'erthrown. There where the fight
Had been most fierce he saw Gurazm's pale face,
His steed o'erthrown beside him where he lay
O'erstrewn with dust, and thus Asfandiyár
Addressed the slain: "O fool and of ill fortune!
Mark what a wise man of Írán once said,
When giving utterance to his secret thoughts:—
'A foe that's wise is better than a friend
Albeit in both their wisdom we commend,
For wise men think within their powers nor fret
Their souls by seeking what they ne'er can get.'
Thou soughtest my position in Írán,
And broughtest this destruction on the world.
Thou hast deprived this kingdom of its lustre,
Hast practised artifice and uttered lies,
And all the blood poured out in this contention
Will be upon thee in the other world.",
He turned his head, still weeping, from the waste,
And came upon the main of Turkman troops.
He saw the host extending seven leagues,
And such that heaven was aghast thereat.
A trench had been constructed round about,
More than an arrow's flight in width. This ditch

He managed with a hundred shifts to cross,
And reined his steed toward the level ground.
The Turkman outpost of some eighty men
Were on their rounds about the battlefield.
V. 1574 They came upon him with disordered ranks,
Came challenging and shouting, and inquired:—
"O lion-man! what seekest thou by night
Upon the battlefield?"
He answered them:—
"All that ye care for on the battlefield
Are sleep and feast. When tidings reached Kuhram:—
'Asfandiyár hath made his passage through you,'
He said to me: 'Take thy sharp scimitar,
And bring the Day of Doom upon their souls.'"
Then, mindful of the battle with Gushtásp,
He drew his scimitar and laid about him,
O'erthrew full many of them on the road,
And thence departed toward the Sháh's abode.

§ 32

How Asfandiyár came to the Mountain to Gushtásp

Asfandiyár climbed that high, flinty mountain,
And did obeisance when he saw his father,
Who seared at heart, arose, kissed, and caressed
His son's face, saying: "I thank God, my boy!
That I have seen thee happy and still ardent.
Regard me not with anger and dislike,
And be not slow to take revenge. Gurazm,
Malignant miscreant that he was, obscured
My heart toward my son, and ill hath come
Upon him for his calumnies, since evil
Befalleth evil men for their ill deeds.
Now by the Ruler of the world I swear,
Who knoweth all things open and concealed,

That if I prosper and o'ercome the foe
I will bestow the realm, the crown, and throne
On thee, establish many a shrine, and give thee
My secret hoards."

Asfandiyár replied :—

"Let me find favour in the monarch's sight;
It will be treasure, throne, and crown to me
If he shall be content with me, his slave.
The monarch knoweth that when I beheld V. 1575
Upon the field the face of slain Gurazm
I shed tears o'er that slanderer and burned
To think what anguish he had caused the Sháh.
Our past mishaps are now but wind to me.
Hereafter when I draw my vengeful sword,
And set my face to quit this rocky height,
I will not leave Arjásp, Áyás, or Chín,
Kuhram, Khallukh, or country of Túrán."

The soldiers, hearing that Asfandiyár
Was freed from heavy bondage and ill-fortune,
Pressed on, troop after troop, upon the mountain
Before their chieftain, while the mighty men,
The alien, and akin bowed down to him.
Thus spake high-starred Asfandiyár: "Famed swordsmen!
Draw ye your watered blades, advance to vengeance,
And slay the foe."

The chieftains blessed him saying :—

"Thou art our crown and falchion of revenge!
We all will pledge our lives for thee and make
The sight of thee the rapture of our souls."

They spent the night in ordering the host,
And getting ready coat of mail and spear.
Gushtásp held further talk of fortune's ills
With glorious Asfandiyár and set
His eyes a-stream in telling of the blood
Of all those valiant youths that had been slain

Upon the battlefield, whose princely heads
Were now encircled by a crown of gore.
That very night the tidings reached Arjásp:—
"The son of Sháh Gushtásp hath come to him.
He hath slain many scouts upon the way,
And those that were not slaughtered showed their backs."
He was in dudgeon, called to him the magnates,
Held converse with Kuhram at large, and said:—
V. 1576 "Our thoughts were other of this war what time
The host set forth. I said: 'If we can catch
That dív still chained the world will issue scathless,
I shall obtain the Íránian throne, and all
Will offer me their homage everywhere.'
Now, since that dív-begotten hath broke loose,
We deal in grief and sighs. None of the Turkmans
Can match him in the fight, so let us march,
Still blithe and yet unworsted, to Túrán
While crown and throne are ours."
He bade to bring
The treasures and the steeds caparisoned—
The booty carried off from famous Balkh—
And charged Kuhram therewith. Arjásp possessed
Four sons, all younger than Kuhram, and these
Packed, and then loaded up a hundred camels,
Which went, each with a guide, by divers roads.
The king was full of terror and of haste,
He could not eat or take his ease or sleep.
There was among the troops a Turkman named
Gurgsár who came before the king, and said:—
"O monarch of the Turkmans and of Chín!
Fling not away thy glory for one man.
Yon host is smitten, beaten, and in flight,
Its fortune all astound, the Sháh himself
Is all consumed with grief, his sons are slain,
And who hath come except Asfandiyár

To help him? Yet thou break'st thy soldiers' hearts,
And woundest by thy words without a battle!
Wise kings fear not, poltroons cause ruin. No mace
Hath fallen on a helm nor arrow struck
A barded steed. I will encounter him,
If he come forth, and fling him to the dust."
Arjásp, on hearing what he said and marking V. 1577
His courage and wise counsel, made reply:—
"O warrior eager for the fray! name, birth,
And parts are thine. If thou make good thy words,
And prowess the corrival of thy tongue,
All from this tent up to the sea of Chín,
And all the treasures of Írán, will I
Bestow on thee; thou shalt command my host,
And never will I swerve from thine advice."
Forthwith he gave the army to Gurgsár
With lordship o'er the more part of the world.
Whenas the sun took up its golden shield,
And dark night did obeisance, putting off
Its musk-black raiment while the world's face grew
All ruby-like in tint, a mighty host
Descended from the heights. Asfandiyár,
The ruler of the world, the valorous,
Led on the troops himself. An ox-head mace
Depended from his saddle. Sháh Gushtásp
Was at the centre of the host, his soul V. 1578
Full of revenge upon Arjásp. Moreover,
The offspring of Zarír, Nastúr, at whom
The lion wont to flee the wood, assumed
His station on the right as general,
And ordered all the battle under him.
Gargwí, the warrior, upon the left
Came forth as bright as Sol in Aries.
Arjásp on his side ranked his troops; the stars
Saw not the plain for spears and blue steel swords;
The air was full of silken flags. The centre,

Where was Arjásp, seemed ebony; Kuhram
Was on the right with trumpets and with tymbals,
And on the left the monarch of Chigil,
From whom a lion might take heart in fight.
When king Arjásp beheld the mighty host
Of chosen, lance-armed cavaliers he went,
Chose out a height, and thence surveyed the armies
On every side. The forces of the foe
Frayed him, the world turned black before his eyes.
Anon he bade the cameleers to bring
A hundred strings of camels from the waste,
And said in private to the men of name:—
"If this affair prove long, if victory,
Success, and glory show not on our side,
I and my friends will need for safety's sake
To take the road upon these rapid beasts."
Now when between the lines Asfandiyár,
Like some fierce lion with his lips afoam,
Was wheeling like the turning firmament,
And brandishing in hand the ox-head mace,
V. 1579 Thou wouldst have said: "The whole plain is his steed;
His soul is greater than his skin can hold."
Arose the war-cry and the clarion's blare;
The warriors of the host advanced. "The waste,"
Thou wouldst have said, "hath grown a sea of blood,
And all the air is Pleiad-like with swords."
Then brave Asfandiyár rose in his stirrups
And shouted, brandishing his ox-head mace
Of steel, then, gripping it still tighter, slew
Three hundred Turkmans of the central host,
Exclaiming: "In revenge for Farshídward
This day will I raise dust-clouds from the sea."
Then letting his swift charger have the reins
He charged against the right wing of the foe,
And slaughtered eight score of the warriors.
Kuhram, when he beheld it, showed his back.

Asfandiyár exclaimed: "Thus I avenge
My grandsire whom my father loved so well,"
Then turned his reins toward the left, and all
The earth became as 'twere a sea of blood.
He slew of mighty men eight score and five,
All men of name possessed of crowns and wealth.
"Thus," said he, "I revenge my noble brothers,
Those eight and thirty who have passed away."
Arjásp, on seeing this, said to Gurgsár:—
"Our warriors in numbers numberless
Are slaughtered all; not one of them is left;
Not one remaineth still before the line.
I know not wherefore thou remainest silent,
Or why thou hadst so much to say before."
The words aroused the spirit of Gurgsár,
And he advanced before the line of battle.
Within his hand he bare a royal bow,
And poplar arrow with a point of steel.
As soon as he was near he aimed his shaft,
And struck the paladin upon the chest.
Asfandiyár hung over on his saddle
So that Gurgsár might deem: "The shaft hath pierced
His breastplate, and the prince's radiant form
Is wounded," and Gurgsár accordingly
Unsheathed his flashing falchion, purposing
To smite the head off from Asfandiyár;
But he, all fearless of disaster, loosed V. 1580
The coiled up lasso from the saddle-straps,
And in the Maker's name, the Omnipotent's,
Flung it about his foe whose head and neck
Were taken in the toils. Asfandiyár
Then hurled Gurgsár all quaking to the ground,
Secured, firm as a rock, his hands behind him,
And, having set a halter round his neck,
Dragged him along the ground before the lines,
With blood-foam on his lips, toward the camp,

Dispatched him to the Sháh's safe custody—
That conquering monarch of the golden helm—
And said: "Keep this man in the camp-enclosure
In bonds and no wise think of slaying him
Till we shall see how fortune will incline,
And which side gain the day."
Departing thence
He led his whole host onward to the fray,
And shouted to the troops: "Where is Kuhram,
Whose flag is seen no more upon the right?
Where is Kundur, the swordsman, too—that taker
Of Lions who was wont to pierce the mountains
With spears and arrows?"
They informed Arjásp:—
"Asfandiyár, the hero, hath encountered
Gurgsár in fight and ta'en him prisoner,
Bold Lion though he was. The atmosphere
Is violet-dim with swords of warriors,
The banner blazoned with the wolf hath vanished."
That portent grieved Arjásp. He bade to bring
The camels and then took the desert-route.
He and his courtiers rode those lusty beasts,
And led their chargers. Thus he left behind
His army still upon the battlefield,
While with his lords he fared toward Khallukh.
V. 1581 Asfandiyár sent up a battle-shout,
The mountain-top re-echoed at his voice.
He shouted to the Íránians: "Brandish not
Your scimitars of battle fruitlessly,
But sheathe them in your foemen's hearts and blood,
And pile on earth a mount Kárun of slain."
The troops, inspired with vengeance, gripped their saddles,
And host encountered host. Dust, stones, and grass
Were saturate with gore, and had a mill
Been standing there the blood had driven it.

The plain was all bestrewn with feet and trunks,
With severed heads and fists still grasping swords,
While still the cavaliers of war charged on,
And gave themselves no time for pillaging.
Now when the Turkmans heard: "Arjásp hath fled,"
The skins upon their bodies burst with grief;
Those that had steeds betook themselves to flight,
While all the rest threw down their casques and mail,
And came in sorrow to Asfandiyár,
Came with their eyes like spring. That mighty one
Accorded quarter and then ceased to slay.
He set a chief to guard them, and thenceforth
Grieved not his grandsire's death. He and his troops
Came to the Sháh, breast, sword, and Rúman casque
All blood; it glued the falchion to his hand,
And his cuirass had galled him, chest and shoulder.
They washed his hand and scimitar in milk,[1]
And drew the arrows from his mail, and then
The atheling, triumphant and unharmed,
Went forth and bathed him. Afterward he called
For raiment meet for worshippers and sought
The all-righteous Judge. Gushtásp, all fear and awe,
Made for a week thanksgiving with his son
Before the just Creator of the world.
Upon the eighth day, when Asfandiyár
Had come again, Gurgsár appeared before him,
Despairing of sweet life and all a-quake V. 1582
With terror like a willow in the wind,
And said: "O prince! my death will not renown thee;
I will attend thee as a slave and ever
Guide thee to good, abate all future ills,
And show thee how to reach the Brazen Hold."
The prince bade take Gurgsár bound hand and foot,
Just as he was, back to the camp-enclosure,
And went to the encampment of Arjásp—

[1] "pour le séparer" (Mohl).

The slayer of Luhrásp—distributed
The spoils midst horse and foot, committed all
The captives taken to his chiefs, and slew
Those that had given the army cause to rue.

§ 33

How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár the second Time to fight Arjásp

Asfandiyár, on his return to camp,
Took counsel with the Sháh about Luhrásp,
And the revenge for Farshídward and all
Those men renowned upon the day of battle.
To him Gushtásp said: "Thou, O mighty man!
Rejoicest while thy sisters are in bondage.
Oh! happy they that died upon the field,
Not frantic with dishonour from the Turkmans!
When men behold me sitting on the throne
What will my subjects say? So long as life
Endureth I shall weep for this disgrace,
And burn within my brain. By most high God,
The Omnipotent, I pledge myself—if thou
Shalt go without disaster to Túrán,
V. 1583 Courageously confront the Dragon's breath,
And free thy sisters from the Turkmans, I
Will yield to thee the crown of empire, treasure
Which thou hast earned not, and the throne of greatness."
Asfandiyár replied: "May none behold
A time devoid of thee. I am a slave
To thee, my sire! I do not seek the kingship,
And hold my soul and body as thy ransom.
I am not fain to sit upon the throne
And rule in person. I will go in quest
Of vengeance on Arjásp, spare neither field

Nor fell within Túrán, and will restore
My sisters from their bondage to their thrones
All through the fortune of the exalted Sháh,
The master of the world."
Gushtásp invoked
A blessing on him, saying: "Now may wisdom
Be with thee ever, in thy going forth
May God protect thee, and the throne be thine
On thy return."
He called the host together
From all parts where were warriors or archmages,
And from among them chose twelve thousand men,
All skilful cavaliers of high renown,
Distributing to them a donative
That well contented them. He furthermore
Bestowed upon Asfandiyár a throne,
And such a jewelled crown as monarchs use.
Then from the portal of the royal court
A shout rose: "Bring the princes' noble steeds."
They bore the tent-enclosure to the plain,
They bore the eagle-standard, and the host
Marched out mid dust that gloomed the radiant sun.
From palace plainward went Asfandiyár,
And saw an army ready dight for war.

PART II

THE STORY OF THE SEVEN STAGES

ARGUMENT

The poet, after inditing a Prelude in praise of Mahmúd, tells how Asfandiyár set forth with his host to rescue his sisters from the Brazen Hold; how he met with divers adventures by the way, captured the Brazen Hold by a stratagem, delivered his sisters, slew Arjásp, defeated the Túránians, and returned in triumph to his father.

NOTE

In this Part the rivalry between the two greatest heroes of Íránian legend proper, the priestly and the popular hero—Asfandiyár and Rustam—may be said to get fairly under way. For the present it is a rivalry of achievement only. In Part III. it is a personal contention in which every faculty of mind and body is exerted to the utmost in a desperate struggle that results tragically for both protagonists. This rivalry in legend may be said to have commenced even in Part I., where, just as Rustam delivered Tús and the Íránian host when beleaguered by the Turkmans on Mount Hamáwan,[1] so Asfandiyár delivers Gushtásp and his army in similar circumstances from Arjásp.[2] In the present Part, however, the rivalry becomes more pronounced. As Rustam went alone to release Kai Káús from imprisonment in Mázandarán and encountered seven adventures on his way, so Asfandiyár goes to Túrán to rescue his enslaved sisters and has a similar series of difficulties to overcome. Again, just as Rustam twice donned merchant's garb, on one occasion to get possession of Mount Sipand,[3] and on another to rescue Bízhan when captive in the pit,[4] so Asfandiyár assumes a like disguise to win the Brazen Hold.[5] We should notice further that though the parallel expeditions of Rustam and Asfandiyár pass under the same

[1] Vol. iii. p. 132 *seq.* [2] p. 106 *seq.* [3] Vol. i. p. 329 *seq.*
[4] *Id.* iii. 334 *seq.* [5] p. 143 *seq.*

name,[1] yet the priestly redactors of the latter's legend have taken care that his achievements should be attended with more pomp and circumstance than his rival's. Thus Rustam goes alone to Mázandarán,[2] but Asfandiyár, whose princely rank has to be recognised, makes his expedition to Túrán accompanied by his brother and minister—Bishútan—and an army. This, however, is not allowed to militate against the merit of his exploits. When an adventure has to be achieved, the hero sets forth alone, while Bishútan and the troops remain at a respectful distance in the rear till all is over, and then come up to offer their congratulations. Again, Rustam sleeps through his first adventure —the killing of a lion—and only wakes up to find that his steed Rakhsh has done the business for him.[3] Asfandiyár slays successively and single-handed two monstrous wolves and a lion and lioness.[4] The third adventure of both is the slaying of a dragon.[5] Rustam succeeds with the help of Rakhsh, Asfandiyár with the assistance of a break and pair of horses! In the next adventure both, after an interlude of wine, lute, and song, put to death a witch;[6] Ghúl, however, whom Asfandiyár slays, is represented as being the more formidable of the two beguilers. Finally, the taking of the Brazen Hold and the slaying of Arjásp by Asfandiyár[7] evidently is intended to eclipse Rustam's capture of Mount Sipand[8] and his encounter with the White Dív in the cave.[9] We may add that both heroes have a prisoner to guide them during part of their respective expeditions. Rustam rewards Úlád.[10] Asfandiyár slays Gurgsár.[11] The champion of the Faith must not show a mistaken mercy to infidels! Evidently, however, from what we have seen above, it was not considered enough that Asfandiyár should be merely a great religious hero; it was desired that he should be a great popular hero as well, and surpass Rustam on the latter's own ground, for Rustam's Haft Khwán obviously is the original one. There seems also to be a malicious hit at Rustam in Asfandiyár's fifth adventure,[12] that in which he kills the Símurgh, the traditional guardian of the race of Zál. Popular legend, however, stood firm on behalf of its great hero; it refused to supersede him or to acquiesce in the death of the Símurgh; on the contrary, it kept the great bird alive so that it might compass indirectly its own revenge by providing Rustam with the means of vanquishing Asfandiyár. Worsted in this world, and to redress the balance, priestly tradition called in

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[1] Haft Khwán. See Vol. ii. p. 29. [2] *Id.* ii. 44, iv. 296.
[3] *Id.* ii. 45. [4] pp. 122, 124. [5] Vol. ii. p. 48, and p. 125.
[6] *Id.* 50, and p. 128. [7] p. 152. [8] Vol. i. p. 330.
[9] *Id.* ii. 59. [10] *Id.* 76. [11] p. 141. [12] p. 131.

aid the next, and declared Rustam's lot therein to be an unhappy one. This conflict between the legends of the two heroes is typified in the story of their personal encounter in Part III., and we shall gather from Firdausí's splendid version of it, "the deepest conflict of soul in the poem and one of the profoundest in all national epics," as Professor Nöldeke justly calls it,[1] that after centuries probably of unconscious give and take the conflicting claims of the two protagonists were compromised, and their combined legend settled down into the marvellous equilibrium which now characterizes it.

§ 1

The Praise of Mahmúd the great King

V. 1584 The Seven Stages will I next set forth[1]
In words both novel and of dainty worth.
Oh! may the world's Sháh live for ever, may
Its potentates be slaves beneath his sway!
He showed his visage like bright Sol above,
And graced the surface of the earth with love.

V. 1585 Sol was in Aries when first he wore
The crown, and East and West rejoiced therefore.
The thunder-peal is rolling o'er the hills,
And tulip and narcissus throng the rills,
The patient tulip, arch narcissus, yea
And awesome spikenard and pomegranate gay.
The clouds have hearts of fire and tearful eyes,
And bursts of anger mix with melodies.
The levin flasheth and the waters leap
Till at the din thou rousest from thy sleep.
Thus wakened look abroad and call the scene
Brocade or painted by Mání in Chín,[2]
A scene that, bright in sunshine, having spied
The tulip and narcissus still wet-eyed,
Will laugh and cry: "Ye minxes! thus again
I weep for love of you, not wrath or pain."

[1] NIN, § 35. *Cf.* too, § 30. [2] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 19 *note*.

Earth hath no laughter while the heaven is dry.
I do not call our great king's hand the sky,
Which only giveth forth its rains in spring,
For such is not the usance of a king.
As Sol, when it ariseth gloriously
In Aries, such shall the Sháh's hand be,
For whensoe'er there cometh to his hand
A wealth of pearls or musk from sea or land,
The radiance that is his he doth not scant
To proud-necked monarch and to mendicant.
Abú'l Kásim! our great Sháh's hand is still
Thus generous alike to good and ill.
He never slackeneth in bounteousness,
And never resteth on the day of stress,
Delivereth battle when the times demand,
And taketh heads of monarchs in his hand,
But largesseth the humble with his spoils,
And maketh no account of his own toils.
Oh! may Mahmúd still rule the world, still be
The source of bounty and of equity!
Now list to what an ancient sage hath told, V.1586
And learn the legend of the Brazen Hold.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF ASFANDIYÁR

§ 2

The First Stage

How Asfandiyár slew two Wolves

A rustic bard hath spread the board and there
Set forth "The Seven Stages" as the fare.
He took within his hand a cup of gold,
And of Gushtásp and of the Brazen Hold,
And of the doings of Asfandiyár,

His journey and the counsels of Gurgsár,
Spake thus:—Now when embittered, tongue and soul,
Asfandiyár reached Balkh he left his sire,
And set out with Gurgsár toward Túrán.
He marched until he came where two roads met,
And camped there with his host, bade spread the board,
And furnish wine and harp and minstrelsy,
While all the captains of the host drew near,
And sat at table with the king of men,
By whose directions presently Gurgsár,
In miserable plight, was brought before him,
And furnished with a golden goblet filled
Four times successively. Thereafter said
Asfandiyár to him: "Thou luckless one!
I will advance thee to the crown and throne,
Will give thee all the kingdom of the Turkmans,
And will exalt thee to the shining sun,
As soon as I return victorious,
If thou wilt tell me truly what I ask,
V. 1587 Nor will I harm thy children, kith or kin;
But if thou go about to utter lies
In any way they will not pass with me,
My sword shall cleave thee, and the hearts of all
Shall tremble at thy fate."

Gurgsár replied:—

"O famous, glorious Asfandiyár!
From me the king shall hear naught but the truth,
And be it thine to act the kingly part."

"Where is the Brazen Hold," Asfandiyár
Said, "for its marches march not with Írán?
What roads are there to it? How many leagues?
How can it be approached without mishap?
Say too how many troops there are within it,
And tell me what thou knowest of its height."

"O kind and glorious Asfandiyár!"
Gurgsár replied, "three roads lead hence to what

Arjásp hath titled 'Battlestead.' One route
Will take thy troops three months, the second two.
The first hath water, grass, and towns, and chiefly
Pertaineth to the chieftains of Túrán.
The second road, that which will take two months,
Will furnish for the troops but little provand;
There is no grass or water for the beasts,
And thou wilt find no camping-grounds. The third
Will occupy but seven days; the troops
Will reach the Brazen Hold upon the eighth,
But that road is all lions, wolves, and dragons,
And none can scape their claws; yet mightier
Than lion, wolf, and savage dragon are
A witch's charms, who raiseth from the deep
One to the moon and flingeth to the abyss
Another headlong. There are wastes, símurghs,
And bitter frosts which rise like blasts and cut
The trees. Then will appear the Brazen Hold,
And none e'er saw, or heard of, such another.
It toppeth the dark cloud-rack. Arms and troops
Abound within it. Waters and a river— V. 1588
A sight to cheer the soul—environ it.
The monarch crosseth to the plain by boat
When he will hunt, but should he stay within
For five score years the plain could furnish naught
That he would need, because inside the hold
Are tilth and pasture, fruit-trees and a mill."
Asfandiyár, on hearing this, was troubled
Awhile and sighed, but said: "There is no way
For us save this; the short road is the best
In this world," and Gurgsár retorted thus:—
"O king! none e'er by puissance and pains
Hath made the passage of the Seven Stages
Without foregoing life."
The chieftain answered:—
If thou art with me thou shalt see the heart

And strength of Áhriman. What, sayest thou,
Will meet me first? What must I fight for passage?"
Gurgsár replied: "O famed and fearless man!
Two wolves, each like a lusty elephant,
A male and female, having horns like stags
And all a-gog to make a fight of lions,
Broad in the neck and breast and thin of flank,
With monstrous elephants' tusks, first will confront thee."
Asfandiyár then bade lead back Gurgsár
Bound as he was in miserable plight,
And blithe himself assumed his Kaian casque,
And held his court.
When Sol displayed its crown
On high, and heaven showed earth its mysteries,
The din of drums rose from the royal tent,
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony,
While in high spirits and with fair array
The prince set forward toward the Seven Stages,
And toward Túrán. When he approached the First
He chose a veteran among the host,
V. 1589 A watchful man, hight Bishútan, who guarded
The army from the foe, and said to him:—
"Maintain good discipline among the troops.
I am disturbed by what Gurgsár hath said,
And will go on. If evil shall befall me
It must not come upon my followers."
He went and armed; they girthed his night-hued steed.
The chief, when he had drawn anigh the wolves,
Sat firmly like a mighty elephant.
The wolves beheld his breast and neck, his waist,
His warrior-handgrip, and his iron mace,
And like grim elephants and keen for fight
Made at him from the plain. The hero strung
His bow and, roaring like a rending lion,

Rained arrows down upon those Áhrimans,
And hardily employed the horsemen's sleights.[1]
The steel-tipped shafts disabled both the beasts,
And neither could approach unscathed. With joy
Asfandiyár perceived them growing weak
And sore distressed, unsheathed his watered glaive,
And charged. He hacked their heads and made the dust
Mire with their blood, lit from his noble steed,
Acknowledging his helplessness to God,
And washed the wolves' gore from his arms and person,
Then sought a spot that had not been defiled[2]
Upon the sand and turning toward the sun,
With troubled heart and cheeks besmirched with dust,
Exclaimed: "O righteous Judge! Thou hast bestowed
Upon me strength, Grace, prowess. Thou hast laid
These beasts upon the dust and to all good V. 1590
Art Guide."

When Bishútan came with the host
They saw the hero at the place of prayer.
The warriors were astonied at his exploit,
And all the troops thought: "Shall we call these wolves
Or lusty elephants? May such a heart
And sword and hand live ever! Never may
The throne of kingship, majesty, and feast,
And host lack him."

The wary warriors
Approached and pitched the tent-enclosure round him;
They set a golden board whereat to dine,
Partook of victuals and called out for wine.

[1] "et se précipita dans le danger qui *jusque-là* avait accablé *tous* les cavaliers" (Mohl).

[2] "Un endroit pur *de sang*" (*Id.*).

§ 3

The Second Stage

How Asfandiyár slew two Lions

As for Gurgsár his portion was chagrin
About those fierce wolves and Asfandiyár,
Who bade the prisoner be brought before him.
They brought him quaking, with his face all tears.
The prince bestowed on him three cups of wine,
And asked: "What wonder shall I next behold
By thine account?"
He answered thus the chief:—
"O monarch crowned and leonine of heart!
Upon the next stage lions will assail thee,
Such as no crocodile would dare encounter;
The lusty eagle, valiant though it be,
Will fly not in their path."
Asfandiyár
Laughed with light heart, and said: "O feckless Turkman!
Tomorrow thou shalt see a valiant man
Address the lion with the scimitar."
When night grew dark the monarch gave command,
And they resumed the march. He led the host
Apace amid the gloom, blood in his eyes,
V. 1591 Despite at heart, and when the sun had doffed
Its dusky cloak and donned brocade of gold
He reached the station for the brave—the plain
Where he must fight the lions. He commanded
That Bishútan should come to him, advised him
At large, and said: "I go to fight in person,
Committing this exalted host to thee."
He went his way, and drawing near the lions
Turned all the world to darkness in their hearts.

There were a lion and a lioness,
And bravely both came forth to fight with him,
The lion first. He smote it with his sword;
Its face grew coral-hued; 'twas cloven from head
To midriff, which appalled the lioness,
Yet, like her mate, she came on savagely.
The chieftain smote her on the head, which fell
And rolled upon the sand. Her paws and breast
Were tulip-hued with blood. He bathed himself
And, looking to all-holy God alone
As his Protector, said: "O righteous Judge!
Thou hast destroyed these creatures by my hand."
Meanwhile the troops came up, and Bishútan
Surveyed the lions' breasts and limbs while all
Acclaimed Asfandiyár. That valiant leader
Thereafter went to his pavilion where
They served to that pure prince delicious fare.

§ 4

The Third Stage

How Asfandiyár slew a Dragon

Asfandiyár then ordered to his presence
The luckless and malevolent Gurgsár,
Gave him three goblets filled with rosy wine,
And, when the wine had cheered that Áhriman,
Addressed him thus and said: "Ill-fated wretch V. 1592
Tell what thou knowest of tomorrow's sight."
Gurgsár returned reply: "High-minded king
May evil-doers ne'er approach to harm thee.
Gone hast thou into battle like a fire,
And made a shift to over-pass these bales,
But know'st not what will come on thee tomorrow.
Have mercy then upon thy wakeful fortune,

For when tomorrow thou shalt reach the stage
A greater task by far confronteth thee.
There will encounter thee an awesome dragon,
Whose breath doth draw forth from the deep the fish.
A flame of fire proceedeth from its maw;
Its body is a mountain made of flint.
Now if thou wilt retrace thy steps 'tis well;
My very soul is pleading in this counsel.
Thou hast not any pity for thyself,
And by that token came this host together."
Asfandiyár replied: "Thou evil one!
I mean to drag thee in thy chains with me
To be a witness that this sharp-clawed dragon
Escapeth not my trenchant scimitar."
At his command some carpenters were fetched,
And therewithal some long and heavy beams.
He had a goodly wooden carriage built
All set about with swords and with a box,
Framed by a clever carpenter, whereon
That seeker of the diadem sat down,
And harnessed to the break two noble steeds
To put it to the proof. He drove awhile
In mail, armed with a falchion of Kábul,
And helmed for fight. Or ever all was ready
For battle with the dragon night grew dark,
As 'twere a negro's face, while Luna showed
Her crown in Aries. Asfandiyár
Gat on his steed Shúlak; his noble host
V. 1593 Marched after him. Next day when it was light,
And night's black flag was furled, the heroic world-lord
Assumed his breastplate and resigned the host
To glorious Bishútan, had break and box,
Wherein he sat, brought forth, attached two steeds
Of noble stock, and sped toward the dragon.
Afar it heard the rumble and beheld
The prancing of the battle-steeds. It came,

Like some black mountain, and thou wouldst have said:—
"The sun and moon are darkened." Its two eyes
Seemed fountains bright with blood, while from its gullet
Fire issued, and like some dark cavern gaped
Its jaws. It bellowed at Asfandiyár,
Who, seeing the monster, drew his breath and turned
To God for help. The horses strove to 'scape
The dragon's mischief, but it sucked them in,
Them and the break, and in his box dismayed
The warrior. In the dragon's gullet stuck
The sword-blades, and blood poured forth like a sea;
It could not free its gullet, for the swords
Were sheathed within it. Tortured by the points
And chariot the dragon by degrees
Grew weak, and then the gallant warrior,
Arising from the box, clutched his keen glaive
With lion-grip and hacked the dragon's brains
Till fumes of venom rising from the dust
O'erpowered him; he tumbled mountain-like,
And swooned away. Then Bishútan and all
His mighty host came up in tears and grief
Lest ill should have befallen Asfandiyár,
The troops all wailed, dismounted, and advanced
Afoot while Bishútan came hurrying, V. 1594
And poured rose-water o'er the hero's head.
Now when the atheling had oped his eyes
He thus addressed the exalted warriors:—
"The venom's fumes o'ercame me, for the dragon
Ne'er struck me."
Rising from the ground like one
Awakening from a drunken drowse he sought
The water, plunged therein, and bathed, bespeaking
A change of raiment from his treasurer.
Then in the presence of all-holy God

He wallowed in the dust and wept, exclaiming:—
"Who could have slain that dragon if the World-lord
Had not assisted him?"
His soldiers too
Bent to the earth and praised the righteous Judge;
But thus to find alive Asfandiyár,
Whom he thought dead, was grievous to Gurgsár.

§ 5

The Fourth Stage

How Asfandiyár slew a Witch

Asfandiyár pitched by the water-side
His tent-enclosure while the troops camped round him.
He set forth wine, called boon-companions,
Rose to his feet, and drank to Sháh Gushtásp,
Commanding too to bring Gurgsár who came
Before him, quaking. Then Asfandiyár
Gave him to drink three cups of royal wine,
Spake laughingly with him about the dragon,
And said: "Thou worthless fellow! now behold
How with its breath that dragon sucked us in!
When I go forward for another stage
What greater toils and troubles are in store?"
Gurgsár replied: "O conquering prince! thou hast
The fruit of thy good star. When thou alightest
Tomorrow at the stage a witch will come
To greet thee. She hath looked on many a host,
But quailed at none. She turneth waste to sea
At will and maketh sunset at mid day.
V. 1595 Men call her Ghúl, O Sháh! Face not her toils
In these thy days of youth. Thou hast o'ercome
The dragon; now turn back; thou shouldst not bring
Thy name to dust."
The atheling replied:—

"Tomorrow, knave! thou shalt recount my prowess,
For I will break the warlocks' backs and hearts,
So will I maul that witch, and trample down
Their heads by might of Him, the one just God."
When day donned yellow weeds, and this world's Lustre
Sank in the west, he marched on, packed the loads,
With prayer to God, the Giver of all good,
And led the army onward through the night.
When Sol had raised its golden casque, begemming
The Ram's face, and the champaign was all smiles,
The prince gave up the host to Bishútan,
And took a golden goblet filled with wine,
Called for a costly lute and, though he went
To battle, dight himself as for a feast.
He had in view a wood like Paradise;
Thou wouldst have said: "The sky sowed tulips there."
The sun saw not within it for the trees,
And streamlets like rose-water flowed around.
He lighted from his steed as seemed him good,
And, having chosen him a fountain's marge
Within the forest, grasped the golden goblet.
Now when his heart was gladdened with the wine
The hero took the lute upon his lap,
And out of all the fulness of his heart
Began to troll this ditty to himself:—

"Oh! never is it mine to see
Both wine and one to quaff with me,
But mine 'tis ever to behold
The lion and the dragon bold,
And not, from bales' clutch, liberty.

'Tis not my lot to look upon
On earth some glorious fay-cheeked one,
Yet now if God will but impart V. 1596
A winsome breaker of the heart
The longing of mine own is won."

Now when she heard Asfandiyár the witch
Grew like a rose in springtide, saying thus:—
"The mighty Lion cometh to the toils
With robe and lute and goblet filled with wine."
Foul, wrinkled, and malevolent she plied
Her magic arts amid the gloom and grew
As beauteous as a Turkman maid, with cheek
As 'twere brocade of Chín and musk-perfumed,
Of cypress-height, a sun to look upon,
With musky tresses falling to her feet.
Her cheeks like rosaries, she drew anear
Asfandiyár, with roses in her breast.
The atheling, when he beheld her face,
Plied song and wine and harp more ardently,
And said: "O just and only God! Thou art
Our Guide upon the mountain and the waste.
I wanted even now a fay-faced maid
Of beauteous form as my companion;
The just Creator hath bestowed her on me,
Oh! may my heart and pure soul worship Him."
He plied her with musk-scented wine and made
Her face a tulip-red. Now he possessed
A goodly chain of steel which he had kept
Concealed from her. Zarduhsht, who brought it down
From Paradise for Sháh Gushtásp, had bound it
About the prince's arm. Asfandiyár
Flung it around her neck; her strength was gone;
She took a lion's form. The atheling
Made at her with his scimitar, and said:—
"Thou wilt not injure me though thou hast reared
An iron mountain. Take thy proper shape,
For now the answer that I make to thee
Is with the scimitar."
Within the chain
There was a fetid hag, calamitous,

With head and hair like snow, and black of face.
With trenchant sword he smote her on the head, V. 1597
Which with her body came down to the dust.
Sight failed, so loured the sky when that witch died,
While blast and black cloud veiled the sun and moon.
The atheling clomb to a hill and shouted
As 'twere a thunder-clap. Then Bishútan
Came quickly with the host, and said: "Famed prince!
No crocodile or witch, wolf, pard and lion,
Can stand thy blows, and by that token thou
Wilt be exalted still. Oh! may the world
Desire thy love!"
The head-piece of Gurgsár
Flamed at these triumphs of Asfandiyár.

§ 6

The Fifth Stage

How Asfandiyár slew the Símurgh

The atheling laid face upon the ground
Awhile before the Maker of the world,
Then pitched his camp-enclosure in the wood.
They spread the board in fitting mode and then
Asfandiyár gave orders to the deathsman:—
"Bring hither in his bonds that wretch Gurgsár."
They brought him to the prince who, seeing him,
Gave him three cups of royal wine. Now when
The ruddy wine had gladdened him thus said
Asfandiyár: "Thou wretched Turkman! mark
Upon the tree the head of that old witch,
'Who turneth,' so thou saidst, 'the plain to sea,
And doth exalt her o'er the Pleiades.'
And now what marvel shall I see next stage,

Judged by the standard of this witch?"
He answered:—
"O Elephant of war in battle-time!
Upon this stage thou hast a harder task:
Be more than ever cautious and alert.
v. 1598 Thou wilt behold a mount, with head in air,
And thereupon a bird imperious,
One like a flying mountain, combative,
And called Símurgh by merchants. With its claws
It beareth off the elephant at sight,
The pard on land, the crocodile from water,
And feeleth not the effort. Weigh it not
With wolf and witch. Upon its mountain-home
It hath two young,[1] their wills to hers affined,
And when it flieth the earth is impotent,
The sun is put to shame. 'Twill profit thee
To turn back for thou canst not strive against
Símurgh and mountain-height."
The hero laughed.
"A wonder!" he exclaimed. "I will sew up
Its shoulders with mine arrows, cleave its breast
With Indian scimitar, and bring its head
From height to dust."
When bright Sol showed its back,
Which ruffled all the bosom of the west,
The chief of warriors led the army forth,
And pondered that account of the Símurgh.
Thus he and host fared onward all the night.
Whenas the shining sun rose o'er the mountains
The Lamp of time gave freshness to the earth,
Transforming dale and plain. Asfandiyár
Gave up the army to its chief[2] and took
To steed and box and break. He sped along,
Like an imperious blast, and spying in air
A peak stayed in its shadow break and steed,

[1] "Il a deux petits qui sont grands comme lui" (Mohl). [2] Bishútan.

Absorbed in contemplation. The Símurgh
Marked from the mount the box, the troops behind it,
And all their trumpeting, and, swooping down
Like some dark cloud obscuring sun and moon,
Essayed to seize the chariot with its talons,
As leopard seizeth quarry, but transfixed
Its legs and pinions with the swords, and all
Its might and glory passed away. It beat
Awhile with claws and beak while strength remained, V. 1599
And then was still. On seeing this its young
Flew off with screams and weeping tears of blood
Down from the eyry, blurring every eye
Beneath their shade. When the Símurgh thus sank
With all its wounds and bathed steeds, box, and break
In blood, Asfandiyár, all armed and shouting,
Emerged and hewed to pieces with his sword
That bird now mastered, once so masterful;
Then prayed thus to the Maker who had given
Such mastery to him in good and ill,
And said: "O righteous Judge! Thou hast bestowed
Upon me wisdon, puissance, and prowess,
Hast driven out the sorcerers and been
My Guide to every good."

With that arose
The sound of clarions, and Bishútan
Set forward with the host. None could behold
The desert for the bird, but only saw
Its form and talons bathed in blood which covered
The earth from range to range, and thou wouldst say:
"The plain was lost in plumes!" Men saw the prince
Blood-boltered, 'twas a sight to fray the moon,
And all the captains, cavaliers of war,
And mighty men applauded him. Anon
Gurgsár heard tidings of that famed chief's triumph,
Quaked, paled, and fared with tears and heart all anguish.

V. 1600 The world's king had the tent-enclosure pitched,
His joyous warriors round him. Then to dine
They spread brocade, took seat, and called for wine.

§ 7

The Sixth Stage

How Asfandiyár passed through the Snow

Asfandiyár, the illustrious prince, then bade
Gurgsár to come and gave him in succession
Three cups of wine whereat his cheeks became
Like bloom of fenugreek, and then the prince
Addressed him: "Miscreant in mind and body!
Observe the doings of this whirling world!
Evanished are Símurgh and lion, wolf
And dragon sharp of claw and valorous!"
Gurgsár then lifted up his voice and said:—
"O famous, glorious Asfandiyár!
God is thy Helper, O most fortunate!
The royal Tree hath come to fruit; howbeit
Tomorrow there confronteth thee a task
That none in war expecteth. Thou wilt take
No thought of mace or bow or sword, and see
No opening for fight, no way of flight,
For snow, a spear's length deep, will come upon thee,
A crisis will confront thee, thou with all
Thy famous army wilt be lost therein,
O glorious Asfandiyár! No marvel
If thou turn back, nor need my words offend thee;
Thou wilt be guiltless of this army's blood,
And quit this road for other. Sure am I
That earth will rive beneath a mighty blast,
The trees be levelled. E'en if thou shalt make
At last thy way through to the plain beyond
The next stage will be thirty leagues across,

An arid wilderness of dust and sand, V. 1601
Which birds and ants and locusts traverse not.
Thou wilt not see a drop of water there;
Its soil is ever seething with the sun.
A lion cannot pass that sandy waste,
Nor swift-winged vulture fly across the sky.
No herbage groweth in the arid soil,
And that is tutty-like,[1] all shifting sands.
Thus wilt thou fare along for forty leagues;
Men's souls will fail and horses lose all heart.
Thy host then will approach the Brazen Hold,
Which thou wilt find upon no fruitful spot.
Its soil is in the maw of poverty;
Its summit holdeth conclave with the sun.
Outside the castle beasts look not for food,
The army will not have a horseman left.
Though there should come a hundred thousand men,
Sword-wielders from Írán and from Túrán,
And should beleaguer it a hundred years,
And shower arrows there, it recketh not
How many enemies or few there be;
They are but as a knocker on the door."

The Íránians heard Gurgsár, were pained, and said:—

"O noble prince! forbear with all thy might
To compass thine own ruin. If things are
As said Gurgsár we cannot blink that we
Came hither to our death and not to wreck
The Turkmans. Thou hast traversed this rough road,
And 'scaped disaster from wild beasts. Not one
Of all our warriors and heroic Sháhs
Can reckon up so great a tale of toils
As thou hast met with in these Seven Stages.
So thank the Maker for it all, and since
Thou wilt return victorious thou mayst go
Light-hearted to the Sháh, while if thou marchest

[1] An impalpable powder used for the eyes.

To war elsewhere the whole state of Írán
V. 1602 Will homage thee. So, as Gurgsár saith, hold not
Thy person cheaply and involve not all
A host in slaughter, for this ancient sky
Will play new tricks. Now that we are triumphant
And glad there is no need for thee to fling
Thine own head to the winds."
On hearing this
That young, heroic paladin replied:—
"Why fray me thus and open for yourselves
The door of terror? Came ye from Írán
To counsel then and not for high renown?
If this was then the mind of all of you
Why did ye gird yourselves to fare with me
Since at this miserable Turkman's words
Ye tremble like a tree? Where then are all
The counsels and the presents of the Sháh,
The golden girdles, thrones, and diadems,
Where all your oaths, your bonds, and covenants
By God 'neath favouring stars that now your feet
Should falter thus and one march wreck your plans?
Turn back then happy and victorious,
But as for me may I seek naught but fight.
The World-lord is my conquering ally,
And fortune's head reclineth on my breast.
Now by my manhood I will none of you
As comrades whether I am slain or slay,
And by my manhood, might of hand, and triumph
Will show the foe what prowess is. Withal
Ye shall not lack for tidings of my Grace
Imperial, famed, and that which I have wrought
In His name, who is Lord of Sun and Saturn,
Upon this stronghold by my might and manhood."
The Íránians looked upon Asfandiyár,
Beheld his eyes all wrath, and went before him
V. 1603 To make excuses: "Let the prince forgive!

Our fault if he see fit. Oh! may our souls
And bodies be thy ransom, such hath been,
And will remain, our covenant with thee.
We grieve for thee, O prince! Our toil and strife
Have not reduced us to extremities,
And, while a chief surviveth, none of us
Will shrink from fight."
Their leader, hearing this,
Grieved for his words and praised the Íránians.
"Prowess,"
He said, "will show itself. If we return
Victorious we shall enjoy the fruits
Of our past toil; it will not be forgotten,
And your own treasuries shall not be void."
The prince took counsel till the world grew cool,
And zephyrs wafted from the mountain-top,
Then trump and clarion sounded from the court-gate,
And all the host set forward, sped like fire,
And called upon the Maker. When the dawn
Rose o'er the mountain-tops, and night drew o'er
Her head her filmy wimple as a veil
Against the blazing sún which pressed behind,
That mighty host—all mace-men clad in armour—
Reached their next stage. It was a glorious day
In spring, a day to gladden heart and world.
The prince bade pitch the tent and tent-enclosure,
Then had the board spread and the wine brought forth.
With that there came a fierce blast from the mountains,
And sore dismayed him. All the world became
Like ravens' plumes, and none knew plain from upland.
From that dark cloud descended showers of snow;
The earth was filled with snow and raging blast,
And o'er the desert for three days and nights
The fury of the wind was measureless.
The tents and tent-enclosure were soaked through, V. 1604
And not a man could stand or stir for cold.

The air was woof, the snow was like the warp;
The chief, resourceless, called to Bishútan:—
"This plight of ours is one with misery.
I met the dragon's fumings like a man,
But strength and manhood now avail us not.
Make supplication, all of you, to God!
Call ye upon Him, offer to Him praise,
That He may cause these ills to pass from us,
Else we are naught henceforth."
Then Bishútan
Made prayer to God, who is the Guide to good,
While all the soldiers lifted up their hands,
And offered supplications numberless.
Thereon a gentle breeze arose which bare
The clouds away and heaven became serene,
And when the Iránians had taken heart
They offered thanks to God. They stayed three days
And, when the world's Light shone upon the fourth,
The leader called the officers to him,
And spake to them at large and graciously:—
"Leave baggage here and take but gear of war.
Let every chief that hath a hundred beasts
Load half of them with water and supplies,
The other half with means of serving them.
Leave all the other baggage here, for now
The door of God is opened unto us.
When any man hath lost all hope in God
His portion of success is small indeed;
But we by help of God shall overcome
That evil-doer and idolater,
While ye shall be the richer for yon hold,
And all have crowns and treasures."
V. 1605 When the sun
Drew o'er its head its yellow veil, and when
The west became like flower of fenugreek,
The warriors, having loaded up the beasts,

Marched with the king of men. Now in the night
A sound of cranes came from the sky above.
Asfandiyár was wrathful at the sound,
And sent this message to Gurgsár: "Thou said'st:—
'There is no water for thee on this stage,
Nor rest nor sleep withal.' Yet cranes give note
Above! Why didst thou make us dread a drought?"
Gurgsár replied: "The baggage-beasts will get
But brackish water here, and thou wilt find
The fountains poisonous, though birds and beasts
Use them."
The chief said: "In Gurgsár have I
A hostile guide."
He bade the host proceed.
Invoking God they hurried on at speed.

§ 8

The Seventh Stage

How Asfandiyár crossed the River and slew Gurgsár

When one watch of the darksome night had passed
There rose a clamour from the plain in front.
The young prince, smiling on his charger, rode
Forth from the centre of the army vanward.
When he had ridden past the troops he saw
A deep, unfathomed river. Now a camel,
One of the caravan whose cameleer
Had kept it in the front, had tumbled in.
The chieftain seized and dragged it from the mud,
And that malignant Turkman of Chigil
Quaked. At the bidding of the prince he came—
That fell Gurgsár—both seared of heart and fettered.
"Base villain!" said the prince, "why hast thou used
This snake-like subtlety? Didst thou not say:—

'Here thou wilt find no water, and the sun
V. 1606 Will burn thee up'? Why didst thou make out water
To be but dust and wouldst have wrecked the host,
Thou miscreant?"

He said: "Thy host's destruction
Would be as bright to me as sun and moon.
I get from thee but fetters; what should I
Wish but thy bale and loss?"

The chieftain laughed,
Stared, was amazed at him, but showed no wrath,
And said: "Gurgsár, thou man of little wit!
When I return victorious from the fight
Thou shalt be captain of the Brazen Hold:
Far be from me to harm thee. All the realm
Is thine if thou wilt give me honest counsel.
I will not hurt thy children, kith, or kin."

Gurgsár grew hopeful at the words. In wonder
He kissed the ground and asked to be forgiven.

The prince replied: "Thy words are passed, but water
Hath not been turned to land by thy wild talk.
Where is the ford? Thou must direct us right."

Gurgsár rejoined: "No arrow plumed and pointed,
When ironed thus, can find its way across.
Thou shalt work magic with the mighty stream
If thou wilt but unfetter me."

The hero
Astonished bade to loose him, and Gurgsár,
When he had seized a camel by the halter,
Descended to the stream and at a spot
That was within his depth essayed the passage.
The soldiers followed him in single file.
Inflating at Asfandiyár's behest
Their water-skins forthwith, and binding them
Along the barrels of their beasts of burden,
They all plunged in. The host and baggage reached
Land, and reforming to the left and right

Marched till the Brazen Hold was ten leagues off.
The captain of the host sat down to meat, V. 1607
The slaves attended him with cups of wine
And, at that mighty Lion's bidding, brought
His tunic, helmet, coat of mail, and sword.
In merry pin the hero gave command,
And when they brought Gurgsár thus said to him:—
"Now that thou hast escaped calamity
Good words and truthful will become thee well.
When I behead Arjásp and make rejoice
The spirit of Luhrásp; when I behead
Kuhram, who slaughtered Farshídward and troubled
My soldiers' hearts; behead Andarímán,
Who slaughtered eight and thirty of our chiefs
When he prevailed; when for my grandsire's death
I take revenge in all ways; when I make
The lions' maws their tombs and gratify
The Íránian warriors' lust; when I stitch up
Their livers with mine arrows and take captive
Their wives and children, shall I call thee glad
Or grieved thereat? Tell all thy heart to me."
Heart-straitened, hostile both in speech and soul,
Gurgsár retorted: "How long wilt thou use
Such converse? Be accursed and justly so.
May every evil star control thy life,
Thy waist be cut asunder with the sword,
Thy gory body flung upon the dust,
The earth thy bed, the grave thy winding-sheet."
Roused by his words, and raging at the oaf,
The prince smote with an Indian sword his head,
And clave him, crown to midriff. To the river
They flung him presently, and that malignant
Grew food for fishes. Then Asfandiyár
Gat on his steed, girt up his warrior-loins
In wrath, and mounted on a height to view
The hold. He saw a mighty iron rampart

Extending over forty leagues by three,
But saw not any earth or water there.
V. 1608 The wall was broad enough for cavaliers
To gallop round upon it four abreast.
Whenas Asfandiyár beheld that wonder
He heaved a sigh, and said: "I cannot capture
A place like that! I suffer for my sins.
Alas for all my fighting and my toil!
Repentance is the only fruit thereof."

He looked around upon the waste and saw
Two Turkmans coursing with four hounds. Descending
With spear in hand he unhorsed both the Turkmans,
Brought them upon the heights and questioned them:—
"What is this splendid hold? How many horsemen
Are there within?"

They told about Arjásp
At large and of the hold. "Observe," they said,
"How long and wide it is! One gate is toward
Írán and one toward Chín, while in it are
A hundred thousand swordsmen—all renowned,
Exalted cavaliers—yet all of them
Are slaves before Arjásp and bow the head
To his command and counsel. There is provand
Past all compute with stores of grain in case
Fresh food should fail, while if the monarch closed
The gates for ten years there is food enough,
Great though his host is, while, if he so willed,
A hundred thousand noble cavaliers
Would come to him from Chín and from Máchín.
He hath no need of aught from any one,
For he possesseth provand and defenders."

They spake. His Indian sword the chieftain drew,
And put to death the simple-minded two.

§ 9

How Asfandiyár went to the Brazen Hold in the Guise of a Merchant

Thence he departed to his camp-enclosure.
They cleared the place of strangers, Bishútan
Came to Asfandiyár, and they discussed V. 1609
The war. That warrior said: "We might assail
This hold in vain for years unless indeed
I take upon me to demean myself,
And try a stratagem against the foe.
Be thou upon the watch here night and day,
And guard the army from the enemy.
A man, I ween, is held in high esteem,
And worthy of a realm and lofty throne,
Who feareth not a host of enemies
In battle, pard on mount or crocodile
In water, but proceedeth now by craft
And now by force, whiles mounting, whiles descending.
I shall approach the hold in merchants' guise,
And none will know me for a paladin.
All craft will I employ and con all lore.
Dispense not thou with watchmen and with scouts,
And never let thy vigilance relax.
If in the day the watch shall spy a smoke,
Or in the night a bonfire like the sun,
The Lustre of the world, then be assured
That 'tis my doing, not my foeman's ruse;
So order thou the army and march hence,
With coat of mail, with helm, and massive mace;
Set up my flag without delay and take
Thy station at the centre of the host;
Charge with the ox-head mace, and bear thee so
That folk will hail thee as Asfandiyár."
He called the head-man of the cameleers,

Caused him to kneel to Bishútan, and said:—
"Bring me a hundred beasts with ruddy hair,
Beasts fit to carry burdens, sound and strong."
Ten of these beasts he loaded up with gold,
Upon five more he put brocade of Chín,
Another five had various kinds of gems,
A golden throne and massive crown. He brought
Forth eighty pairs of chests, whose fastenings
Were all concealed from sight, and therewithal
Made choice of eight score of his mighty men—
Such men as would not make his purpose known—
V. 1610 And, having hidden them within the chests,
Bound on the baggage and set forth. He bade
Some twenty of his nobles skilled in sword-play
To take the conduct of the caravan,
And turned these nobles into cameleers.
With slippered feet, a blanket thrown about him,
And freighted with the jewels, gold, and silver,
The chieftain went in haste toward the hold,
And journeyed in the guise of chafferers.
He led the way, and when the sound of bells
Rose from the caravan the chiefs inside
The hold grew ware of it, held talk at large,
Were all a-gog, and said: "A merchantman,
Who selleth a dínár's worth for a drachm,[1]
Hath come."
The dealers and the nobles went
To buy, and asked the owner: "What hast thou
Of use within these bales?"
He made reply:—
"The first thing is for me to see your king,
And show my wares to him. When he commandeth
I will display them to your eyes."
He loaded

[1] *I.e.*, Who will give us an opportunity of buying at a lower price than usual.

One of the camels and himself proceeded
To see how he could make his market quickly.
He took a goblet filled with royal gems,
And many a piece of gold to give in largess,
Some signets set with ruby and with turquoise,
A steed, and ten bales of brocade of Chín.
He draped the goblet in a piece of silk,
Perfumed throughout with musk and spicery,
He donned a dress of beautiful brocade, V. 1611
Sought for an introduction to Arjásp,
And at the interview strewed gold, and said:—
"May wisdom mate with kings! A merchant I:
My sire was Turkman and my mother Persian.
I purchase from Túrán, bear to Írán,
And also to the desert of the brave.
I have with me a caravan of camels,
And deal in stuffs, in clothes, and furniture,
In jewels, crowns, and other valuables.
I left my goods outside the hold, assured
That all are safe with thee. If thou wilt let
The cameleers conduct the caravan
Within the hold thy fortune will protect me
From every ill, and I shall sleep beneath
The shadow of thy love."

Arjásp replied:—

"Be happy and secure from every ill;
No one shall do thee hurt within Túrán,
Nor when thou goest to Máchín and Chín."

At his command they gave Asfandiyár
Within the Brazen Hold a spacious dwelling—
A warehouse with a mansion at its back[1]—
And thither brought the baggage from the plain
That he might make the warehouse a bázár,
And keep his goods in safety. They departed,
And led the camels, after loading them.

[1] "un magasin aux approches du palace" (Mohl).

A shrewd man asked: "What is inside the chests?"
A cameleer replied: "Our wits, for we
Must carry them themselves."
Asfandiyár
Prepared the warehouse, decking it to look
Like flowers in spring. On all side buyers sprang up,
And there was busy trafficking within it.
V. 1612 The night passed by. At dawn Asfandiyár
Went to the palace to the king, there kissed
The ground before him, praised him much, and said:—
"I and my cameleers have made all haste
To bring the caravan and baggage in,
And there are crowns and bracelets suitable
For an exalted king, so let him bid
His treasurer inspect my stock, for all
The warehouse is in order. I shall be
Content if he will take what seemeth best;
The king's part is acceptance and the merchant's
Excuse and praise."
Arjásp smiled, showed him favour,
Assigned him a more honourable seat,
And asked: "What is thy name?"
He said: "Kharrád,
A merchant, traveller, and well to do."
The king replied: "O noble man! concern not
Thyself with more excuses. Ask no longer
For audience through the chamberlain, but come
Before me when thou wilt."
He then inquired
About the labours of the road, Írán,
The Sháh, and host. Asfandiyár replied:—
"My journey hath been five months' pain and toil."
The king said: "In Írán what tidings were there
Both of Asfandiyár and of Gurgsár?"
He said: "My gracious lord! folk speak of them,

Each as his fancy is: 'Asfandiyár,'
Said one, 'is in revolt for injuries
Inflicted by his sire.' Another said:—
'He is advancing by the Seven Stages
In haste to fight Arjásp; he will attempt
War with Túrán and boldly seek revenge.'"
Arjásp replied with smiles: "No man of age
And knowledge of the world would talk like that!
If vultures e'en approach the Seven Stages V. 1613
Then call me Áhriman and not a man."
The warrior heard and, having kissed the ground,
Came from the palace of Arjásp rejoicing,
Then opening the noted warehouse-doors
He filled the hold with din of chaffering,
And seemed so occupied that he deceived
The eyes of all. Scarce for dínárs took he
The worth of drachms and traded recklessly.

§ 10

How the Sisters of Asfandiyár recognised him

Now when the bright sun set and buying ceased
The sisters of Asfandiyár descended
Lamenting from the palace to the street,
And bearing water-jars upon their shoulders.
They came heart-broken and in deep dejection
Toward Asfandiyár who, when he saw
That monstrous spectacle, concealed from view
His features from his sisters, for his heart
Misdoubted how they might comport themselves,
And so he hid his face behind his sleeve.
They both drew near him and the cheeks of each
Were running with the torrents from their eyes.
The hapless ones began to question him—
That wealthy man of merchandise—and said:—

"May all thy days and nights be prosperous,
The nobles be before thee as thy slaves!
What tidings hast thou from Írán, brave chief!
Both of Gushtásp and of Asfandiyár?
We twain, the daughters of the king of kings,
Are captives in the hands of wicked men,
And carry water, bare-foot and unveiled.
Our sire hath merry days and peaceful nights,
While we fare naked in the throng. How blest
Is she that hath a shroud to cover her!
The tears that we are shedding are of blood:
Be our physician and relieve our pain.
If thou canst tell us aught of Sháh and home
Our bane here will be changed to antidote."

V. 1614 He gave a cry beneath his robe that made
The damsels shake with terror: thus he said:—
"I would that there were no Asfandiyár,
And no one in the world to care for him.
Would there were no Gushtásp, that unjust Sháh:
May crown and girdle never see his like!
Perceive ye not that I am trading here,
And toiling that I may support myself?"

When glorious Humái had heard his voice
She recognised him and took heart again,
But, though she recognised his voice, she kept
The knowledge to herself and stood before him
As stricken to the heart as theretofore,
And pouring down the tear-drops on her cheeks.
Her feet and countenance were foul with dust,
Her soul was filled with terror of Arjásp.
The gentle warrior saw that Humái
Had recognised him and he thereupon
Revealed his countenance, his tearful eyes,
His heaving breast, and visage like the sun.
The process of the world astonished him,
He bit his lips in dudgeon and addressed

His sisters thus: "Restrain your tongues awhile,
For hither have I come to war and win
Renown by toil. Can any's sleep be sweet
Whose daughter is a water-bearing slave?
May heaven father, and earth mother, her:
This lot I praise not I."
The young man left
The warehouse, hurried to Arjásp, and said:—
"O king! be happy, master of the world,
And live for ever. While upon my journey
I chanced upon a deep sea all unknown
To merchantmen. A whirlwind rose thereon;
The boatman said: 'I mind me of no like.'
On board we all were wretched and in tears,
Consuming for our persons and our lives.
I swore by God, the one and only Judge:— V. 1615
'If I escape from this with life to shore
Then will I hold a feast in every realm
That hath a monarch to rule over it,
Invite all cordially to be my guests,
And pour my very soul out for their sakes.
I will give more or less to all who ask,
And hold the mendicant exceeding dear.'
Now let the monarch show me special favour,
And honour this request of mine today;
I have arranged to make his army's chiefs—
Those whom the world's king honoureth—my guests,
And by so doing set my mind at ease."
Arjásp, that witless man, was well content
On hearing this; his head was filled with folly.
He bade: "Let every one of high degree,
And all the noblest of the army, visit
The dwelling of Kharrád today as guests,
And, if he giveth wine, bemuse yourselves.'
Then said Asfandiyár: "King, hero, sage
The high-priest and the ruler of the world!

My house is small, thy palace is too grand.
The rampart of the hold will do for us;
'Tis early summer. I will light a fire,
And glad the nobles' hearts with wine."
Arjásp
Said: "Go the way that pleaseth thee; the host
Is king at home."
The paladin rejoicing
Conveyed a mass of firewood to the ramparts.
They slaughtered steeds and sheep, and carried them
Up to the summit of the hold. The wood
Sent up a smother that obscured the sky.
He brought forth wine and, when they had partaken,
Each reveller became a slave thereto.
The chiefs all left bemused; to steady them,
While in their cups, each clutched a narciss-stem.[1]

§ 11

How Bishútan assaulted the Brazen Hold

V. 1616 The night came and a conflagration blazed,
Whose burning scorched the sky. When from the look-out
The watchman saw the flames by night, and day
Made thick with smoke, he left his post and came
Exultingly, and "mated to the wind,"
Thou wouldst have said. On reaching Bishútan
He told what he had seen of fire and fume.
Said Bishútan: "A valiant warrior
In courage passeth elephants and lions."
He sounded corn-pipe, flute, and brazen cymbal;
The blare of trumpets went up from his door.
The army from the plain approached the hold,
And bright Sol gloomed with dust. The troops were all
In mail and helm, their livers seethed with blood.

[1] "c'est-à-dire le bras d'un page" (Mohl). *Cf.* p. 164.

When news spread in the hold: "A host hath come,
And all the world is hidden by dark dust,"
The place rang with the name "Asfandiyár";
The tree of bale was bearing colocynth.
Arjásp armed for the fray and rubbed his hands
Together vehemently. "Let Kuhram,
The lion-catcher," thus he bade, "take troops,
Mace, scimitar, and shaft."
He told Turkhán:—
"Exalted chief! speed forth with troops for fight.
Take thou ten thousand of the garrison,
All men of name and battle-loving swordsmen,
Discover who are our antagonists,
And why it is that they attack us thus."
Turkhán, the chief, with an interpreter
Went in all haste to that side of the hold.
He saw a host equipped with arms and armour,
Their flag a leopard on a sable ground.
Their leader Bishútan was at the centre, V. 1617
And all his troops' hands had been bathed in blood.
He held Asfandiyár's own mace and rode
A noble steed; he seemed to be none other
Than brave Asfandiyár, and there was none
But hailed him monarch of Írán. He ranked
The troops to right and left till none saw daylight.
Such were the blows of spears with flashing points
That thou hadst said: "Blood raineth from the clouds."
The forces on both sides advanced to battle,
All who were men of war and loved the fray.
Then Núsh Ázar, the swordsman, galloped forth,
And offered combat to the enemy.
The noble chief Turkhán went out to him
To bring his head down trunkless to the ground.
When Núsh Ázar beheld him on the field
He clapped his hand upon his sword and drew it;
He cut Turkhán asunder at the waist,

And filled Kuhram's heart with dismay and anguish;
Then in like fashion fell upon the centre,
Where great and small were all alike to him,
Thus those two armies battled, each with each,
While dust collected in a cloud above them.
In full flight from the host the chief Kuhram
Made for the hold, and said before his sire:—
"O famous monarch, glorious as the sun!
A mighty host hath come forth from Írán;
Their leader is a doughty warrior,
Who by his stature is Asfandiyár.
None like him hath approached the hold before.
He beareth in his hand the spear which thou
Beheld'st him grasping at fort Gumbadán."[1]
The words distressed the heart of king Arjásp,
Because the old feud had revived again.
He gave the Turkmans orders: "Go ye forth
Upon the plain in mass, surround the foe,
V. 1618 Roar like great lions, let none live, and name not
Írán again."
The soldiers marched away
With wounded hearts and eager for the fray.

§ 12

How Asfandiyár slew Arjásp

Asfandiyár, when night was growing dark,
Arrayed himself again in fighting-gear,
Undid the chest-lids that more air might come
To those inside, and brought kabáb and wine
With other provand, battle-mail, and raiment.
When they had eaten he supplied to each
Three cups of wine, which gladdened them, and said:—

[1] *I.e.* at the battle fought in that neighbourhood, when Asfandiyár delivered Gushtásp from his perilous position on the mountain, where he was beleaguered by Arjásp. See p. 106 *seq.*

"This night is one of bale. Hence we may well
Win fame. Put forth your powers. Quit you like men,
And from calamities make God your refuge."
Then of those warriors adventurous
He formed three troops, one in the stronghold's midst
To combat any that they met, the second
To move upon the gate and take no rest
From strife and bloodshed, while he told the third:—
"I must not find hereafter any trace
Of those that revelled with me yesternight,
So take your daggers and behead them all."
He went with twenty valiant men of war
In haste, committing to them other work,
Went boldly to the palace of Arjásp,
Arrayed in mail and roaring like a lion.
Humái, when these shouts reached her in the palace,
Came rushing with her sister Bih Afríd,
Their cheeks all hid by tears, to meet the chiefs.
Asfandiyár perceived that spring-like pair
As he approached. "Like flying dust-clouds speed," V. 1619
Thus spake that lion-man, "to my bázár
With all its wealth, for 'tis upon my way,
And wait till in this fight I lose my head
Or win a crown."
This said, he turned from them,
And vengeful sought the palace of Arjásp.
He entered with an Indian sword in hand,
And slaughtered all the nobles that he saw.
The audience-chamber of that famous court
Was blocked, its floor was like a billowing sea,
So many were the wounded, stunned, and slain.
Arjásp awoke, was troubled at the din,
Arose in fury, donned his coat of mail
And Rúman helm, a bright glaive in his hand,
The war-cry on his lips and rage at heart.
Asfandiyár rushed from the palace-gate,

And, clutching with his hand a glittering sword,
Cried to Arjásp: "Now will this merchantman
Supply thee with a sword that cost dínárs.
I give it as a present from Luhrásp,
And on it is impressed Gushtásp's own seal.
When thou shalt take it thine heart's blood will flow,
And thy next stage will be beneath the dust."
They closed in strife outrageous, foot to foot
With sword and dagger, striking whiles at waist
And whiles at head. Arjásp failed 'neath the blows;
He was a mass of wounds; his huge form sank,
And then Asfandiyár beheaded him.
Such is the fashion of life's changeful day!
Thou hast by turns its sweetness and its bane.
V. 1620 Why dote upon this Hostel by the Way?
Grieve not, thou canst not, as thou know'st, remain.
Asfandiyár, freed from Arjásp, commanded
To kindle torches and to fire the palace:
He raised its reek to Saturn. Having charged
The eunuchs with the womenfolk he carried
Them all away—the Lustre of the place—
And set a seal upon the treasury-door,
No one opposing him. He sought the stables,
He mounted there with Indian sword in hand,
And of the Arab horses bade his men
To saddle such as liked him. There went forth
A cavalcade of eight score warriors,
Approven horsemen on the day of battle.
He furnished mounts, moreover, for his sisters,
And marched forth from the court-gate of Arjásp,
But left a few Íránians, men of name,
With noble Sáwa in the hold. "When we,"
He said, "have gone outside the walls, have gone,
I and my noble warriors, to the plain,
Secure the gate against the Turkman troops,
And may my good star aid me. When ye think

That I have joined our noble troops outside,
Then let the watchmen from the look-out cry :—
'Blessed be the head and crown of Sháh Gushtásp.'
And when the Turkman troops come toward the hold,
In flight retreating from the battlefield,
Then ye shall throw the head of king Arjásp
Before them from the tower of the watch."
The valiant hero rushed upon the plain, V. 1621
And slaughtered all the Turkmans that he found.
As he approached the troops of Bishútan
They saw and praised him in amaze that he,
Who was so young, should show such bravery.

§ 13

How Asfandiyár slew Kuhram

Whenas the moon had left her silvern throne,
And when three watches of the night had passed,
The watchman shouted lustily, proclaiming :—
"Gushtásp, the Sháh, hath gained the victory,
And may Asfandiyár be ever young.
May heaven, moon, and fortune be his helpers,
Who hath in vengeance for Luhrásp beheaded
Arjásp and, adding lustre to our Grace
And customs, cast him down from throne to dust,
And made the name and fortune of Gushtásp
Resplendent."
Hearing such a cry the Turkmans
All listened while Kuhram grew dark of heart
By reason of that watchman, was astonied,
And spake thus to Andarímán : "How clear
This cry is in the night ! What, sayest thou,
Can be the cause ? Let us consult, for who
Would dare to bawl thus by the monarch's couch
And after dark ? What tricks might such an one

Play in the day of battle and thus bring
Our nobles into straits! So send and have
His head cut off, whoever he may be.
If one of our own household is our foe,
And he is backing up our enemies
V. 1622 With evil words and evil presages,
Then will we brain him with an evil mace."
Now when the cry went on persistently
Kuhram was stricken to the heart with anger
Against the watch whose utterance, spread abroad
In such a fashion, filled the nobles' ears.
The soldiers said: "The shouts increase, beyond
A watchman's! Let us drive the foemen forth
And after take[1] this host."
Kuhram was straitened
At heart about that watchman, writhed, and frowned.
He told the troops: "These men have filled my heart
With dread about the king. We must return
At once, past question. What may happen after
I know not."
So that night they left the field,
Whereat Asfandiyár, with ox-head mace
And mailed, pursued them. When Kuhram had reached
The portal of the hold, and saw the Íránians
Pursuing, "What is left us," he exclaimed,
"Unless to fight with brave Asfandiyár?
Unsheathe and send your message by the sword."
But fortune frowned and those famed chiefs fared ill.
The two hosts raged and smote each other's heads
Till morning came, and then the chiefs of Chín
Had had their day. Ascending to the ramparts
The warriors of Asfandiyár inside

[1] In the sense of "No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm." —*Hamlet*, i. 1.

The hold flung down therefrom the severed head
Of brave Arjásp—the king that slew Luhrásp.
The Turkmans fought no longer, from their host
Arose a cry, and all the troops unhelmed.
The two sons of Arjásp wept and consumed V. 1623
As in fierce fire, while all the army knew
What they must weep for on that evil day.
They said: "Alas! thou gallant heart, thou prince,
Thou chief of lions, hero, warrior!
May he who slew thee perish on the field
Of vengeance, may his day be gone for ever!
To whom shall we intrust our families?
Whose standard shall we have upon our right?
Now that the dais is bereaved of king
Let crown and host not be."
The soldiers longed
For death, and from Khallukh up to Taráz
Was universal anguish. In the end
They all of them advanced to certain death,
Advanced in armour with their helms and casques.
Rose from the battlefield the sound of strife,
The air above was like a dusky cloud.
The slain lay everywhere in heaps, the plain
Was thick with trunkless heads and limbs; elsewhere
Lay hands and maces, while a wave of blood
Rose at the portal of the hold, and who
Could tell left hand from right? Asfandiyár
Advanced; Kuhram, the captain of the host,
Opposed him; and those warriors grappled so
That thou hadst said: "They are one!" The peerless chief
Took by the waist Kuhram, whirled him aloft—
A wondrous feat—and dashed him to the ground
While all the Íránian army roared applause.
They bound his hands and bore him off in shame,

And all his splendid armament dispersed.
Then maces fell like hail, the earth was full
Of Turkmans, and the air was charged with death;
Heads showered beneath the swords like leaves from trees;
One side lost all, the other gained a throne;
Blood dashed in billows on the battlefield;
Here heads were trampled and there heads were crowned.
V. 1624 The world is fain to keep its secret still,
And no man really wotteth of its will.
Those that had noble chargers fled the field,
Those in the Dragon's gullet strove in vain.
Few of Túrán or Chín were left and none
Of name. All flung away their mail and helms,
And all had blood-drops in their eyes. They made
All haste to come before Asfandiyár
With eyes like early spring. The general
Shed blood unmercifully, and the host
Approved the want of mercy that he showed;
He gave no quarter to a warrior,
And had the wounded slaughtered past account;
No noted warrior of Chín remained,
No prince was left surviving in Túrán.
They moved the camp-enclosure and the tents,
And left the whole field to the slain. He reared
Before the palace-gate two lofty gibbets
Whence twisted lassos fell. From one he hung
Andarímán head-downward, from the other
His brother[1] living, sent out troops on all sides,
And when they lighted on some chieftain's seat
His orders were that they should burn it down:
They wrecked thus all the cities of Túrán;
No man of name was left in any place,
And not a horseman in Túrán or Chín.

[1] Kuhram.

Thou wouldst have said: "There rose a murky cloud,
And poured down fire upon the battlefield."
The atheling, with matters in this trim,
Brought wine and gathered all the chiefs to him.

§ 14

How Asfandiyár wrote a Letter to Gushtásp and his Answer

Asfandiyár called for a scribe and told
The story of his stratagem and fight.
The illustrious scribe sat on the throne and bade V. 1625
His Turkman slave to bring him silk of Chín
And pen which having inked, he lauded first
The Master of the Moon, the Lord of Saturn,
Of Venus and the Sun, of elephant,
Of ant, of victory, and Grace divine,
The Lord of the imperial diadem,
The Lord of right direction and good gifts,
The Lord of place and counsel: "May the name
Of Sháh Gushtásp for ever live through Him,
Luhrásp have all his will in Paradise!
I reached Túrán and by a road which I
Shall never praise. If I narrated all
Youth's locks would age with grief, but when the Sháh
Is so disposed I will expound the plan
Of my campaign; his sight will gladden me,
And I shall revel in these longsome toils.
The Brazen Hold, by means of the devices
That I employed to compass my revenge,
Is void both of Arjásp and of Kuhram,
Is void of all save wailing, grief, and mourning.
I have spared none; the herbs upon the plain
No longer bear; the lion and wolf devour
The brains, and lusty pards the hearts, of men.
Oh! may the crown of Sháh Gushtásp illume

The sky, and Sháh Luhrásp make earth a rosebed."
They set the signet of Asfandiyár
Upon the letter and made choice of riders,
Whom that young ruler sent forth to Írán
On beasts that went apace with lips afoam.
He tarried till he should receive the answer,
Repressing all a self-willed man's impatience,
And in a little while the answer came,
A key whereby his fetters were unlocked.
It opened thus: "Established may he be
That seeketh good. The rightly minded sage
Will compass in adversity God's praise."
V. 1626 It further said: "I pray the one just God
That He may guide thee ever. I have planted
In Paradise a Tree that is more bearing
Than any set by Faridún. Its fruit
Is gold and rubies and its leafage beauty
And Grace. Its summit chafeth on high heaven;
Its roots withal are precious. May this Tree
Abide for ever, flourishing of stem,
And glad of heart—the favourite of fortune!
As for thy words: 'By craft and subtlety
I sought for vengeance for my grandsire's death,
And then for thy description of the bloodshed,
And of thine exploits in the fight—the persons
Of kings are precious though renown may come
From strife and travail. Guard thy person well
And wisdom too, for wisdom nourisheth
The mind with knowledge. Thirdly thou hast said:
'Of all these thousands I have spared not one.'
Be thy heart ever warm and merciful,
Be temperate in soul and soft in voice.
Let it not be thy business to shed blood,
Or fight with chieftains, saving for revenge,
Because the bloodshed hath surpassed all bounds
In this thy wreak for eight and thirty brothers.

But in that, though thy grandsire in old age
Had banished craft and ill will from his heart,
Since they shed his blood thou hast shed theirs too,
And closed with them like lions when they fight,
For that be ever fortunate and happy,
And do the dictates of thy soul and wisdom.
I long to look upon thy face and mind
So doughty and so shrewd. On reading this
Bid thy troops mount, and come back with thy chiefs
To court."
The speedy dromedaries went, V. 1627
And all Írán re-echoed with the news.
Now when they had returned the cameleers
Came to the exalted chief who had no peers.

§ 15

How Asfandiyár returned to Gushtásp

Asfandiyár, when he had read the letter,
Distributed dínárs and made an end,
Reserving but the treasure of Arjásp,
While lavishing the treasures of his kinsmen:
The troops were all enriched beyond compute.
On plain and mountain there were steeds and camels,
All brand-marked by the monarch of Túrán.
Ten thousand head of these Asfandiyár
Collected from the plain and mountain-top,
And bade his men to load of them a thousand
With gold out of the royal treasury,
Three hundred with brocade and thrones and casques,
Five score with musk, with ambergris, and jewels,
Five score with crowns and splendid diadems,
One thousand with brocaded tapestries,
Three hundred with the native stuffs of Chín,
With hides both raw and tanned and painted silks

He furnished litters with brocaded curtains,
And carried off from Chín two troops of girls,
With cheeks like spring and tall as cypress-trees,
With reed-like waists and pheasant-like in gait.
A hundred ladies, beautiful as idols,
Went with the sisters of Asfandiyár.
Five ladies of the kindred of Arjásp—
His mother, his two sisters, and two daughters—
Toiled on in misery and wretchedness,
In pain and grief and stricken to the heart,
V. 1628 And, finally, he fired the Brazen Hold;
The tongue of flame ascended to high heaven.
He razed the castle-ramparts to the ground,
And sent the dust up from the land of Chín.
He gave his three young sons a force each, saying:—
"Take various roads, and fortune be with you.
If any shall insult you on your way
Cut off the head of such remorselessly.
March ye in haste toward the desert-track,
And raise your spear-points to the shining sun.
I shall myself go by the Seven Stages
To hunt the lion. Make what speed ye may,
But I shall take my time, shall occupy
The road's end, and expect you in a month."
Asfandiyár went with his famous troops
To hunt along the Seven Stages' route.
As soon as he approached the frozen stage
He saw his baggage lying all about.
The air was sweet, the earth was beautiful:
Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis spring in summertime!"
He gathered all the goods that he had left,
And marvelled that he was so fortunate.
As he was drawing nearer to Írán—
The land of Lions and of warriors—
He whiled away two weeks with hawks and cheetahs,
Distressed with travail and the longsome road,

And kept a watch for his three noble sons,
Whose long delay in coming angered him,
But when the armies and the sons arrived
He smiled on all, and said: "My journey done,
I was anangered at your tarrying."
The three sons kissed the ground and made reply:—
"Who hath a father in the world like thee?"
He went thence toward Írán and bare off all
The treasures to his valiant countrymen.
The folk decked all the cities of the land,
And called for wine, for harp, and for musicians.
They draped the walls with hangings and showered musk
And ambergris from overhead. The air
Resounded with the voice of minstrelsy, V. 1629
And earth was full of horsemen armed with spears.
Gushtásp made merry when he heard the news,
And pledged the tidings in a cup of wine.
At his command all that were with the host,
And all the great men of the provinces,
Assembled at the palace-gate with drums.
The chiefs went out to meet Asfandiyár.
His sire, moreover, with illustrious sages,
The great, the wise, and the archmages, went
With beaming countenance toward his son,
And all the city talked of little else.
Now when the prince beheld his father's face
His heart grew merry and his spirit bright.
He urged his black steed forward from the ranks,
That steed which set a-blaze the flames of war,
And, having lighted down, embraced his sire,
Who, wondering at his exploits, praised him much,
Thus saying: "Ne'er may time and earth lack thee."
Thence went they to the palace of the Sháh
In popularity with all the world.
Gushtásp prepared the palace and the throne;

His great good fortune made his heart rejoice.
They spread the banquet in the halls. The Sháh
Said to the chamberlain: "Invite the lords."
The boon-companions came from every side
To that imperial Sháh. The royal wine
In crystal goblets gave to those that quaffed
A lustre like the sun's; upon their cheeks
The flush of wine was burning, and the hearts
Of evil wishers died and were consumed.
The son drank modestly his father's health,
The father in like manner pledged his son,
And asked him how he passed the Seven Stages.
Asfandiyár replied: "Nay, ask me not
Such questions in the banquet-hall. Tomorrow
V. 1630 Will I relate the story in thy presence,
Wise king of men! Tomorrow thou wilt hear
In soberness and own that God hath triumphed."
Each one among the guests that grew bemused
Went homeward clinging to a moon-faced page.[1]
Told is the story of the Stages Seven,
Peruse it in His name—the Lord of Heaven,
Lord of the sun and of the shining moon,
Him who alone hath power for bale or boon.
If this tale please our conquering monarch's eye
I set my saddle on the circling sky.
The time to quaff delicious wine is now,
For musky scents breathe from the mountain-brow,
The air resoundeth and earth travaileth,
And blest is he whose heart drink gladdeneth,
He that hath wine and money, bread and sweets,
And can behead a sheep to make him meats.
These have not I. Who hath them, well is he.
Oh! pity one that is in poverty!
The garth is strewn with rose-leaves and each hill
With tulip and with hyacinth, and still

[1] *Cf.* p. 150.

The nightingale complaineth in the close,
And at its plaining burgeoneth the rose.
At night it never ceaseth to complain;
The rose is overcharged by wind and rain.
I see the cloud's sighs and its tears, but why
The narciss should be sad I know not I.
The nightingale bemocketh rose and cloud;
Perched on the rose it carolleth aloud.
I wist not which of them it holdeth dear, V. 1631
But from the cloud a lion's roar I hear.
The cloud's robe sundereth and from its form
Fire flasheth, and the tear-drops of the storm
Bear witness for themselves upon the ground
Before the imperious sun. Who shall expound
The descant of the nightingale, disclose
The purport of its quest beneath the rose?
But mark it at the dawning of the day,
If thou wouldst list to its heroic lay,
Bewailing dead Asfandiyár, for he
Surviveth only in that threnody.
A-nights the cloud with Rustam's voice doth flaw
The heart of elephant and lion's claw.

PART III

THE STORY OF ASFANDIYÁR'S FIGHT WITH RUSTAM

ARGUMENT

Asfandiyár, finding that his father still is disinclined to abdicate, makes a formal application to him to do so. Gushtásp, having ascertained his son's destiny from the astrologers, sends him to bring Rustam in chains to court. Asfandiyár sets forth very unwillingly. Long negotiations with Rustam follow.

At length the two engage in single combat, and in the end Rustam, by the help of the Símurgh, is victorious. He brings up Asfandiyár's son, Bahman, at his own home. Gushtásp sends for Bahman, and appoints him to succeed to the throne.

NOTE

"A man there is," said Muhammad in the Kurán, "who buyeth an idle tale, that in his lack of knowledge he may mislead others from the way of God, and turn it to scorn :—For such is prepared a shameful punishment!"[1]

The reference is to a certain merchant, Nadr the son of Hárith by name, who had brought back from the banks of the Euphrates the story of Rustam and Asfandiyár, and recited it to the inhabitants of Mecca, where it became for a time much more popular than Muhammad's own deliverances. The Prophet never forgave Nadr, who was one of the two prisoners put to death by him after the battle of Badr, A.D. 623. It is evident, therefore, that the story contained in this part was well established at the beginning of the seventh century of our era. Reference already has been made[2] to the compromise arrived at in Íránian legend between the conflicting claims of Rustam and Asfandiyár, and the reader will find it fully set out in the following pages.

§ 22. The Alwá slain by Núsh Ázar is identical probably with

[1] RK, 284.

[2] p. 116 *seq.*

the Alwá previously recorded to have been slain by Kámús.[1] They are both warriors and natives of Zábulistán, and the function of both is the same—to give the enemy a temporary triumph which is counteracted by the intervention of a stronger champion. Alwá reappears as we are dealing with a different legend.

§ 1

How Asfandiyár ambitioned the Throne and how Gushtásp took Counsel with the Astrologers[2]

I heard a story from the nightingale,
Which it reciteth from the lays of old,
How, when Asfandiyár bemused with wine
Came forth in dudgeon from the royal palace,
His mother, Cæsar's daughter, Katáyún,
Took him to her embrace. When midnight came
He wakened from his drowse, called for the wine-cup,
And babbled to his mother, saying thus:—
"The Sháh is treating me injuriously.
He said: 'When by thy valour thou shalt take
Revenge on king Arjásp for Sháh Luhrásp,
Shalt free thy sisters from captivity,
And win us high renown throughout the world,
Shalt weed it utterly of malcontents,
And renovate it by thy labours, then
The whole realm and the army shall be thine,
And therewithal the treasure, throne, and crown.'
Now when the sky shall bring again the sun,
And when the Sháh shall wake, I will recall
His words to him; my rights must be asserted. V. 1632
If he shall give to me the crown of kingship
I will adore him to idolatry;
But if he will not and his face shall frown
I swear by God, who stayeth up the sky,

[1] Vol. iii. p. 188.

[2] This heading is not in the original, which has merely "The Beginning of the Story."

That I will place the crown on mine own head,
And give the land and treasure to the people,
Will make thee lady of Írán and do
The deeds of lions with my strength and courage."
His mother sorrowed at his words. The silk
Upon her turned to thorns. The famous Sháh,
She knew, would give him not throne, crown, and treasure,
And said to him: "What would thy princely heart
Require yet of the world, my toil-worn son?
The treasure, rule, and conduct of the host
Thou hast already: seek for nothing more!
Thy sire, my son! hath nothing but the crown,
While thou hast all the troops and all the realm.
How better were it for the savage Lion
To stand before his sire with girded loins!
When he departeth crown and throne are thine,
Thine greatness, fortune, state."
Asfandiyár
Replied: "How goodly was the sage's saw!
'Thy secret unto women ne'er confide,
For thou wilt find it in the street outside;
Moreover do not as she biddeth thee,
For woman good at rede thou ne'er wilt see.'"
With frowning face and all abashed his mother
Repented of her words. Asfandiyár,
Howbeit, went not to Gushtásp but spent
His time with minstrelsy and boon-companions.
V. 1633 He drained the wine-cup for two nights and days,
And took his ease among his moon-faced dames.
Gushtásp upon the third day was informed
About his son's pretension to the state,
That he was growing more resolved and needs
Must have the Kaian crown and throne. Forthwith
He called Jámásp and all Luhrásp's diviners.
They came, their tablets on their breasts, and he
Inquired about the brave Asfandiyár:—

"Is he to have long life? Will he abide
In peace, prosperity, and all delights?
Is he to wear the crown of king of kings,
And will the good and great rely on him?"
The wise man of Írán,[1] on hearing this,
Looked at his ancient astrologic tablets,
While sorrow filled the lashes of his eyes
With tears, and knowledge all his brow with frowns.
He said: "Ill are my days and ill my stars,
And knowledge bringeth ill upon my head.
Would fate had cast me to the lion's claws,
Preventing glorious Zarír; then I
Had not beheld him flung upon the ground,
All dust and blood; or would that mine own sire
Had slain me ere ill fortune reached Jámásp!
Although Asfandiyár in combat now
May rend a lion's heart by his attack;
Though he hath cleared the world of enemies,
And knoweth neither fear nor dread in fight;
Though he hath made the world to fear no foe,
And cloven the dragon's form in twain, hereafter
We shall have reason to lament for him,
And taste enough of woe and bitterness."
The Sháh exclaimed: "O admirable man!
Speak out and turn not from the path of knowledge.
If he shall fare as did the chief Zarír
To live will be henceforth an ill to me.
Come tell me instantly, for bitterness V. 1634
Hath come upon me from my questioning,
Whose hand will slay him and so cause the pang
For which I needs must weep?"
Jámásp replied:—
"Will not ill fortune reach me too, O king?
His death will be within Zábulistán,
And at the hands of Zál's heroic son!"

[1] Jámásp.

The Sháh replied: "Give this affair due weight.
If I resign to him the imperial throne,
The treasure, and the crown of majesty,
He will not even see Zábulistán,
And none will know him in Kábulistán;
He will be safe from every turn of fortune,
And favouring stars will be his monitors."
The astrologer rejoined: "Who can escape
The process of the sky? None can avoid
By courage or by might the sharp-clawed Dragon
Above our heads. What is to be will be
Past doubt, the when the wise seek not to know.
Although Surúsh be lying at his feet
The prince will perish by a great man's hand!"
The monarch mused, his mind a brake of thoughts;
He pondered on the processes of time,
Which in their turn instructed him in crime.

§ 2

How Asfandiyár demanded the Kingdom from his Father

When night had gathered up its reins and gone,
And when the dawn had raised its shining spear,
The Sháh sat down upon the throne of gold;
And glorious Asfandiyár approached.
V. 1635 He stood before the presence of his sire
In deep concern, slave-like with folded arms,
And when the throng of warriors and nobles
Had gathered round the Sháh, and when the archmages
Were ranged in line before his throne, and when
The captains of the host stood ranked before him,
Asfandiyár, the elephantine chief,
Began to vent his grievances, and said:—
'O Sháh! live evermore. Upon the earth
The Grace of God is thine. Through thee are love

And justice manifest, and crown and throne
Adorned. A slave am I to thee, my sire!
And run to do thy will. Thou knowest how
Arjásp came hither for religion's sake
With cavaliers from Chín, while I had sworn
A mighty oath e'en as God prompted me:—
'Whoever shall make wreckage of the Faith,
And give his heart to idol-worshipping,
Him will I smite asunder and fear none.'
So when Arjásp came forth to war I shrank not
From fighting that fierce Leopard; yet didst thou
Disgrace me at the instance of Gurazm,
When quaffing royally upon a feast-day,
Didst put my body into heavy bonds,
And blacksmiths riveted my chains and fetters;
Didst send me to the hold of Gumbadán,
And give me up to strangers in contempt.
On quitting Balkh thou wentest to Zábul,
Regarding warfare merely as a feast,
And though consigning Sháh Luhrásp to death
Beheldest not the falchion of Arjásp.
Jámásp, when he arrived, saw me in bonds,
And scathed thereby, assured to me the realm V. 1636
And throne, and pleaded much. I said to him:—
'These heavy chains, these columns, and these shackles
By blacksmiths riveted, will I display
To God upon the Great Day of Account,
And cry to Him against the evil-doer.'
He said to me: 'The blood of all our princes—
Men of high rank and armed with massive maces—
Shot down by arrows on the battlefield;
Thy sisters carried captive; Farshídward,
The noble warrior, o'erthrown and wounded
Upon the field of battle; and the Sháh
Himself in flight before the Turkmans, writhing
At having put Asfandiyár in bonds—

Is not thy heart on fire at things like these,
And all this travail, grief, and misery?'
He added much—words fraught with grief and anguish.
I burst my yoke and bonds, and came apace
Before the ruler of the flock. I slew
Unnumbered foes; the Sháh approved my deeds.
If I should speak about the Seven Stages
Good sooth! I ne'er should end. I glorified
The name of Sháh Gushtásp, I took the head
Off from Arjásp and brought his wife and children,
His crown and throne and treasure, to this court.
The goods thou placed'st in the treasury;
My capital was blood, my profit toil.
Thou wast so full of promise, oath, and pledge
That I more readily performed thy bidding.
Thou said'st: 'If I shall look on thee again
I will esteem thee dearer than my soul,
And give thee diadem and ivory throne,
Because thy courage meriteth the crown.'
V. 1637 Now I am shamed before the mighty men,
Who say: 'Where are thy treasures and thy host?'
What pretext hast thou? What is my position?
For what end have I gone through all the toil?
It is the part of Sháhs to keep their word;
They do not break their bonds and covenants.
Now therefore set the crown on thy son's head
As thine own father crowned thee in his stead."

§ 3

How Gushtásp answered his Son

The Sháh replied: "'Tis ill to turn from right.
Till now thou hast been better than thy word:
The Maker of the world be thine ally.
I see not at this present anywhere

A public or a private foe. What man
Shall catch thy name and shall not writhe thereat?
Did I say writhe? Nay verily not live!
Thou hast no peer except the worshipful
And famous son of Zál, who hath for life
Zábulistán, Kábulistán, Ghaznín
And Bust, and is exalted o'er the sky
In valour, but accounteth not himself
A subject and transgresseth my commands
And counsels, stooping not to league with me
Although he was a slave to Kai Káús,
And was devoted unto Kai Khusrau,
But sayeth of the kingship of Gushtásp:—
'He hath a new crown while my crown is old.'
Now thou hast not a rival in the world
Midst Rúmans, Turkmans, or our own free folk,
And must set forward to Sístán forthwith, V. 1638
And put in practice colour, force, and guile,
Lay bare the sword and mace, and bring me Rustam,
The son of Zál, Zawára, Farámarz,
In bonds and suffer none to mount the saddle.
Then by the Judge of all the world, the Source
Of strength, who kindleth star and moon and sun,
Then by the Zandavasta and Zarduhsht,
The good religion, and by Núsh Ázar,
The Fire and Grace divine, as soon as thou
Accomplishest these things thou shalt not hear
Of further opposition at my hands,
But I will give thee treasure, throne, and casque,
And seat thee crowned upon the state myself."
Asfandiyár replied: "O worshipful
And noble Sháh! thou quitt'st the ancient rule;
Thou shouldst speak measured words. Fight with the king
Of Chín and send dust from his warriors,
But wherefore fight against an agèd man,

Whom Kai Káús dubbed 'Lion-capturer'?
From Minúchihr as far as Kai Kubád
The whole state of Írán rejoiced in him.
Men called him: 'Lord of Rakhsh,' 'World-conqueror,'
'King-maker,' 'Lion-queller.' He is great;
His fame is not a new thing in the world;
He hath his patent from Sháh Kai Khusrau,
And if the patents of the Sháhs are void
One should not seek for patents from Gushtásp!"
The Sháh replied: "My famed, illustrious son!
Whoe'er hath turned him from the way of God,
His patent is as is the desert-wind.
Thou surely must have heard how Sháh Káús
Went erring at the bidding of Iblís
V. 1639 And, having scaled the sky on eagles' wings,
Fell vilely into water at Sárí.[1]
He brought a dív's child from Hámávarán,
And made her mistress in the royal bower.[2]
By her malpractice Siyáwush was slain,
The day departed from his family.[3]
It is not well to pass the gate of one
That turneth from his fealty to God.
If thou art eager for the crown and throne
Lead forth the host and hie thee to Sístán.
Upon arriving there bind Rustam's hands,
And bring him with the lasso on thine arm.
As for Zawára, Farámarz, and Zál,
See that they set no traps upon thy way.
Bring them afoot and running to my court,
And bring them so that all the troops may see;
Then none hereafter will revolt from us
However he may wish it and repugn."
The chieftain frowned. "Go not about," he said,
"To compass such designs, for neither Zál
Nor Rustam is in question here, but thou

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 102 *seq.* [2] *Id.* p. 86 *seq.* [3] *Id.* p. 200 *seq.*

Wouldst rid thee of Asfandiyár; thou art
Concerned about the throne of empiry,
And wouldst be quit of me. Let crown and throne
Of chiefs remain thine own, for me the world
Hath nooks enough, yet I am still thy slave,
And bow my head to thy command and will."
Gushtásp said: "Be not angry. Thou shalt have
This greatness yet and therefore be not downcast.
Choose from the army many cavaliers—
All veterans in war. At thy disposal
Are implements of war and troops and money; V. 1640
'Tis for thy foemen to despond. Without thee
What are the treasure and the host, the throne
Of kingship and the golden casque, to me?"
Asfandiyár replied: "No host will serve;
The world-lord, if my fate is drawing nigh,
Will not withhold it with his troops!"
He quitted
The presence of his sire with indignation
Both for the crown's sake and his father's words,
And entered his own hall in doleful wise,
His heart all sorrowful, his lips all sighs.

§ 4

How Katáyún counselled Asfandiyár

Much moved and weeping sun-cheeked Katáyún
Went to the glorious Asfandiyár,
Her son, and said to him: "O thou that art
The memory of the heroes of the world!
Bahman hath told me that thou wouldest go
From this Rose-garden to Zábulistán,
And wilt put Rustam, son of Zál, in chains,
That master of the mace and scimitar!
Now hear of all things what thy mother saith:—

Rush not to evil and endeavour it not.
That cavalier of elephantine might
Disdaineth battle with the river Nile,
Dis-sundereth the White Dív's liverstead,
And maketh with his sword the sun to stray.
He slew the monarch of Hámávarán
Withal, and none is bold to chide with him.
V. 1641 When he took vengeance on Afrásiyáb
For Siyáwush he made earth like a sea
With blood. But if I were to talk for ever
I could not tell the tale of his good deeds.
Give not thy head for crown's sake to the winds,
For no one yet was born already crowned.
Thy father is an old man; thou art young—
A mighty man of hardihood and valour.
The whole host's eyes are on thee; plunge not then
Thyself through anger in calamities.
Sístán is not the sole place in the world,
Act not the youth and be not masterful.
Make me not sad in this world and the next,
But hearken to thy loving mother's words."
Asfandiyár replied: "O loving mother!
Heed what I say: thou knowest Rustam well,
And what thou say'st of his accomplishment
Is true as Zandavasta. Thou mayst search
At large throughout Írán but wilt not find
A better man; 'twould be a shame to bind him.
Such ill, not good, proceedeth from the Sháh!
But still there is no need to break my heart,
Though if thou dost so I will tear it out.
How can I disobey the Sháh's command,
Forego a state like this? Grant that my life
Shall finish in Zábul; 'tis Heaven's process
V. 1642 That draweth me thither, and if Rustam yieldeth
He ne'er will hear unfriendly words from me."
His mother's eyes rained blood, she tore her hair,

And cried: "O mighty, raging Elephant!
Strength maketh thee too prodigal of life.
Thou art no match for elephantine Rustam,
And therefore go not hence without a host.
Take not thy life, on thine own shoulders merely,
To that fierce Elephant; thy will to go
Is also miscreant Áhriman's for thee.
Oh pause! Take not thy children into Hell,
Or no wise man will call thee well-advised."
The warlike prince made answer: "Not to take them
Would be unwise, for while a youth remaineth
Within the bower his spirit is repressed,
His mind is dark, and, O my prudent mother! V. 1643
I want their help on every battlefield.
There is no need for me to take a host,
Just kith and kin and certain chiefs at most."

§ 5

How Asfandiyár led a Host to Zábul

At dawn, at cock-crow, from the court-gate rose
The din of drums, the elephantine chief
Gat on his steed and led his powers like wind.
He marched until he came where two roads met;
Then prince and army halted in dismay.
One road led toward the hold of Gumbadán,
The other toward Zábul. The leading camel
Lay down, thou hadst said "wedded to the ground."
The camel-driver smote it on the head,
But for the while the caravan was stayed.
It seemed ill-omened to the atheling,
Who gave commandment to behead the beast
So that the harm might come upon itself,
And he himself not lose the Grace of God.
The warriors cut its head off on the spot,

And turned forthwith the presage on the camel.
Though vexed about the beast, Asfandiyár
Affected to disdain the evil omen,
And said: "When one hath triumphed, and illumed
Earth by his fortune and his eminence,
He ought to smile since good and ill alike
Derive from God."
He then fared toward the Hírmund,
But fearful of mishap. As they were wont
They pitched the tent-enclosure while the chiefs
Chose their own camping-ground. The prince set up
Throne and pavilion; thither fared the favoured.
Asfandiyár provided wine and minstrels,
And he and Bishútan sat down together,
V. 1644 Rejoicing his own heart with song and filling
His nobles' hearts with bluster. When old wine
Had made the faces of the warrior-king
And of his lords to blossom like the rose
He said thus to his friends: "I have abandoned
The Sháh's injunctions and his way withal.
He said: 'Get this affair of Rustam's over:
Bate naught of bondage and humiliation.'
I have not acted as my father bade me,
Because the brave and lion-hearted Rustam
Hath many toils in other chieftains' stead
To his account and with his massive mace
Reformed the world. The whole state of Írán
From Sháh to slave surviveth to this day
Through him. I need a valiant messenger,
Instructed, wise, and of retentive mind,
A cavalier of Grace divine and lustre,
A man that Rustam will not over-reach.
If Rustam will come hither and illume
My gloomy soul, by graciously allowing me
To bind him, he shall not experience
For his discretion any harm from me.

I wish him well if he will think no ill."
"That is the proper course," said Bishútan,
"Hold thereunto and seek the hurt of none."

§ 6

How Asfandiyár sent Bahman to Rustam

Asfandiyár then summoned to his presence
Bahman, held talk with him at large, and said :—
"Array thee in brocade of Chín and mount
Thy sable steed, wear too a royal crown,
Bedecked with jewels fit for paladins,
So that whoever seeth may discern thee
Among the notables and, recognising
That thou art one of royal race, invoke
The Maker's blessings on thee. Take five steeds
With golden trappings, and ten archimages, V. 1645
All men of reputation and degree,
Proceed to Rustam's house, and do thine errand
With right good will. Greet him from us, be kind,
Address him, adding compliments, and say :—
'Let him that groweth great and keepeth all
The world unscathed give thanks to God that He
At all times recogniseth excellence ;
Howbeit one that is both great and good,
And keepeth his own heart from frowardness,
Will find his might and riches all the more,
Be happy in this Hostel by the way,
And, by renouncing every sordid aim,
Hereafter compass Paradise. With us
Both good and evil are but transient things
As all of wisdom know. Dark dust at last
Will be our couch, our spirit wing to God.
Those that know Him will toil to serve the Sháhs.
And now let us appraise thee faithfully

Without exaggeration or default,
For thou hast lived through countless years and seen
Full many a king on earth. Thou know'st that 'tis
Unseemly to hark back from wisdom's way
For thee who hast such greatness, troops, and treasure,
Such noble horses, crown, and throne, all which
Thou hadst from my forefathers for prompt service;
Yet for how long did Sháh Luhrásp possess
The world and yet thou never cam'st to court!
And since he gave the kingdom to Gushtásp
Thou hast not recognised the Sháh, not written,
Or paid to him the customary service,
V. 1646 Hast never gone to court to do him homage,[1]
Or hailed him as thy Sháh. Yet from Húshang,
Jamshíd, and Farídún who won by valour
The kingship from the offspring of Zahhák,
Until we reach the time of Kai Kubád,
Who set the crown of greatness on his head,
There hath not been a monarch like Gushtásp
In fight, in feast, in counsel or the chase.
He hath received the pure and good religion,
Both error and injustice are no more,
For when the Lord's way shone forth gloriously
Bad doctrine and the Dív's way disappeared.
Thereafter when Arjásp came forth to fight,
With troops like pards and chiefs like crocodiles,
And no one knew the number of his host,
Our famous sovereign encountered him,
And made a graveyard of the battlefield,
Till no one could discern the face of earth.
In sooth until the Resurrection Day
The tale will ne'er grow old among the great.
He is the man to break a lion's neck,
And everything is his from east to west,
His from Túrán as far as Sind and Rúm;

[1] Reading with C and P.

The whole world is a bit of wax to him.
Among the spearmen of the desert too
Full many cavaliers come to his court;
They send him toll and tribute from their realms,
Because they have not strength to fight with him.
This have I said to thee, O paladin!
Because his soul is vext on thine account
In that thou hast not come to his famed court,
Nor recognised his nobles, but hast chosen
A nook wherein thou hid'st thyself; yet how,
Unless they ban all feeling, can our chiefs
Cease to remember thee who hast done good
In all things alway and hast raised thy head
To do the bidding of the Sháhs? If any
Should reckon up thy toils they would exceed
Thy treasures; yet no Sháh could acquiesce
In what is told of thee. Gushtásp said: "Rustam,
Because of much goods, province, and stored treasure, V. 1647
Hath tarried at Zábul and grown bemused
With drink, and none hath profit from a drunkard.
Though wanted he is absent from the field,
And doth not see me even at festivals."
The Sháh was wroth and sware an oath one day
By bright day and the azure dim of night:—
"None of this chosen host shall look on him
Here in the court unless in bonds." And now
Upon this matter have I left Írán;
The Sháh would not allow me time to breathe.
Be circumspect and shun the monarch's wrath:
Hast thou not seen the fury in his eyes?
If thou wilt come, obeying my command
And mourning thy remissness in the past,
Then by the sun, the bright soul of Zarír,
And by that noble Lion my father's life,
I swear that I will make the Sháh repent,
And cause the moon and stars to shine again.

Moreover Bishútan will bear me witness
That, having mind and wisdom for my guides,
I oftentimes have tried to pacify
The Sháh, though seeing that thou wast to blame.
My father is the lord; I am the liege,
And never will I swerve from his command.
A conclave of thy family should sit,
Consult, and take this matter well in hand.
Allow Zawára, Farámarz, and Zál,
As well as noble and discreet Rúdába,
To hear what I advise in all respects,
And recognise the goodness of my words.
This house must not be wrecked and be the den
Of pards and lions. When I bear thee bound
Before the Sháh I will set forth to him
Thy many faults, then rise and bring him back
From wrath and wreak, let no wind blow on thee,
But act as native worth would have of me.'"

§ 7

How Bahman came to Zál

V. 1648 Bahman, or ever he had heard the words
Of that illustrious prince, went on his way.
He donned a robe of royal cloth of gold,
And placed the crown of greatness on his head,
Then set forth proudly from the camp-enclosure
With standard raised and fluttering behind him.
The atheling went over the Hírmund—
A noble youth upon a mighty steed.
Immediately the watchman sighted him,
And sent a cry toward Zábulistán:—
"A gallant, warlike cavalier hath come
Upon a sable steed with golden trappings.
Behind him are attendant cavaliers,
And he hath passed in safety o'er the stream."

Zál mounted on his saddle instantly,
With lasso in the straps and mace in hand,
Then coming to the watch-tower saw Bahman,
And from his liver drew a deep, cold sigh.
He said: "This is a famous paladin
Of noble rank clad in a royal robe.
In sooth he is a kinsman of Luhrásp,
And may his advent prove our country's weal."
Departing from the watch-tower he approached
The gate and paused distracted on his saddle.
It was not long before Bahman, whose head
Was higher than the turning sky, appeared
And, having no acquaintance yet with Zál,
Waved with his royal arm, and then approaching
Cried: "Noble thane! where is the son of Zál,
This people's lord, the backbone of our times,
For great Asfandiyár hath reached Zábul,
And pitched his tents upon the river-bank?"
Zál said to him: "O mine impetuous son!
Dismount, take wine, and rest, for Rustam now
Is coming from the chase with Farámarz, V. 1649
Zawára, and their retinue. Come then
With these thy cavaliers as honoured guests,
And cheer thy heart with many a draught of wine."
Bahman made answer thus: "Asfandiyár
Enjoined not minstrelsy and boon-companions.
Give me a guide to take me to the chase."
Zál said: "What is thy name? Thou art in haste!
What is thy will? Methinketh that thou art
A scion of Gushtásp or Sháh Luhrásp."
Bahman replied to him: "I am Bahman,
Son of the world-lord of the brazen body."
Then noble Zál dismounted and did homage.
Bahman alighted smiling, and the twain
Exchanged their greetings. Earnestly Zál pleaded:—
'Wait here, there is no colour for such haste."

Bahman rejoined: "Not thus must we delay,
And slight the mission of Asfandiyár."
Zál chose a warrior that knew the road,
And sent him with Bahman forth to the chase.
That veteran, hight Shírkhún, went first as guide,
Just pointed to the spot and homeward hied.

§ 8

How Bahman gave the Message to Rustam

A mountain lay before the youth who urged
His gallant charger thither, then looked down
Upon the chase. The captain of the host
Appeared in sight—a man like Mount Bístún.
He held a sapling in one hand whereon
An onager was spitted. By his side
Were placed his iron mace and other gear.
V. 1650 Within his other hand he held a goblet
A-brim with wine; his son was in attendance;
Rakhsh roamed about the meadow. There were trees,
Grass, and a stream withal.
"'Tis either Rustam,"
Bahman said, "or the rising sun, for none
In all the world hath looked on such another,
Or heard of such from famous men of old.
I fear me that the brave Asfandiyár
Will not stand up to him, but quit the combat.
So let me kill him with a crag and make
The hearts of Zál and of Rúdába writhe."
He loosed a flinty boulder from the height,
And sent it downward from the lofty peak.
Zawára from the hunting-ground beheld it,
And heard the rumble that it made withal.
He shouted: "Paladin and cavalier!
A stone is rolling from the mountain-top!"

But Rustam to Zawára's wonderment
Ne'er moved nor laid aside the onager;
He waited till the stone was close to him,
While all the mountain darkened by its dust,
Then with a kick dispatched it far away,
Whereat Zawára praised him joyfully.
Bahman was sick at heart at Rustam's deed
And, marking both his majesty and mien,
Said: "If the glorious Asfandiyár
Should fight against a man of such renown
He would be vanquished vilely. It were better
For him to deal with Rustam courteously,
Who, if he overcame Asfandiyár,
Would seize on all the country of Írán."
He gat upon his wind-swift steed and quitted
The mountain in a muse, informed the archmages
About the wonder that he had beheld,
And quietly proceeded on his way.
When he was hard upon the hunting-ground
The peerless Rustam spied him as he came,
And asked an archimage: "What man is this? V. 1651
I take him for a kinsman of Gushtásp."
Then Rustam with Zawára and the rest,
Both great and small, went forth to meet Bahman,
Who swift as smoke alighted from his steed,
Exchanging greetings and all courtesies,
And Rustam said to him: "Until thou tellest
Thy name thou wilt not get thy will of me."
The youth replied: "Renowned Bahman am I,
Son of Asfandiyár, that upright prince."
The paladin embraced him on the spot,
And made excuses for his tardy coming.
Then both with their respective retinues
Set forth for Rustam's camp. Now when Bahman
Was seated he gave greetings for himself
And for the Sháh and the Íránians.

"Asfandiyár," he then went on to say,
"Hath journeyed from the court as quick as fire
And, as the Sháh, victorious and exalted,
Enjoined him, pitched his camp on the Hírmund.
Now if the noble cavalier will hear me
I have a message from Asfandiyár."
"The Sháh's son," Rustam answered, "hath endured
Much and hath travelled far; so first of all
Let us partake of what we have, and then
The world is at thy bidding."
On the board
He laid new bread and hot roast onager;
Slaves helped Bahman and matchless Rustam parled.
He placed his brother by the prince but summoned
No other nobles to the feast. He put
A second onager before himself—
His customary portion at each meal.
He sprinkled salt, cut up the meat, and ate;
Meanwhile the exalted prince could not but gaze.
V. 1652 He ate a little of his onager,
But not a hundredth part of Rustam's meal,
While Rustam smiled upon him, saying: "Sháhs
Possess the state in order to enjoy.
If thou art such a feeble trencherman
How ever didst thou pass the Seven Stages?
In what sort dost thou wield the spear in battle
Who hast, O prince! so little appetite?"
Bahman said: "God forbid a prince should talk
Or eat much. Eating little he is great
In war and ever hath his life in hand."
Then Rustam smiled and cried: "One should not veil
One's manhood from mankind."
Then he filled up
A golden bowl with wine and drank "The free."
He gave another to Bahman, and said:—
"Take this and drink it unto whom thou wilt."

Bahman was frayed thereat, and so Zawára
First took a draught thereof and said to him:—
"O scion of the Sháh! may wine and drinker
Rejoice in thee."
Bahman took back the bowl
At once, but that sweet youth was temperate,
And Rustam's appetite, neck, arms, and shoulders
Astounded him. Both mounted, and Bahman
Set forth with noble Rustam and then gave
The message of the prince fair-famed and brave,

§ 9

How Rustam made Answer to Asfandiyár

When he had heard Bahman the ancient hero
Mused and replied: "Yea I have heard the message
And joy to see thee. Bear Asfandiyár
This answer from me: 'Lion-hearted chief
And famed! the man whose soul is tenanted V. 1653
By wisdom seeth matters in the gross,
And when he hath both valour and success,
Possessions, hoarded treasures, majesty,
With heroism and a lofty name,
And is the favourite of noble men,
As thou art at this moment in the world,
Should not be evil-minded. Let us worship
God and the right, not grasp the hand of ill.
A word when uttered inexcusably
Is but a tree that hath no fruit or scent,
And if thy soul shall tread the path of greed
Thy travail will be long and profitless.
'Tis well a prince should weigh his words, and well
To have no wish to utter aught amiss.
Thy servant used to joy in all that said:—
"No mother's son is like Asfandiyár.

In courage, wisdom, enterprise, and counsel
He will be greater than his ancestors."
How famous is thy name in Hindústán,
In Chín and Rúm and in the land of warlocks!
I thank thee for thy counsels and give praise
By day and in three watches of the night.
I sought of God, what now I joy to find
Accorded me, that I might look upon
Thy cherished face, thy greatness, manhood, love,
That, seated side by side in joy, we twain
Might drain a goblet to the king of kings,
And now I have attained my whole desire—
The wish that I was instant to achieve.
I will appear before thee unattended
To hear from thee the Sháh's behest and bring
To thee the patents granted by just Sháhs
From Kai Khusrau right back to Kai Kubád.
Now, matchless hero! look upon my case,
My pains and actions, on the goodly deeds
That I have done, my hardship and my travail,
V. 1654 And how I have been servant to the Sháhs
From this day backward to the days of old.
If chains are to repay me for these toils,
And ruin from the monarch of Irán,
'Tis well for none to look upon the world,
Or only just to look and tarry not.
I will tell all my secrets when I come,
And speak in tones that all the world may hear.
Then if there should appear a fault in me—
A fault for which I ought to lose my head—
Then I will set a yoke on mine own shoulders,
And come afoot clothed in a leopard-skin;
But inasmuch as I am he that brake
Fierce elephants' necks and flung them to the Nile,
Forbear unseemly words to me and keep
Thy mischiefs to afflict the Dív's heart. Say not

What no one e'er hath said, use not thy courage
To encage the wind. The mighty cannot pass
Through fire at all, nor, save they swim, through water;
Thou canst not hide the shining of the moon,
Or mate the fox and lion. Pour not then
Contention o'er my path, who am myself
Adept therein. None hath beheld me fettered,
No savage lion ta'en my post. Act thou
As princes should. Consult not with the Dív.
Put from thy heart wrath and revenge for trifles,
And look not on the world with boyish eyes.
Rejoice then, cross the stream, and may God bless thee.
Do honour to my mansion at a feast;
Keep not aloof from me who am thy slave.
Just as I was a liege to Kai Kubád,
So now I joy, both heart and brain, in thee.
If thou wilt come to me with all thy host,
And pass two months with me in merriment,
Both man and beast shall rest from toil, foes' hearts
Grow blind with envy. Beast on land, and fowl
On water, wait thee if thou wilt but stay.
I shall behold thy warrior-might, and thou V. 1655
Shalt with thy scimitar o'erthrow the lion
And pard. When thou art fain to lead the host
Íránward to the monarch of the brave,
I will unlock the ancient hoards which I
Have here collected by my scimitar,
And place at thy disposal everything
That I have gathered by my might of hand.
Take what thou wilt and give the rest away;
Make not a day like this a grief to me.
Then when the time shall come for thee to go,
And thou art anxious to behold the Sháh,
I will not separate my reins from thine,
And we will go to him in company.
By asking pardon I will soothe his wrath,

And kiss him on the head and feet and eyes.
Then will I ask the great but unjust Sháh:—
"Why should these hands of mine be put in bonds?"'
Retain my words in each particular,
And tell them to the great Asfandiyár."

§ 10

How Bahman returned

Bahman, when he had heard what Rustam said,
Departed with the holy archimages,
But Rustam—peerless chieftain—stayed awhile
Upon the road and, having called Zawára
And Farámarz, said thus: "Depart to Zál
And to the fair Moon of Zábulistán,[1]
And say to them: "One who ambitioneth
The world hath come—Asfandiyár. Set up
Within our halls a golden throne, and place
For him apparel such as monarchs wear,
As on the occasion with Sháh Kai Káús,[2]
But let the audience-hall be grander still.
Prepare ye somewhat too by way of food:
There must not be a lack of things to eat,
V. 1656 For the Sháh's son hath come to us, hath come
In a revengeful mood intent on war.
He is a famous warrior and brave prince,
And heedeth not a wilderness of lions.
I go to him, and if he will accept
Mine invitation there is hope for all.
If I shall find him well disposed toward me
I will present him with a crown of rubies,
And not withhold from him my treasures, jewels,
Bards, mace, and sword. If I return despondent,
Because I have not a white day with him,

[1] *I.e.* Rúdába. [2] Vol. ii. p. 83.

Thou knowest that my twisted lasso bringeth
The heads of savage elephants to bonds."
Zawára said to him: "Have no such thought:
Men do not seek to fight without a cause.
I know not any king in all the world
For rede and courage like Asfandiyár;
Ill deeds proceed not from a man of wisdom,
And he hath not received a wrong from us."
Zawára went to Zál. For his part Rustam,
Bestirred himself and hurried to the Hírmund,
His head all dazed with fear of coming ill,
Drew rein and waited for Bahman to greet him.
Now when Bahman had reached the tent-enclosure,
And stood before the presence of his father,
The glorious Asfandiyár inquired:—
"What answer did the famous hero give thee?"
Bahman, on hearing, sat before his sire,
Narrated all his tidings point by point;
And, having given Rustam's greeting first,
Told all about the message and reply
Before his father, told what he had seen,
Or noted privily. "I never saw,"
He said, "in any company a man
Like elephantine Rustam. He possesseth
A lion's heart, the bulk of elephant,
And haleth from the Nile the crocodiles.
He now is on the bank of Hírmund,
Without his armour, helmet, mace, or lasso,
And fain would see the Sháh. I do not know
His purpose as to thee."
Asfandiyár, V. 1657
Wroth with Bahman, disgraced him in full court,
And said to him: "Men of exalted rank
Should not confide in women; furthermore
The employ of children in affairs of moment
As messengers is neither brave nor valiant.

Where ever hast thou looked on warriors,
Who hast heard not a charger's tramp? By making
An elephant of war of Rustam thou
Wilt break the spirit of our famous host."
In private he spake much to Bishútan,
And said: "This noble Lion of the fight
Will act the youngster and, I will engage,
Hath not a wrinkle yet in spite of age!"

§ 11

The Meeting of Rustam and Asfandiyár

The glorious Asfandiyár bade set
A golden saddle on his sable steed;
Then from his famous troops a hundred horsemen
Set forth with him. His charger neighed on one hand,
And Rakhsh upon the other. Matchless Rustam
Lit from his steed, advanced to greet the hero,
And, greeting over, said: "I prayed to God—
The only God—that He would be thy Guide,
And thou with thy great men and troops withal
Hast reached us safe and sound. Come let us sit,
Use gracious terms, then give a good reply.
My witness, be assured, is God himself,
And wisdom is my guide in what I say,
For I shall gain no glory from this matter,
Nor will I tell a lie in any case,
v. 1658 That now were I to gaze on Siyáwush
I should not look so happy as I do,
For thou resemblest nobody but him,
That wearer of the crown, that world-bestower.
Blest is the Sháh who hath a son like thee!
Thy sire may glory in thy height and face.
Blest are the people of Írán, the slaves
Of thine unsleeping fortune and thy throne.
Ill-starred is he who seeketh thee in fight:

From throne and fortune he will come to dust.
May all foes' hearts be filled with fear of thee,
And thine ill-wishers' riven, may thy fortune
Prevail through all thy years and thy dark nights
Be as the day to thee."

Asfandiyár
Thereat alighted from his royal steed,
Embraced the hero's elephantine form,
Called many blessings down on him, and said:—
"Thank God, O chief of paladins! that I
Behold thee glad and bright of mind. 'Tis well
That we should praise thee and that this world's heroes
Should be as dust before thee. He is blest
That hath a son like thee, for he beholdeth
A fruitful Branch, and blest is he that hath
A stay like thee, for he will be unscathed
By evil fortune! When I looked on thee
I called to mind that leader of the host,
That cavalier and Lion—Zarír."

Then Rustam:—
"Thou paladin and world-lord shrewd and ardent!
I have one wish, O prince! a wish which granted
Would make me well content, and 'tis that thou
Shalt visit me in state and make my soul
Bright at the sight of thee. Though there be naught
Worth thine acceptance we will do our best."

Asfandiyár replied: "Thou memory
Of this world's heroes! he that hath a name
Like thine will prove a joyance to Írán
As one whose counsel must not be transgressed, V. 1659
His land and home not slighted. Ne'ertheless,
I may not swerve in public or in private
From what the Sháh commanded, and he did not
Instruct me to abide within Zábul,
Or with the nobles of that warlike land.
Act so that thou mayst take of fortune's fruit;

Go thou the way the monarch biddeth thee.
Delay not thou to put thy feet in fetters;
Those of the king of kings are no disgrace,
And when I bear thee bound before the Sháh
The evil will recoil on him. Meanwhile
Thy bondage will have hurt me to the soul,
I shall have waited on thee like a slave.
I will not leave thee in thy bonds till night;[1]
No harm at all shall come upon thy life.
Dost thou suspect foul play, O paladin?
Beyond all doubt the Sháh will do no wrong,
And he hath told me: 'I will give to thee
Mine ivory throne, my treasures, and my crown.'
When I shall set that crown upon my head
I will entrust the whole world to thy hands.
Before the all-just God I do no wrong,
Nor shall I shame in presence of the Sháh.
When thou returnest to Zábulistán,
What time the gardens blossom with the rose,
Thou shalt receive such precious gifts from me
As will adorn thy land."

"O noble man!"

Said Rustam, "I have prayed the almighty Judge
That I might glad my heart by seeing thee,
But how can I give ear to these thy words?
We both are men of rank, one old, one young,
Two paladins both wise and vigilant;
But I am fearful of the evil eye,
And that our heads will wake from pleasant dreams.
The Dív is making way betwixt us two
To warp thy heart by means of crown and throne.
A thing like this would be a shame to me,
One that would last for ever, that a leader,
One high-born and a chieftain such as thou art,

[1] The night of the day on which Rustam should be brought before the Sháh.

A noble Lion and a mighty man,
Should come not for a while to mine abode, V. 1660
Or be my guest within these coasts. If thou
Wilt banish this contention from thy thoughts,
And do thy best to exorcise the Dív,
I will adorn my soul by sight of thee,
And do whate'er thou biddest save these bonds,
For they are utter shame, defeat, and outrage.
No one shall see me bound while I survive:
My life on that. Enough!"

Asfandiyár
Replied: "O memory of this world's heroes!
Thy words are truth, not falsehood, and men gain
No lustre from deceit; still Bishútan
Is cognisant of all the Sháh's commands
When I set forth. 'Bestir thyself,' he said,
'As touching Rustam. Be thy whole concern
To fight or bind him.' If now I shall go,
A blithe, triumphant guest, to visit thee
In thine own home, and from the Sháh's commands
Thou turn thy neck, 'twill mar mine own day's lustre.
For one thing I shall fight thee and employ
The leopard's instinct in that fight, forget
The bond of bread and salt, and cast a slur
Upon the honour of my lineage;
While if I disobey the Sháh the fire
Will be my dwelling in the world to come.
Yet, since thou wishest, let us pass one day
With wine in hand. Who knoweth what may chance
Tomorrow, so we need not talk thereof?"

Said Rustam: "I will do so. I will go
And doff my road-dress. For a week have I
Been hunting and been eating onager
Instead of lamb. When things are ready call me, V. 1661
And sit down with thy kinsmen at the board."

Hurt and concerned he mounted, hurried home,

Beheld the face of Zál, the son of Sám,
The son of Narímán, and said: "Famed chief!
I have been visiting Asfandiyár,
And seen a horseman like a straight-stemmed cypress,
A man of wisdom, dowered with grace and Glory.
Thou wouldest say: 'Sháh Farídún, the hero,
Bequeathed to him both might and understanding.'
His presence bettereth hearsay: there doth shine
From him the Grace imperial and divine."

§ 12

How Asfandiyár summoned not Rustam to the Feast

When Rustam left the bank of the Hírmund
The great Asfandiyár sat lost in thought,
And Bishútan, his counsellor, anon
Came to the camp-enclosure. Said the hero:—
"We have dealt lightly with a grave affair:
I have no business in the house of Rustam,
And he for his part should not look on me.
If he come not I will not summon him;
Else, should one of us die, the other's heart
Would burn with anguish for the slain, his head
Shed tears for friendship's sake."
Said Bishútan:—
"Who hath a brother like Asfandiyár,
Famed chief? By God, when first I saw you two,
And neither of you tried to make a quarrel,
My heart became like early spring thereat,
As much for Rustam as Asfandiyár;
But as I looked more deeply I perceived
The Dív controlling wisdom's path. Thou knowest
What Faith and honour bid, the laws of God,
And thine own sire's intent. Restrain thyself,
Do life no hurt, and hear thy brother's words.

I heard what Rustam said: his greatness matched V 1662
His courage, and thy fetters will not gall him.
He heedeth not thy Grace divine and state.
The chief of cavaliers, the son of Zál,
Will not put his head lightly in the net.
The matter, as I fear, will be prolonged
For evil, being 'twixt two haughty men.
Thou art a great man, wiser than the Sháh,
And abler both in skill and bravery.
If one would feast, the other strive for vengeance,
Consider which the more deserveth praise."
The prince replied: "If I shall not obey
The Sháh I shall be censured in this world,
And God will call me to account hereafter.
I would not sell both worlds for Rustam's sake;
No man will sew up his own eyes and heart."
The other said: "The outcome of good counsel,
Will profit thy pure body and thy soul.
I have said all. Now choose thee which is best;
A prince's heart should be above revenge."
The chieftain bade the cooks to spread the board,
But said to no one: "Summon Rustam hither."
The eating done he took the cup in hand,
Spake of the Brazen Hold, of his own manhood,
And drank in honour of the king of kings,
While Rustam stayed within his palace-walls,
Remembering his promise to eat bread.
Now when a long while passed and no one came,
Though Rustam often looked along the road,
And when the time for feasting had gone by,
The hero's dignity could brook no more.
He smiled and said: "My brother! deck the board,
And summon to the feast the men of birth.
If 'tis the custom of Asfandiyár
To treat us with such superciliousness
As to invite and then not summon us, V. 1663

Hope for no good from him."

He spake. They decked
The board and, having eaten, rose. Then said
The heroic paladin to Farámarz:—
"Bid saddle Rakhsh as they would do in Chín.
I shall go back and tell Asfandiyár:—
'Prince though thou art, remember: he that breaketh
His plighted word hath in himself effaced
The pathway that the great and good have traced.'"

§ 13

How Asfandiyár excused himself for not summoning Rustam to the Feast

Then like an elephant he mounted Rakhsh,
Whose neighings could be heard two miles away,
And hurried to the river, where the troops
Pressed eagerly to see him, while the hearts
Of those that saw him loved him. All exclaimed:—
"This noble chief resembleth none but Sám,
The cavalier. An iron hill is he
Upon the saddle and thou wouldest say
That Rakhsh is Áhriman's own mount, and were
A mighty elephant his opposite
Then splash its head with mourning hues. The king
Must have a witless pate to give up one
That is possessed of Grace divine and prowess—
A moonlike chieftain like Asfandiyár—
To slaughter for the sake of crown and throne.
He groweth greedier with age and fonder
Of signet and of diadem."

When Rustam
Drew near, Asfandiyár went forth to meet him.
Said Rustam: "Paladin and glorious youth,
But of new-fangled manners! so thy guest
V. 1664 Was thought unworthy of the summoning!

Thy promise is a promise and no more.
Attend to what I say, and be not hasty
Without a cause with one advanced in years.
Thou thinkest far too highly of thyself,
And art too haughty to the chiefs. Good sooth!
Thou holdest me but light in point of courage,
And slight in counsel and in understanding.
Know that I am the Rustam of the world,
The lustre of the race of Narímán.
I make the Black Dív gnaw his hand, I lay
The heads of sorcerers low. The mighty men
That saw mine iron corslet, and that great
And roaring Lion that I rode, abandoned
The field without a blow and on the plain
Threw down their bows and arrows—valiant horsemen
And fighters like Kámús, the warrior,
Or like the Khán of Chín, whom with coiled lasso
I haled from saddle and bound head and foot.
The warden of the Sháhs am I, the stay
Of brave men everywhere. Mistake me not
Because I begged a boon, nor deem that thou
Art higher than heaven. Thy royal Grace and state
Led me to seek thy rede and fellowship,
And I desire not that a prince like thee
Should have his fortunes ruined by my hand,
Because heroic Sám is mine ideal,
At whose approach the lion fled the wood,
And I am his memorial on earth,
O valiant, royal prince Asfandiyár!
Long have I been the chief of paladins,
But never spent a day in evil-doing,
Have purged the world of foes and undergone
Abundant toil and stress. I thank my God
That in these latter days I have beheld
My peer—a glorious Shoot who will take vengeance
On infidels amid the world's applause."

V. 1665 Then smiling on him said Asfandiyár:—
"O son of Sám, the horseman! thou wast hurt
In that no summons came whereas I took
Some credit to myself. Be not displeased
Because I spared thee on so hot a day
So long a journey, for I said: 'At dawn
I will set out to offer mine excuses;
Then shall I have the joy of seeing Zál,
And be for once quite happy!' But since thou
Hast of thine own self undergone the toil,
Hast left thy home and come across the plain,
Sit down to rest thyself, take up the cup,
And make no show of wrath and bitterness."
Asfandiyár placed Rustam on his left,
Such was the way in which he did the honours!
Then said the veteran: "This is not my place;
Let me have that to which I am entitled."
The prince said to Bahman upon his right:—
"Give him the seat as he demandeth it."
Then Rustam in his wrath said to the prince:—
"Look on me fairly and with open eyes;
Regard my prowess and illustrious stock,
For I am of the seed of valiant Sám.
Though thou hast no seat that befitteth me
I have the Grace, my triumphs, and my prudence."
V. 1666 Thereat the prince gave orders to his son
To place a golden seat upon the dais,
And with a scented orange Rustam came,
And took his seat but he was all aflame.

§ 14

How Asfandiyár spake Shame of the Race of Rustam

Then thus to Rustam spake Asfandiyár:—
"O lion-hearted chieftain of renown!

Now I have heard a tale from archimages,
The mighty men and sages wise of heart,
That Zál is one of evil race, a dív
By birth, and hath no better origin.
They kept him for a while concealed from Sám,
And thought the child a Doomsday to the world.
His head and hair were white, the rest was dark.
Sám at the sight of him was in despair,
And bade them take the young child to the sea
That birds and fish might have him for their prey.
Then the Símurgh came with spread wings but saw
That 'twas no proper child with Grace divine.
She bore him off to where she had a nest,
She carried him away to serve as food,
And threw him in contempt before her young
That they might finish him at feeding-time.
When they attempted to devour the child
They were afraid and would not batten on him,
But passed him over as he was so vile,
And turned away; though ravenous the Símurgh
Could not quite stomach such a thing as Zál,
But made him free of the nest though nobody
Was pleased to see him. He ate carrion
That she rejected, and his wretched body
Was raimentless. She came to love the child, V. 1667
And thus the heaven turned o'er him for a season.
When he had fared on carrion for a while
She carried him all naked to Sístán,
Where Sám, who had no child, adopted him
Through folly, dotage, and stupidity.
The Sháhs and glorious, great men of my race,
My benefactors and mine ancestors,
Then took him up and furnished him withal.
Thus many years passed o'er him; he became
A Cypress, one whose head was out of reach;
It put forth branches and its fruit was Rustam,

Who by his manhood, skill, and mien thus scaled
The sky, in such wise seized on royalty,
Increased in power, and took to villainy."

§ 15

How Rustam answered Asfandiyár, praising his own Race and his Deeds

Then Rustam answered, saying: "Hold thy peace!
Why speak'st thou such provocatory words?
Thy heart is growing into frowardness,
The utterance of thy soul is that of dívs.
Speak what befitteth the great kings; the Sháh
In speaking swerveth not from what is right.
The world-lord knoweth that the son of Sám
Is great and hath both knowledge and fair fame.
Again, Sám was the son of Narímán,
Which hero was the son of Karímán,
And thus they run back to Garshásp, while all
Are scions of Jamshíd. Thine ancestors
Obtained the crown through us, else none had named them.
V. 1668 'Twas I who brought Kubád, the chosen one
Of all the people, out of Mount Alburz,[1]
And but for that he had remained a subject,[2]
Not having treasure, host, or puissance.
In sooth thou must have heard reports of Sám,
Who had the fairest fame of all his time:
First, how there was a dragon once at Tús,
A dragon from whose clutches none could 'scape;
A crocodile in water and a leopard
On land, its breath would soften mountain-flints,
Would broil the fishes' heads in water-ways,
Would scorch the vultures' feathers in mid-air,

[1] See Vol. i. p. 382 *seq.* [2] Reading with C.

And suck in elephants with its breath. Glad hearts
Were saddened at the thought thereof. And next,
There was a fearful and malicious dív,
Whose body was on earth and head in heaven,
Because the sea of Chín reached but his middle;
The sun itself shone with diminished lustre.
He used to take up monsters from the deep
And, towering o'er the orbit of the moon,
Broil them upon the sun while turning heaven
Was all dissolved in tears. These two great Pests[1]
Were rendered lifeless and consumed before
The sword of Sám, the hero. Then again,
My mother was the daughter of Mihráb,
Who made the realm of Sind so prosperous,
And was the fifth descendant from Zahhák,
Who raised his head above all other kings.
Who hath a nobler origin than this?
A wise man will not turn from truth: the honour
Of all the world is mine, and other heroes V. 1669
Must seek to win it back from me. Again,
Mine earliest patent is from Kai Káús;
Thou canst not find a pretext on that score.
I have one too from righteous Kai Khusrau,
Like whom no Kaian ever girt his loins.
My wanderings have covered all the earth,
And many an unjust monarch have I slain.
Whenas I crossed the waters of Jíhún
Afrásiyáb fled from Túrán to Chín.[2]
When Kai Káús went to Mázandarán[3]
My father Zál had much to say thereon.
Thou knowest how that Sháh fared with the dívs,
And in his blindness cried out from his soul.
Alone I journeyed to Mázandarán;
The nights were gloomy and the leagues were long.
I did not spare the White Dív or Arzhang,

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 172, 296. [2] *Id.* ii. 356. [3] *Id.* 30 *seq.*

Púlád,[1] son of Ghundí, or Bíd or Sanja.
Moreover for our monarch's sake I slew
My wise and valiant boy.[2] There hath not been
Another warrior like Suhráb in strength,
In courage, and approof in war. In sooth
Above six hundred years have passed away
Since I was severed from the reins of Zál;
I have been always paladin in chief,
In public or in private 'twas all one.
Just as it was with noble Farídún,
Who set the crown of greatness on his head,
Dethroned Zahhák and brought him, head and crown,
To dust; and secondly, as Sám, my grandsire,
Engrossed the craft and knowledge of the world;
So, thirdly, since I girded up my loins
The person of the monarch hath had rest.
There never were such days of happiness,
The wanderers' feet were never so secure,
As when my will prevailed throughout the world,
And I used scimitar and massive mace.
I speak in order that thou mayst know all,
For thou art prince and nobles are thy flock;
V. 1670 Yet in respect of age thou art a youth,
Though with the Grace of Kai Khusrau. Thou seest
None but thyself and know'st not secret matters.
Now, having talked much, turn we for relief
To wine and hunt therewith the soul of grief."

§ 16

How Asfandiyár boasted of his Ancestry

Asfandiyár, on hearing Rustam's words,
Smiled and his heart began to beat with joy.
He answered: "I have listened to thy toils,
Thy pains, thy combats, and anxieties.

[1] Úlád in the text, but *cf.* Vol. iv. p. 296, *note.* [2] *Id.* ii. 172.

Now hearken to the gests that I have done,
Whereby I raised my head above the noble.
'Twas for the Faith that first I girt my loins,
And cleared the earth of idol-worshippers:
Our warriors could not see the world for slain.
Gushtásp was mine immediate ancestor,
Who was himself begotten by Luhrásp;
Luhrásp again was son of king Aurand,
Who at that time possessed both fame and rank.
Aurand was of the seed of Kai Pashín,
Blessed by his father who was Kai Kubád—
A Sháh of wisdom and of upright heart;
Pursue my race thus to Sháh Farídún,
The root of kings and glory of the throne.
My mother is, moreover, Cæsar's daughter,
Who is the crown upon the Rúmans' head
And sprung from Salm—a glorious lineage,
Instinct with justice, precedent, and Grace.
Salm was the son of valiant Farídún,
Who carried off the ball from all the kings
For valour. I assert what none gainsay, V. 1671
Though many quit the way and few are in it,
That in the presence of mine own forebears,
Those mighty men devout and glorious,
Thou and thy grandsire were but servitors.
I do not seek to best thee but thou hadst
Thy kingship from the Sháhs, who were my sires,
For zealous service. Wait while I tell all,
Then if there be a falsehood point it out.
Since Sháh Luhrásp gave to Gushtásp the throne
I have been girt with valour and success,
And I have slain the perverts from the Faith
Upon the plains of Chín and of Túrán.
Then later on, when through Gurazm's words
My father bound and banned me from the feast,
Ill reached Luhrásp by reason of my bonds:

The Turkmans hid the earth. Then to the hold
Of Gumbadán the veteran Jámásp
Came with a message and in soldier's garb.
When he arrived and saw how I was bound,
Saw how my mind and heart were pierced by care,
He sent for blacksmiths to deliver me
Out of my heavy bondage, but their work
Was far too slow for me because my heart
Yearned for the scimitar. My heart was straitened
I shouted at them, wrenched me from their grasp,
Rose to my height from where I sat and brake
My bonds with mine own hands, then sought the field
Whereon the fortunes of Gushtásp were lost;
And when Arjásp fled with his famed array
Before me I girt up my loins with manhood,
And went like raging lion in pursuit.
As for the Seven Stages thou hast heard
Of mine adventures with the lions there
V. 1672 And with that Áhriman, and how I entered
The Brazen Hold by guile and quelled a world,
Hast heard about my doings in Túrán,
And all the toil and hardship that I bare.
Good sooth, no onager e'er hath endured
Such from a pard, nor maw of crocodile
From sailors' angle. On a mountain-top,
Sequestered by its height from all the throng,
There was a hold. I found the people all
Idolaters and dazed like men bemused.
Since Túr, the son of valiant Farídún,
No man had robbed the hold of its repute.
I took that fortress by my bravery,
I cast the images upon the ground,
And set alight the Fire there that Zarduhsht
Brought in a censer out of Paradise.[1]
Victorious through the just, the only God,

[1] *Cf.* p. 33.

I came again in such case to Írán
That we had no foe left in all the world,
And not a Brahman in his idol-house.
In all my battles I have fought unaided;
No one hath shared with me the cares of war.
Now, seeing that we have so long converst,
Tilt up the wine-cup if thou art athirst."

§ 17

How Rustam vaunted his Valour

Then Rustam spake thus to Asfandiyár:—
"My deeds remain as my memorial;
So now in simple justice hear the words
Of one whose name is known—an ancient man:
If I had gone not to Mázandarán,[1]
And borne my massive mace upon my shoulder,
Where would have been blind Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús,
And our exalted Sháh—that sport of grief?
Who had torn out the White Dív's heart and brain? V. 1673
Who had sufficient trust in his own arm?
Who would have rescued Kai Káús from bonds,
And have restored him to the lofty throne
Whereto from heavy chains I carried him—
The fortune-favoured darling of Írán?
I cut the heads from off the sorcerers;
They saw no bier, no shroud, no burial.
Mine only helpers in those fights were Rakhsh,
And my sharp sword which meteth out the world.
Then when Káús went to Hámávarán,[2]
Where they made fast his feet in heavy fetters,
I took an army of Íránians,
Drawn from wherever there were prince and chief,
Slew in the fight that folk's king, and made void

[1] Vol. ii. p. 44 *seq.* [2] *Id.* 88 *seq.*

Their famous throne. The monarch of the world—
Káús himself—was captive and his heart
Was stricken by anxiety and travail.
Meanwhile Afrásiyáb was in Írán
Together with his host and famous chiefs.
Then it was I who rescued Kai Káús
As well as Tús, Gív, and Gúdarz, and brought them
Back to Írán out of Hámávarán,
Brought all the paladins and men of name.
One dark night as I went before the troops
In search of fame, not rest, Afrásiyáb
Discerned my fluttering flag and heard Rakhsh neigh:
Abandoning Írán he made for Chín,
And justice and thanksgiving filled the world.
Had blood come from the neck of Kai Káús
How could he have begotten Siyáwush?
Had saintly mother not borne Kai Khusrau,
Who would have named Luhrásp for Sháh? Why vaunt
V. 1674 About his crown, the armlets and the throne
V. 1675 Of Sháh Gushtásp[1] who saith: 'Go, bind the hands
Of Rustam'? Not high heaven itself shall bind them!
From boyhood up to now in mine old age
I have not borne such words from any man.
To make excuses and beg off would shame me;
To speak thus mildly is a degradation."
Asfandiyár smiled at his violence
And, reaching out and gripping Rustam's hand,
Said: "Rustam of the elephantine form!
Thou art what all have represented thee;
Thine arm is mighty as a lion's thigh,
Thy breast and limbs are like a lusty dragon's,
Thy waist is fine and slender as the pard's,
And such a chieftain beareth off the day."
He squeezed the hand of Rustam as he spake,
But yet the youth made not the old man writhe;

[1] Reading with P.

Though gall exuded from his finger-nails
Good sooth the hero writhed not with the pain.
Then Rustam grasped the prince's hand in his,
And said: "O prince and worshipper of God!
How blessèd is the famous Sháh Gushtásp
To have a son such as Asfandiyár!
How blest is he who getteth one like thee:
He addeth to the glory of the world!"
He spake and grasped the other's hand until
The prince's face became as red as blood,
Till blood and water oozed out from his nails,
And he was frowning, though he laughed and said:—
"Famed Rustam! drink today. In fight tomorrow
Thou wilt have pain and think no more of feasting.
Or ever I shall saddle my black steed,
And place the royal helm upon my head,
I will unhorse thee with my spear: thereafter
Thou wilt not seek for battle and revenge.
Then will I bind thy hands, bear thee before V. 1676
The Sháh, and say: 'I saw no fault in him,'
Will intercede for thee and urge all pleas,
Will set thee free from sorrow, pain, and travail,
And thou shalt have instead both good and treasure."
Then Rustam, smiling at Asfandiyár,
Said: "Thou shalt have enough of combating.
Where hast thou seen the fights of warriors?
Where hast thou felt the wind of massive maces?
If such then be the aspect of the sky
Love will be veiled between two men at least;
We shall have war instead of ruddy wine,
Use lasso, bow, and strategy, require
The roar of drum instead of voice of harp,
And greet each other with the sword and mace.
Then shalt thou, glorious Asfandiyár!
Behold the rush and pulsing of the fight.
Tomorrow when I come upon the field,

And in the battle man opposeth man,
I will unhorse thee with a firm embrace,
And carry thee away to glorious Zál,
Then seat thee on the famous ivory throne,
And crown thee with the heart-rejoicing crown,
Which I myself received from Kai Kubád,
And may his soul rejoice in Paradise!
I will unlock my treasury fulfilled
With precious things and lay my hoards before thee,
Put all thy troops past want and raise to heaven
Thy crown, then seek the presence of the Sháh
In state rejoicing, boldly set the crown
Upon thy head as thanks to Sháh Gushtásp,
Then gird me as I have been girt erewhile
Before the Kaians, renovate my heart
With joy, and make the Garden's surface weedless.
Men's bodies will not keep their souls within
When thou art Sháh and I am paladin."

§ 18

How Rustam drank Wine with Asfandiyár

V. 1677 Asfandiyár replied: "More talk is useless.
My belly craveth, half the day is over,
And we have had much talk of combating.
Bring ye the table and what food ye have,
But summon nobody that talketh much!"
Now when the board was spread, and Rustam ate,
They were astonied at his appetite.
Asfandiyár and all the other heroes
Set lambs in front of him on every side.
He ate them all, whereat the prince and people
Were lost in wonder. Then the prince commanded:—
"Bring cups and ruddy wine for him, and we
Will note how he will hold forth in his cups,
And prate of Kai Káús."
The drawer brought

A goblet filled with wine of ancient vintage,
And Rustam drank it to the king of kings;
He drained that golden fountain dusty-dry.
The young cup-bearer brought the cup again—
The same with royal wine replenishèd—
And matchless Rustam whispered to the boy:—
"We want no water on the table here.
Why dost thou mingle water in the cup,
And weaken this old wine?"
Said Bishútan
Thus to the server: "Bring a bowlful neat."
He had the wine brought, summoned minstrelsy,
And gazed astound on Rustam.
At departure, V. 1678
When noble Rustam was all flushed with wine,
Asfandiyár said thus to him: "Live happy
While time shall last. May both the wine and meat
Agree with thee, and right be thy soul's provand."
To him said Rustam: "Prince! may wisdom ever
Be thine admonisher. What wine soe'er
I drink with thee is good and nourisheth
My prudent soul. If thou wilt ban this strife,
Wilt magnify thy majesty and wisdom,
Wilt leave the plain and come to mine abode,
Wilt for a season be my joyous guest,
I will accomplish all that I have said,
And set before thee wisdom as a guide.
Pause for a while and strive not after ill;
Show courage and regain thy common sense."
Asfandiyár, the hero, thus rejoined:—
"Sow not a seed that ne'er will grow. Tomorrow
Thou shalt behold the accomplishment of heroes
What time I gird my girdle for the fray.
Moreover do not glorify thyself;
Go home and fit thee for tomorrow's work.
Thou shalt perceive that in the ranks of war

I am the same as in my revelry.
Attack me not upon the battlefield;
Hear mine advice; go not about to fight.
Thou shalt see prowess greater than my words;
Let it not prove a cause of grief to me.
Accept of all the counsel that I give:
Submit to fetters at the Sháh's command
What time we quit Zábul and seek Írán,
And come before the monarch of the brave."
Then grief made Rustam ponder, and the world
Was like a wood before his eyes. He thought:—
V. 1679 "For me to give my hands up to his bonds,
Or rise up in my might and injure him,
Are courses both inglorious and bad,
Both novel and ill precedents. Moreover,
My name will suffer from his bonds while I
By slaying him shall end but ill myself,
And all that tell the tale throughout the world
Will never let my blame grow obsolete,
Thus saying: 'Rustam 'scaped not from a youth
Who went forth to Zábul and bound his hands.'
Then all my fame will turn to infamy,
I shall be smirched and be in evil odour;
While if he shall be slain upon the field
My face will pale in presence of all kings,
And men will say: 'He slew the youthful prince
For speaking harshly.' I shall be accursed,
When I am dead, and called 'old infidel.'
Again, if I shall perish by his hand
Zábulistán will lose both hue and scent,
Zál's seed will perish and no Zábulí
Gain fame thenceforth. Still men at least shall quote
Good words from me when I have passed away,
And if I left but one good word untried,
Past doubting, wisdom's self would take my life."
Then to that haught man thus he spake: "Concern

Hath made my visage wan. Why speak so much
Of bonds? I fear that thou wilt suffer hurt
Therefrom unless the will of heaven be other:
The swift sky's purpose is above surmise.
Thine are dívs' counsels, thou wilt not receive
Wise words. Thou art a man of simple heart V. 1680
And versed not in the world. Know that thy hurt
Is aimed at secretly, for while Gushtásp
Hath crown and throne he will not grow aweary
Of life and fortune, but will keep thee running
About the world and make thee face all dangers.
He hath examined all the earth, and made
An ax of wisdom and a bill of wit,
To find a chief that will not quail to fight thee,
That thou mayst perish by that hand, and he
Still may retain the crown and lofty throne.
Shall imprecations be upon the crown,
And by that token shalt thou couch in dust?
Wilt thou expose my soul to obloquy?
Why wilt thou not consider in thy heart?
Thou art the source of trouble to thyself
Though injured not at heart by any foe.
Act not, O prince! act not so boyishly,
Delight not so in ill, our hearts aggrieve not,
Nor bring calamity on both our souls;
Have some respect for God and for my face,
And act not as a traitor to thyself.
There is no need at all for thee to fight,
To struggle or contend or strive against me.
'Tis Destiny that hath been driving thee
With this thy host to perish by my hand,
While I shall leave an ill name in the world.
Oh! may Gushtásp's own end be also ill!"

When proud Asfandiyár had heard these words
He thus returned reply: "O noble Rustam!
Mark well the saying of a sage of yore,

What time he married wisdom to his soul :—
'An aged deceiver is a fool indeed
Howe'er successful and possessed of rede.'
Thou practisest upon me so to keep
The collar from thy neck, and wouldst that all
V 1681 Who hear this should believe thy specious words,
Call me a man whose purpose is malign,
Call thee a wise man and beneficent,
And say thus : 'Rustam came in all good will,
With invitations, and held out great hopes,
But still the chief rejected what he said,
And would consent to nothing but a fight ;
He treated Rustam's wishes with contempt,
And kept his own tongue charged with bitterness.
Know that I will not disobey the Sháh,
Though 'twere to win the crown and diadem.
My good and evil in this world depend
On him ; he is my Hell and Paradise.
May that which thou hast eaten nourish thee,
And may it work destruction to thy foes.
Go home in safety, tell what thou hast heard,
Prepare for fight, and bandy not more talk.
Come forth at dawn, use every ruse of battle,
And make an end. Tomorrow thou shalt see
The world turn black before thee on the field,
Know how the heroes fight, and what a day
Of battle and contention really is."

Then Rustam said : " O seeker after fame !
Since such a wish as this hath come to thee,
Upon swift Rakhsh will I perform the part
Of host and physic thee with club and mace.
Thou hast heard people saying in thy land,
And grown self-confident because of it :—
'The swords of warriors on the battlefield
Will ne'er avail against Asfandiyár.'
Tomorrow thou shalt see my pointed spear,

As well as somewhat of my horsemanship,
And afterward thou wilt not seek to fight
Upon the battlefield with men renowned."
The valiant youth with laughter on his lips— V. 1682
A laughter that humiliated Rustam—
Replied: "O thou that seekest after fame!
Thou hast been angered quickly by our talk.
Tomorrow, when thou comest on the field,
Thou wilt be more informed about the doings
Of men that are men. I am not a mountain,
Nor is my steed. I shall not be attended,
And, saving for the name of God, shall have
No help from blow of shaft and scimitar.
Thy mother, should thy head go down the blast
Through mace of mine, will weep for pain of heart,
And, if thou art not slain upon the field
Of battle, I will bind and carry thee
Bound to the Sháh that such a slave as thou
May seek not fight with him as thou dost now."

§ 19

How Rustam returned to his Palace

As Rustam went forth from the tent-enclosure
He stood before the entry for awhile,
And thus addressed the tent: "O house of hope!
Blest were the days that saw Jamshíd within thee.
Great wert thou in the time of Kai Káús,
And in the days of favoured Kai Khusrau;
But now the door of Grace is shut upon thee,
For one unworthy sitteth on thy throne."
Asfandiyár, the hero, heard the words,
Strode forth to noble Rustam, and spake thus:—
"Why art thou angry with the tent-enclosure,
Thou well-advised? Well might a man of sense
Bestow upon Zábulistán the name

Of 'Babblestead.' Why need a guest abuse
His host because the guest is weary of him?
V. 1683 Time was," he went on to the tent-enclosure,
'When thou hast held Jamshíd in thine embrace,
Who left the way of God and forfeited
Good days on earth and jocund Paradise.[1]
The day too was when thou for Sháh Káús
Didst serve as veil and shelter for the troops,
Káús who sought to know God's mysteries,
And hankered to investigate the stars![2]
The earth was all convulsed on his account,
And filled with depredation, sword, and arrow.
Gushtásp is now thine owner, and Jámásp
Is standing in his presence. At his side
Is seated on one hand Zarduhsht who brought
The Zandavasta out of Paradise;
Upon the other Bishútan, the brave
And good, not seeking this world's weal and woe;
In front is glorious Asfandiyár,
The man in whom the wheel of fortune joyeth,
In whom the hearts of good men live; the bad
Turn slaves through terror of his scimitar."
The valiant cavalier passed through the gate.
Asfandiyár looked after him and, when
He had departed, said to Bishútan:—
"I must admit his manliness and prowess.
I have not looked on such a horse and horseman,
And know not how this combat will result.
A mighty elephant upon Mount Gang
Is he if he doth come forth armed to battle.
His Grace and comeliness surpass his height,
Yet will he see, I fear, a fall tomorrow.
The Glory of his countenance inflameth
My heart, but still I will not sever it
V. 1684 From our just Sháh's behest. When Rustam cometh

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 134, 139. [2] See Vol. ii. p. 102 *seq.*

Upon the field tomorrow I will dim
His day."
Said Bishútan: "List to my words:
I say to thee, my brother! do not so.
I said to thee before, I say again,
And will not purge my heart of what is right,
Aggrieve not any, for a noble man
Will not submit to injury and wrong.
Take rest tonight and at tomorrow's dawn
Go unattended to his palace, there
Let us enjoy some days of happiness,
And answer every question that he raiseth.
Among the mighty and among the mean
No good is done that is not done by him.
He will not turn away from thy commands,
For I perceive that he is true to thee.
Why struggle so in vengeance and in wrath?
Wash vengeance from thy heart, ire from thine eyes."
Asfandiyár returned this answer: "Thorns
Are growing in the corner of the Rose-bed."[1]
He said moreover: "Surely these thy words
Become not a professor of the Faith!
If thou art minister of all Írán,
The heart, the ears, and eyes of valiant men,
Canst thou approve a course however wise
That bringeth injury upon the Sháh?
Then all my cares and toils have turned to wind,
And all the doctrine of Zarduhsht is wrong,
Which teacheth us that those who disobey
The Sháh's commands shall have their place in Hell.
Thou bid'st me oft: 'Be disobedient,
Reject thou the commandment of Gushtásp.'
Thou sayest it, but how can I convert
Yea into nay through any words of thine?
If thou hast fears about my person I

[1] Of the court, *i.e.* my own people are turning against me.

Now will relieve thee of them. No one dieth
V. 1685 Save at his fated time, and wholly then
One that hath made no name. Tomorrow thou
Shalt see my dealings on the battlefield
With this brave Crocodile."
Said Bishútan:—
"Thou talk'st so much of fight, O chief! because
The foul Iblís[1] hath ceased to wish thee ill
Since thou cam'st hither with the sword and mace.
Thou hast given the Dív an entry to thy heart,
And hearkenest not to me, thy counsellor.
I see thy heart obscured, thy head fulfilled
With strife, and rend my clothes. Oh! how can I
Relieve my heart of terror once for all?
Of two such men, such warriors and brave Lions,
How can I know which body will go under?"
Still vapouring though full of misery
The noble prince returned him no reply.

§ 20

How Zál counselled Rustam

Now Rustam coming to his palace saw
No remedy but fight. Zawára came
And found him wan and gloomy. Rustam said:—
"Go[2] bring mine Indian sword, cuirass, and helm
Of battle, bring my bow and massive bards,
My lasso, mighty mace, and tiger-skin."
Zawára bade the treasurer produce
What Rustam named, who, seeing his fighting-gear,
Cried with a sigh and with dejected head:—
"O war-cuirass! thou hast had rest awhile
From fight; but now a fight confronteth thee.
Prove strong and lucky wear for me at all times.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 70. [2] Reading with C and P.

Oh! what a battlefield is this, for roaring
Two Lions, valiant both, will meet in battle!
And how now will Asfandiyár proceed,
And show what sport amid the blast of war?"
When Zál heard Rustam's words the old man's brain V. 1686
Grew anxious, and he said: "Famed paladin!
What words are these that make me dark of soul?
Since first thou mounted'st on the battle-saddle
Thou hast been single-hearted and sincere;
It hath not irked thee to obey the Sháhs.
I fear me that thy day is near its close,
And that thy star is falling into sleep,
That this will overthrow the race of Zál,
And cast our wives and children to the dust.
If thou art slain in battle by the hand
Of such a youth as is Asfandiyár,
Zábulistán will have no land or water
Left, and our eminence will be engulfed;
While if mishap through this befalleth him
Not e'en thy fame exalted will be left thee,
For they that tell hereof will shatter it,
And say: 'Twas he that slew the youthful prince
For having spoken to him scurvily.'
Now either stand before him as his liege,
Or, if thou wilt not do so, quit thy home.
Seek some obscure retreat unknown to him
That no one in the world may hear thy name,
For such an evil act would gloom thy soul.
Beware then of this monarch of the world,
Buy back again thy words with toil and treasure,
Prefer brocade of Chín to battle-ax,
Prepare gifts also for his troops, and use
Thy riches to redeem thyself from him.
As soon as he departeth from the Hírmund
Mount lofty Rakhsh and, feeling no misgivings,
Attend Asfandiyár upon his journey

That thou mayst see the Sháh's face once again.
How shall he act ill when he seeth thee?
Will wrong become the monarch of Írán?"
V. 1687 "O ancient hero!" Rustam answered him,
"Take not such things so lightly. Now have I
Been long a man and known much good and ill.
I reached the dívs within Mázandarán,[1]
I fought the horsemen of Hámávarán,[2]
I fought Kámús too[3] and the Khán of Chín,[4]
Although earth trembled underneath his steed.
Now if I flee Asfandiyár do thou
Resign the flowers and palace of Sístán.
With God, the Fosterer, to aid shall I
Quail at Gushtásp and at Asfandiyár?
Old as I am yet on the day of battle
I will bring down the orbed moon's head to dust.
What are a hundred mighty elephants,
Or fields of men, when on the battle-day
I don my tiger-skin? Thou speak'st of prayers:
I have not spared them and have read to him
Subjection's roll. He doth misprize my words,
And turneth from both wisdom and my counsel;
But now if he will stoop his head from Saturn,
And give me salutations heartily,
I will not grudge him gems or other treasures,
Or mace and sparth and coat of mail and sword;
But all that I can say hath no effect,
And in our talk we merely clutch the wind.
Tomorrow, if he is resolved to fight,
Have not thy heart in pain about his life,
Because I will not grasp my trenchant sword,
But with my lasso take his noble head;
I will not wheel about upon the field;
He shall not feel my sparth or spear-thrust; I

[1] Vol. ii. p. 57 *seq.*
[2] *Id.* 95 *seq.*
[3] *Id.* iii. 188.
[4] *Id.* 230.

Will cut off his retreat, clutch him amain
About the waist, and hug him from the saddle,
Bestow on him the kingship of Gushtásp,
Will bring and set him on our splendid throne, V. 1688
And afterward fling wide the treasury's door.
When he hath been my guest three days and when,
Upon the fourth, the Lustre of the world
Hath doffed the robe of lapis lazuli,
And when the Cup of Topaz showeth, forthwith
In company with him will I regird
My self, set face toward Gushtásp, will set
The prince upon the famous ivory throne,
Will crown him with the heart-delighting crown,
Gird mine own loins before him as a slave,
And only seek to carry out his will.
Thou knowest, thou rememberest my brave deeds
Performed before the throne of Kai Kubád,
Yet now thou biddest me to skulk away,
Or yield me unto bonds if I am bidden!"
Zál smiled to hear the words that Rustam spake,
And shook his head awhile in meditation,
Then answered Rustam, saying: "O my son!
These words of thine have neither head nor tail,
And only lunatics on hearing thee
Could give assent to thy distempered speech.
Thou art Kubád when seated on a mountain
In dudgeon, lacking throne, crown, wealth, and treasure.
Oppose not then the Sháh, a chief and one
With rede and ancient treasures, or one like
Asfandiyár, whose name Faghfúr of Chín
Inscribeth on his signet. 'I will take,'
Thou sayest, 'from the saddle to my breast
Asfandiyár and bring him to Zál's palace'!
No man advanced in years should speak like that;
Haunt not the portal of thine evil star.
Now have I told thee what my counsel is,

As thou dost know, O leader of the people!"
He spake, stooped to the earth, praised the Almighty,
V. 1689 And said: "Thou Judge supreme! avert from us
The ills of fortune!"
Thus he made request
Until the sun rose o'er the mountain-crest.

§ 21

How Rustam fought with Asfandiyár

When day came Rustam donned his coat of mail
With his protecting tiger-skin withal,
He tied his lasso to the saddle-straps,
He mounted on his elephantine steed,
And, having bidden Zawára come, held talk
At large about the troops, and said: "Depart,
Be marshal of the host, and take thy station
On yonder sand-hills."
So Zawára went,
And mustered all the troops on the parade
To lead them to the field. When matchless Rustam
Came from his palace, spear in hand, they all
Blessed him, and said: "May charger, sparth, and saddle
Ne'er lack thee."
Rustam followed by Zawára,
His second in the state, went to the Hírmund:
The soldiers vaunted but his soul was sad.
His brother and the troops both halted there,
But he advanced toward the Íránian host,
First saying to Zawára privily:—
"E'en at this present I would stay from battle
The hands of that beguiling reprobate,
And make a pathway for his soul to light,
But still I fear that we shall come to blows,
And after that I know not what will be.
Remain thou here and keep the troops in hand;

I go to see what fortune will bring forth.
If I shall find him wroth then by that token
I shall not call chiefs from Zábulistán,
But shall engage with him in single combat;
I would not have one of the army injured.
Victorious fortune always favoureth V. 1690
The man whose heart is on the side of justice."
He passed the river, mounted on a height,
And marvelled at the process of the world;
He called and said: "O brave Asfandiyár!
Thine opposite hath come; prepare thyself."
Asfandiyár, when he had heard the words
Which that old, battle-seeking Lion spake,
Laughed and replied: "Behold I made me ready
Or ever I arose from sleep."
He bade
To bring helm, breastplate, spear, and ox-head mace.
These brought, he clothed his shining breast and donned
His Kaian casque, then bade his sable steed
Be saddled and led forth, which when he saw
He in the might and puissance that he had
Stood on the ground the butt-end of his spear,
And vaulted to the saddle as a leopard
Will leap upon the back of onager
And madden it. The soldiers marvelled at him,
And called down blessings on their noble chief,
Who went and, drawing nigh to peerless Rustam,
Saw him upon his charger unattended,
And spake thus from his steed to Bishútan:—
"I want no friend or mate in fighting him,
For since he is alone I too will go
Alone and mount upon yon lofty height."
They both went forth to battle in such wise
That thou hadst said: "The world hath done with feastings."
As they drew near, the old man and the young,

Both noble Lions and both paladins,
Their steeds neighed; thou hadst said: "The field is rent!"
V. 1691 And Rustam shouted: "Happy, prosperous prince!
Be not so wroth and fierce, but hear for once
A wise man's words: if thou desirest fight
And bloodshed, and such stir and strife, permit
That I lead forth the horsemen of Zábul
With hauberks from Kábul upon their breasts,
And do thou likewise bid the Íránians,
That men may know the jewel from the mite.
Let us bring them to battle on the field,
And for our own parts tarry for a while;
Thus there will both bloodshed and fierce fighting
According to thy wish."

Asfandiyár
Replied: "Why talk so much to no avail?
Thou camest from thy palace at the dawn,
And from this lofty hill didst challenge me.
Why now hast thou befooled me? In good sooth
Thou hast perceived that thine own fall is near.
Why should I fight against Zábulistán?
Why should Írán fight with Kábulistán?
May no such disposition e'er be mine.
It is not in accordance to my creed
That I shall give Íránians to be slain,
Or crown myself. I go forth first in battle
Albeit to leopard's claws. If thou hast need
Of helpers send for them; such help not me.
God will help me in fight and fortune smile
Upon mine undertaking. Thou dost challenge,
And I am willing; let us fight it out
Between ourselves unhelped, and we shall then
See if the charger of Asfandiyár
Will go toward the stable riderless,
Or if the charger of the challenger
Will turn toward Rustam's halls without its lord."

The combatants agreed that none should aid.
Long while they fought together with their spears, V. 1692
And from their breastplates poured down blood amain.
Thus they continued till the spear-points brake,
And they were forced to use their scimitars;
They grew more instant, wheeled to left and right,
And, when their stout swords shivered with the strokes,
Reached out and, drawing sparth from saddle, showered
Blows as stones shower a-down a precipice.
Wroth as two lions raging they belaboured
Each other. When the hafts brake, and their hands
Were weaponless, they clutched their leathern girdles
While both their speedy chargers strove to fly.
Asfandiyár grasped Rustam's belt, and Rustam
Asfandiyár's. Those two exalted heroes,
Both men of elephant-body, tugged amain,
Yet neither Lion budged. Both cavaliers
Were all distraught, both steeds fordone, with fight.[1]
Within their mouths the blood and dust were blent
In foam, on man and horse the mail was rent.

§ 22

How the Sons of Asfandiyár were slain by Zawára and Farámarz

When Rustam, son of Zál, had tarried long,
Because the heroes fought no little while,
Zawára led his troops across the river—
An army seared of heart and keen for strife.
He cried to the Íránians: "Where is Rustam? V. 1693
Why should we hold our peace on such a day?
It was to fight with Rustam that ye came,
Came to the gullet of the Crocodile.

[1] Reading with P.

Ye would bind Rustam's hands! No sitting still
For us on such a field!"
He cursed and spake
Unseemly words. A famous cavalier,
Son of Asfandiyár, was full of wrath
Thereat. He was a youth hight Núsh Ázar,
A leader of the host and masterful.
This noble raged against the Sigzian,[1]
And loosed his lips to utter foul abuse.
"Fool of a Sigzian!" said he, "know'st thou not
That every one that cherisheth the Faith
Rejecteth all self-seeking manfully,
And liveth on the bidding of the Sháhs?
Asfandiyár, the hero, ordered us
Not to engage in battle with you dogs.
Who then will disobey his hest and counsels,
And who be bold to break his fealty?
But if ye will commit this wickedness,
And take upon you to provoke a fight,
Ye shall behold for once what warriors are,
When armed with swords and spears and massive maces."
Zawára gave his troops command: "Lay on,
And crown yon chieftains with a crown of blood."
Forth to the front he went, the din of war
Rose, and they slew Íránians numberless,
While Núsh Ázar, on seeing this, made ready,
Bestrode his noble dun and, Indian sword
In hand, advanced. Upon the other side
A warrior came—the refuge of the host,
V. 1694 A chief. That famous one was named Alwá—
A dashing cavalier and masterful.
Him Núsh Ázar espied, drew sword, and smote
His foeman's head, who came from steed to dust.
Zawára spurred his warhorse, neared, and cried

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 100, *note*.

To Núsh Ázar: "Him hast thou slain and now
Stand fast thyself! I do not call Alwá
A horseman."
With his spear he smote the head
Of Núsh Ázar, who tumbled to the ground.
The day turned 'gainst his host when he was slain.
His youthful brother Mihr-i-Núsh, a swordsman,
In tears, with troubled[1] heart, in dudgeon spurred
His elephantine steed and from the centre
Advanced before the lines with lips a-foam
Through anguish, while for his part Farámarz,
Like maddened elephant, came, Indian sword
In hand, and closed with noble Mihr-i-Núsh
While both hosts shouted. Both antagonists
Were noble youths—a prince and paladin;
They were as fierce as lions combative,
And with their swords belaboured one another.
Though Mihr-i-Núsh was active on the field
He had not strength to fight with Farámarz.
The young prince raised his sword and hoped to lay
His famous foeman's head upon the dust,
But struck the blow upon his own steed's neck
So that it came down headlong to the ground,
And Farámarz dispatched him thus unhorsed; V. 1695
The battlefield was reddened with his blood.
Now when Bahman beheld his brothers slain,
And all the soil beneath them turned to mire
With gore, he came up to Asfandiyár,
When he was in the hottest of the fight,
And said to him: "O ardent sire! a host
Of Sigzians hath come forth to strive with us!
Thy two sons—Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh—
Have yielded wretchedly their lives to them.
Thou fightest here while we are in distress,
Our youths and princes shrouded by the dust.

[1] Reading with P.

Eternal shame will rest upon our race
Through what these fools have done."
The shrewd chief's heart
Was full of rage, his lips were full of sighs,
His eyes of tears. "O offspring of the Dív!"
He said to Rustam, "wherefore hast thou left
The common path of right? Didst thou not say:—
'I will not bring the army to the fight'?
Thou hast no sense of honour and of shame.
Hast thou no reverence for me or God?
Dost thou not dread His Day of Reckoning?
Dost thou not know that they who break their pledge
Will have no worship with their fellow-men?
Two Sigzians have slaughtered my two sons,
And still they turn not from their blind misdoings."
When Rustam heard it he was sorely troubled
And, trembling like the branches of a tree,
Swore by the Sháh's own life and head, by sun,
And by the scimitar and battlefield:—
"I never gave commandment for this fight,
Nor do I praise the doer of this thing.
Now will I bind my brother's hands, who showed
The way to ill, and bring too Farámarz
In manacles before the pious Sháh.
Slay them in vengeance for thy noble sons,
And be not wroth for this insensate act!"
Asfandiyár replied: "For me to shed
A snake's blood for a peacock's is not well
v. 1696 Or seemly, and it hath no precedent
With mighty Sháhs. Thou villain! guard thyself
Because thy time hath come, and I will mix
Thy thighs and Rakhsh's body with mine arrows,
As milk is mixed with water, that no slave
Henceforth may dare to shed his master's blood.
If thou survivest I will bind thy hands,
And carry thee forthwith before the Sháh;

But if thou diest by mine arrow-points
Take it in vengeance for my noble sons."
Then Rustam: "What availeth all this talk
Unless it be to make our glory less?
And now to God, to every good the Guide,
Turn thee for shelter and in Him confide."

§ 23

How Rustam fled to the Heights

They took their bows and shafts of poplar wood;
The sun's face lost its lustre;[1] but, while Rustam
And Rakhsh both suffered injury whenever V. 1697
A shaft was loosened from the prince's hand,
The shafts of Rustam injured not the prince,
And noble Rustam, in bewilderment
At such a contest, said: "The warrior,
Asfandiyár, hath got a form of brass!"[2]
When Rakhsh was growing weak beneath those arrows,
And neither horse nor warrior were whole,
The rider lighted wind-like from his steed,
And set his noble face toward the heights,
While wounded Rakhsh went on his homeward way,
And so became a stranger to his lord.
The blood was pouring down from Rustam's body,
That Mount Bístún was weak and all a-tremble.
Asfandiyár laughed out at seeing it,
And cried: "O famous Rustam! why hath strength
Departed from the maddened Elephant?
Why is the iron Mountain pierced by arrows?
Oh! whither have thy mace and manhood gone,
Thy Grace divine and eminence in war?
Why hast thou fled away and scaled the heights

[1] Six couplets omitted. [2] See p. 19.

Because thou heard'st a mighty Lion's voice?
Art thou not he that caused the dívs to wail,
And singed wild beasts with flashes from his sword?
Why hath the elephant of war turned fox,
And grown thus impotent in fight?"

Zawára
Perceived the step of glossy Rakhsh, who came
From far all wounded, and the world grew dark
Before his eyes. He went forth to the scene
Of strife, lamenting, and beheld the form
Of elephantine Rustam wounded thus,
With all the wounds undressed, and said to him:—
"Up, mount my steed, and I will don for thee
The breastplate of revenge."

He answered: "Go
To Zál and say: 'The glory of Sám's race
V. 1698 Is gone. Look to the remedy therefor,
And for these grievous wounds. If I survive
Tonight the arrows of Asfandiyár
It will, I wot, O Zál! be even so
As if my mother gave me birth today!'
When thou hast gone let Rakhsh be all thy care,
And I will follow though I tarry long."

Zawára turned away intent on Rakhsh.
Asfandiyár abode awhile, then cried:—
"Famed Rustam! wherefore standest all this time
Upon the heights? Who will direct thy steps?
Fling down thy bow, put off thy tiger-skin,
And loose the girdle from thy loins. Repent,
And yield thy hands to bondage; so shalt thou
Receive from this time forth no hurt from me.
I will conduct thee wounded to the Sháh,
And not impute thine acts to thee as crimes;
But if thou wilt fight on then make thy will,
Appointing somebody to be the marchlord,
And ask God's pardon for thine own ill-doing;

It may be that He will forgive thy faults,
And guide thee when thou quit'st this Wayside Inn."
But Rustam made reply: "It is too late,
Our hands are shortened both for good and ill;
Go back to thine own troops, for none is fain
To fight when it is night, and as for me
I will return to mine own palace now,
Refresh myself and slumber for a while,
Bind all my wounds and call some of my kin—
Zawára, Farámarz, Zál, and the others
Of name—and now I will perform thy hest,
For loyalty to thee is righteousness."
Asfandiyár, the brazen-bodied, said:— V. 1699
"Old, self-willed reprobate! thou art a man,
A great and strong one, knowing many shifts,
And charms and counsels. I have marked thy falseness
All through, and long to see thine overthrow,
But still I give thee quarter for this night;
Thou shalt go home; but dally not with guile.
Do as I bid and never bandy words
With me again."
Then Rustam answered him:—
"I will make shift to charm my wounds away."
He left the presence of Asfandiyár,
Who watched to see how Rustam would proceed.
Sore wounded as he was he crossed the river;
Those arrow-wounds enforced him to dispatch.
When he had crossed the river like a boat
He prayed to God for succour for his body,
And said: "O Thou, the just and holy Judge!
If I shall perish by these wounds of mine
What noble will avenge me, who take up
My rede, my courage, and my precedents?"
Asfandiyár was gazing after him,
And, having seen him reach the farther bank,

Exclaimed: "They say that he is not a man!
He is a mighty, raging Elephant!"
Then added in amaze: "Almighty Judge!
It was Thy will to make him of this sort,
Who art the Author both of earth and time."
He went his way, and from his tent-enclosure
Rose wailings. Bishútan came out lamenting
For gallant Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh.
The prince's camp-enclosure was all dust,
And every noble had his raiment rent.
V. 1700 Asfandiyár, alighting from his steed,
Clasped to his breast the heads of those two slain,
And said: "Alas ye two young warriors!
Where have your souls gone from these forms of yours?"
Then said he unto Bishútan: "Arise,
And weep no more the slain. I see no good
In pouring blood. We should not cling to life.
We all are born to die, both old and young,
And when we pass may wisdom succour us."
On teaken litters holding golden coffins
He sent those corpses to the Sháh, his sire,
The master of the crown, and with this message:—
"This branch of thy design hath borne its fruit.
Thou didst launch forth the boat upon the water
By seeking for the servitude of Rustam.
When thou behold'st the bier of Núsh Ázar
And Mihr-i-Núsh be less intent on wrong.
The bull Asfandiyár is in his hide:
I know not what the future may bring forth."
He sat upon his throne in grief and mourning,
And pondered Rustam's words. Then spake he thus
To Bishútan: "The Lion cowereth
Before the brave man's grip. Today when I
Saw Rustam like an elephant in stature
And mien I offered praise to holy God,
The Author of our hopes and of our fears,

Who in His providence had formed him thus.
Praise be to Him, the Maker of the world!
What actions once were Rustam's, he that used
To drop his fish-hook in the sea of Chín
And land the crocodile, and with his breath
Suck in the leopard on the waste![1] Yet I
Have wounded him with arrows till the ground
Hath come to be a puddle with his blood.
He left the field afoot, he scaled the heights,
And armed and armoured hurried to the river.
He made the passage, wounded as he was,
With all his body full of arrow-heads; V. 1701
But still methinketh, when he reacheth home,
His soul will quit it and to Saturn roam."

[1] The same collocation of consonants means "breath" and "tail" in Persian. Mohl renders "qui a saisi sur la plaine la queue des léopards." Rustam, however, seems to be compared to a dragon drawing in its prey with its breath. *Cf.* p. 127 for a similar passage, where Mohl translates "Les chevaux cherchaient à se soustraire à l'attaque du dragon; mais il aspira avec son souffle et les engloutit ainsi que le chariot," and where the same expression is used of Asfandiyár himself in the preceding couplet: "He drew his breath." Similarly in Gurgsár's account of the same dragon (p. 126), Mohl translates "qui attire avec son haleine le poisson de la mer." When, however, Asfandiyár subsequently speaks of his adventure with this dragon to Gurgsár (p. 128), Mohl translates: "O homme vil de corps et sans valeur, regarde ce vaillant dragon qui enveloppait *ses victimes* avec sa queue," and in the passage referring to the dragon of Tús (p. 203): "il attirait avec sa queue l'éléphant." Again, in the account of Gushtásp's encounter with a dragon (vol iv. p. 346), he translates: "Quand le dragon vit sa haute stature, il essaya de l'attirer vers lui avec sa queue." Mohl therefore wavers. The mode of defence adopted by the two heroes—a long sword in one case and a chariot bristling with sword-blades in the other—seems intended to counteract what appears to be somewhat a characteristic of the eastern dragon. "From Candahar is reported a Mussulman legend, which relates that in pagan times the king of Candahar found himself compelled to promise a young girl every day to a dragon. Accordingly a maiden mounted on a camel was daily sent to the monster. As soon as the camel arrived within a certain distance of the cavern where the dragon dwelt, the latter inhaled its breath with such force that its prey was inevitably drawn into its throat."—HLP, iii. 56.

§ 24

How Rustam took Counsel with his Kin

Now Rustam for his part regained his palace
Where Zál beheld him in his grievous plight.
Zawára too and Farámarz shed tears,
And were consumed by sorrow for his wounds.
Rúdába, when she heard the others' cries,
Began to pluck her hair and tear her face.
Zawára came and, loosing Rustam's girdle,[1]
Removed his armour and the tiger-skin,
While all the skilful gathered at the door,
But Rustam bade to take them first to Rakhsh.
Shrewd Zál plucked his own hair and laid his cheeks
On Rustam's wounds, and cried: "That I should live
Hoar-headed to behold my dear son thus!"
Then Rustam said: "What booteth to bewail?
That which hath happened is by Heaven's decree.
The matter now confronting me is harder,
More fearful to my soul, for ne'er have I
Beheld the equal of Asfandiyár,
The brazen-bodied, for courageousness
In time of battle. I have roamed the world,
And wotted both of sights and mysteries.
I took the White Dív by the waist and hurled him
Down to the ground as 'twere a willow-branch.[2]
V. 1702 My poplar shafts were wont to pierce an anvil,
And scorn a shield. I often hit with them
The armour of Asfandiyár, but they
Proved thorns 'gainst stone! Again, the pards on seeing
My sword would skulk beneath the rocks and yet
It will not cleave the breastplate on his breast,
Or e'en a bit of silk upon his head!

[1] Reading with P. [2] Vol. ii. p. 60.

However oft too I excuse myself,
That I may warm that stony heart of his,
He only seeketh to disgrace me more
By words and actions full of arrogance.
Thank God! night came, and when he could not see
I 'scaped this Dragon's claws. I know not how
To seek release. Mine only course, methinketh,
Tomorrow will be to abandon Rakhsh,
And fare to where the prince will find me not.
Let him strew heads within Zábulistán:
He will grow weary of the work in time,
Though not soon sick of ill."

Zál said: "Alas!
My son! give ear and, talking done, grow calm.
There is a way from all contingencies
On earth save death which is itself a way.
I know of one resource; use it, for I
Herein will summon the Símurgh to aid.
If for the future she will be my guide
Our lands and borders will be saved for us;
Else by Asfandiyár that brave knave's hand
Will utter ruin come upon our land."

§ 25

How the Símurgh succoured Rustam

When both were set on this bold project Zál, V. 1703
The well-beloved, went to a lofty height,
And carried from the palace censers three
Containing fire. With him went three brave sages.
Now when the wizard reached the top he drew
Forth from brocade a plume of the Símurgh
And, having raised a flame within a censer,
Consumed therein a portion of the feather.[1]
Whenas the first watch of the night had passed

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. pp. 246, 320.

Thou wouldst have said: "The face of air is darkened!"
And gazing from the eminence Zál saw it
Filled with the fluttering plumes of the Símurgh.
Just then the bird, surveying from the air
And seeing fire ablaze with Zál before it
Set seared and sad, swooped down upon the dust.
Beholding the Símurgh he praised her greatly,
And did obeisance, filling up the censers
With incense in her presence and surcharging
His cheeks with his heart's blood. Said the Símurgh:—
"What was't, O king! that made thee need these fumes?"

Zál answered: "May the ills that miscreants
Have brought upon me fall upon my foes.
The body of the lion-hearted Rustam
Hath been bewounded, and my care for him
Hath fettered me. In short his injuries
Raise fears about his life; none hath beheld
A man so stricken; thou wouldst say withal
That Rakhsh is dying, he is writhing so
With anguish from the shafts. Asfandiyár
Hath come against our land and knocketh only
Upon the door of war. He asketh not
For land or crown or throne, but he would have
The tree yield root and fruit!"

V. 1704 Said the Símurgh:—
"O paladin! be not distressed hereat,
But let me presently see Rakhsh and him,
The exalted chief who meteth out the world."

Then Zál sent one to Rustam with these words:—
"Make shift, I prithee, to bestir thyself,
And give, moreover, orders that they bring
Rakhsh instantly to the Símurgh."

When Rustam
Came to the height to that sagacious bird
She said: "O mighty, raging Elephant!

By hand of whom hast thou grown thus distressed?
Why didst thou seek to fight Asfandiyár?
Why kindle thine own breast?"

Zál said to her:—

"O queen of love! since thou hast shown to us
Thy holy face, say where shall I take refuge
If Rustam be not healed? They will lay waste
Sístán, will turn it to a lair for leopards
And lions, and our race will be uprooted.
Now in what manner shall we deal with Rustam?"

The bird surveyed and sought to heal the wounds,
Sucked them and, drawing forth eight arrow-heads,
Stroked with her feathers on the wounded parts,
And Rustam was restored to might and Grace.
She said: "Bind up thy hurts and for a week
Shun danger, moisten one of these my feathers
With milk and stroke therewith inside the wounds."

She in like manner having called for Rakhsh
Employed her beak on him to make him whole,
And drew out from his neck six arrow-heads—
All that there were. Rakhsh neighed. The crown-bestower
Laughed for delight.

"O elephantine one!" V. 1705
Said the Símurgh, "thou art most famed of folk.
Why didst thou seek to fight Asfandiyár,
The brazen-bodied and illustrious?"

He made reply: "He talked of binding me,
Else I had not been vexed, but I prefer
Death to disgrace if in my present straits
I shun the fight."

She said: "'Tis no disgrace
To stoop to dust before Asfandiyár,
Because he is a warrior and a prince,
A holy man who hath the Grace of God.
If thou wilt make a covenant with me,

Be penitent for having sought the fight,
And seek not triumph o'er Asfandiyár,
The work of war or moment of revenge,
But make submission to him on the morrow,
And proffer soul and body for his ransom,
Then if his time be coming to an end
No doubt he will regard not thine excuses.
For such an issue I will furnish thee,
And sunward raise thy head."
When Rustam heard
He joyed and put away all thought of strife;
He said: "I will not disobey thy words
Although the air rain swords upon my head."
Said the Símurgh to him: "I will declare
In love to thee the secret of the sky:
Whoe'er shall shed that hero's blood will be
Himself pursued by fortune. Furthermore
Throughout his life he will abide in travail,
Find no escape therefrom, and lose his treasures,
Be luckless in this world and afterward
In pain and anguish. If thou art content
With this, and present triumph o'er thy foe,
V. 1706 I will reveal to thee this night a wonder,
And bar for thee the lip from evil words."
"I am content," he said to her, "and now
Say what thou wilt. We leave the world behind
As our memorial and pass away,
And there is nothing left of any man
Save the report of him. If I shall die
With fair fame all is well with me, but fame
I must have for the body is for death."[1]
"Go and mount Rakhsh," she said, "and choose a dagger,
A bright one."
When he heard he girt his loins

[1] Rustam's speech is inserted from C. Both V and P omit it.

And, mounting, fared until he reached the sea,[1]
And saw the air all dark with the Símurgh.
When Rustam had arrived beside the waters
That noble bird descended, and he saw,
Sprung from the soil and with its head in air,
A tamarisk, and on it perched that fowl
Imperious. She showed him a dry path,
The scent of musk exhaling from her breath,
Then bidding him come near to her she stroked
The feathers of her wing upon his head.
"Choose out the straightest, longest, slenderest bough,"
She said to him, "because this tamarisk
Is fatal to Asfandiyár; so hold not
This wood of small account. Let it be straightened
Before the fire, choose good, old arrow-heads,
And fit it with three feathers and two points.
Now have I shown thee how to work him woe."
When Rustam had cut off the branch he went
Back from the sea toward his hall and hold
With the Símurgh still acting as his guide, V. 1707
And, as she kept above his head, she said:—
"Now when Asfandiyár shall seek to fight thee
Petition him, ask him to do thee right,
And knock not at the door of loss. Perchance
Soft words may turn him, and he may recall
Old times, for thou hast lived so long in toil
And hardship for the great. If he reject
All that thou canst advance, and if he treat thee
As one of little worth, string up thy bow,
And set thereon this shaft of tamarisk,

[1] Of Chín, according to C; or the legend may owe somewhat to Zoroastrian mythology (see Vol. i. p. 235); or the lake of Sístán may be intended. Asfandiyár's fate lay in Sístán, and it seems fitting that both the fatal shaft and the user of it should come from that neighbourhood. The tamarisk, with its long, slender branches, grows there, and is the only shrub that aspires to be called a tree in that otherwise treeless region.

This fosterling of bane. Aim at his eyes,
Straight, with both hands as one that worshippeth
The tamarisk, and Destiny will bear
The arrow thither straight. He will be blinded,
And fortune rage at him."
Then the Símurgh,
Embracing Zál as woof embraceth warp
In bidding him farewell, took flight content,
While Rustam, when he saw her in the air,
Took order to prepare a goodly fire,
And straightened out thereby the tamarisk wood.
He fitted arrow-heads upon the shaft,
And fixed the feathers to the finished haft.

§ 26

How Rustam went back to fight Asfandiyár

When dawn brake from the heights, and dark night's waist
Arched, Rustam armed himself and much invoked
V. 1708 The Maker. When he reached the famous host,
For war and vengeance on Asfandiyár,
The hero, good at need, cried in reproach:—
"O lion-heart! how long wilt slumber thus,
For Rustam hath already saddled Rakhsh?
Arouse thee from thy pleasant sleep and close
In fight with Rustam eager for the fray."
Now when Asfandiyár heard Rustam's voice
All earthly weapons seemed of no avail,
And thus he said to Bishútan: "The Lion
Adventureth not against a sorcerer.
I did not think that Rustam would bear home
His coat of mail, his tiger-skin, and casque,
While as for Rakhsh, his mount, its breast was hidden
By arrow-heads! Now I have heard that Zál,
The devotee of sorcerers, extendeth

E'en to the sun his practices, surpasseth
All warlocks in his wrath, and sorteth not
With wisdom."

Bishútan replied in tears:—

"Be care and wrath thy foe's. What hath come o'er thee
That thou art wan to-day? Thou must have passed
A sleepless night! What in the world can ail
These heroes that they must increase such toils?
Whose fortune hath gone halt I know not I
In that it ever bringeth feud on feud!"

Asfandiyár, the hero, donned his mail,
Advanced toward famous Rustam and, on seeing
His face, exclaimed: "Now may thine honour perish!
Perchance thou hast forgot, thou Sigzian!
Thy foeman's bow and breast? Thou hast been healed
By Zál's enchantments; otherwise the charnel
Had sought for thine embrace. But thou hast gone,
Hast used unholy arts, and hastenest thus
To fight with me. Today will I so maul thee V. 1709
That Zál shall see thee living never more."

"O Lion never satiate of fight!"
Said Rustam, "reverence holy God, the World-lord,
And fling not heart and wisdom to the abyss.
I have not come today for fighting's sake,
But for excuse, for honour, and for fame.
Thy whole contention with me is unjust,
And thou art closing both the eyes of wisdom.
By just Zarduhsht and by the good religion,
By Núsh Ázar, the Fire, and Grace divine,
By sun, by moon, and by the Zandavasta,
I prithee turn thy heart from mischief's path.
Keep not in memory the words that passed,
Though they would cause a man to burst his skin.
Come then and see the place of mine abode,
For thou hast lost all power upon my life.

I will unlock the door of ancient treasures,
Which I have gotten me in my long day,
And load them on mine own beasts. Give thou them
All to thy treasurer to drive before him.
Moreover I will travel by thy side
And, if thou biddest, go before the Sháh.
Then if he slayeth me I am content,
Content too if he biddeth me be bound.
Consider what the wise man said of old:—
'May none be wedded to a luckless star.'
I will try all expedients in the hope
That fortune may distaste thee with this strife."
Asfandiyár replied: "I am not one
To use deceit in time of war or fear.
V. 1710 Thou pratest much of hall and house, much lavest
The face of peace. If still thou wilt live on
First wear my chains."
Then Rustam loosed again
His tongue, and said: "O prince! renounce injustice.
Blast not my name, degrade not thine own soul,
For ill alone can come of this contention.
A thousand royal jewels will I give thee,
As well as crown with armlet and with earrings;
Will give to thee a thousand sweet-lipped youths
To minister to thee by day and night;
Will give a thousand damsels of Khallukh
To be the glorious graces of thy crown;
I will unbar for thee the treasury
Of Sám, the son of Narímán, and Zál,
O peerless one! amass thee all their wealth,
And from Kábulistán bring men withal
To do thy will and chase thy foes in fight.
Then like a bond-slave will I go before thee,
Go to the presence of the wreakful Sháh;
But, O my prince! put vengeance from thy heart,
Make not thyself an ambush for the Dív.

Thou hast another power than that of bonds;
Thou art my monarch and thou servest God.
Doth ill become thee, for thy bonds would shame me
For ever?"

But Asfandiyár replied:—

"How long wilt thou talk idly? 'Quit,' thou sayest,
'God's path and what the veteran Shah commandeth.'
But he that goeth from the Shah's behest
Defraudeth God. Choose either fight or bond,
And cease to utter words that are but fond."

§ 27

How Rustam shot Asfandiyár in the Eyes with an Arrow

When Rustam knew that humbleness availed not V. 1711
Before Asfandiyár he strung his bow,
And set therein the shaft of tamarisk
With baneful points, and said: "O Lord of sun
And moon, who makest knowledge, Grace, and strength
To wax! Thou seest my mind pure in intent,
My soul, and self control, for much I toil
To turn Asfandiyár from strife. Thou knowest
That his contention is unjust, and how V. 1712
His traffic with me is all fight and prowess;
So visit not my crime with retribution,
O Maker of the moon and Mercury!"

Asfandiyár perceived him tarrying long
From strife, and said to him: "O famous Rustam!
Thy soul is satiate of fight, but now
Thou shalt behold the arrows of Gushtásp,
Luhrásp's own arrow-heads and lion-heart."

Then Rustam quickly fitted to his bow
The tamarisk-shaft as the Símurgh had bidden;
He struck Asfandiyár full in the eyes,
And all the world grew dark before that chief;

The straight-stemmed Cypress bent, intelligence
And Grace abandoned him. The pious prince
Fell prone, his bow of Chách dropped from his hands.
He clutched his black steed by the mane and crest;
The battlefield was reddened with his blood.
Said Rustam: "Thou hast brought this evil seed
To fruit! Thou art the man who said'st: 'My form
Is brazen, and I dash high heaven to earth.'
Yet through one arrow hast thou turned from strife,
And fallen swooning on thy noble charger.
Moreover now thy head will come to dust,
And thy fond mother's heart will burn for thee."

V. 1713 Meanwhile the famous prince had tumbled headlong
Down from his black steed's back and lay awhile
Till he recovered consciousness, sat up
Amid the dust, and listened. Then he seized
The arrow by its end and drew it out,
Drew it out soaked in blood from point to feather.

When presently the tidings reached Bahman:—
"The Grace divine of empire is obscured,"
He went to Bishútan and said: "Our war
Hath wedded woe, the mighty Elephant's body
Hath come to dust, and this distress hath turned
The world to an abyss for us."
They both
Ran from the army to the paladin.
They saw the warrior with his breast all blood,
And with a gory arrow in his hand.
Then Bishútan cast dust upon his head
And rent his raiment, uttering loud cries;
Bahman rolled in the dust and rubbed his cheeks
Upon the yet warm blood.
Said Bishútan:—
"What chief or noble knoweth this world's secrets
Since an Asfandiyár, who for the Faith
So bravely drew the scimitar of vengeance,

Who purged the world of foul idolatry,
And never set his hand to work injustice,
Hath perished in the heyday of his youth?
The head that wore the crown hath come to dust,
While o'er the bad man's head, who bringeth anguish
Upon the world and harroweth the souls
Of noble men, unnumbered seasons pass,
Because he seeth not mischance in war."
The two youths took his head upon their breasts,
And wiped away the gore, while Bishútan,
With cheeks all tears of blood and heart all anguish,
Made lamentation over him, and said:—
"Alack, O warrior Asfandiyár,
The world-lord and the progeny of kings!
Who tore this warrior-mountain from its place?
Who overthrew this furious Lion? Who drew
The tusks redoubted of this Elephant, V. 1714
And flung him to the waters of the Nile?
Is our race blasted by the evil eye,
For evil surely is for those that do it?
Where are thy courage, thine intelligence,
Thine usages, thy strength, thy star, thy Faith?
Where is thy splendid equipage in war?
Where is thy gracious voice at festivals?
What time thou purged'st all the world of foes
Thou fear'd'st not the lion or the dív,
And now, when thou shouldst profit by the work,
I see thee bite the dust!"

Asfandiyár

Made answer wisely: "Shrewd and prosperous man!
Distract not thou thyself before me thus,
For sky and moon allotted me this fate.
Dust is the dead man's couch; bewail not then
So grievously my slaughter. Where are now
Húshang, Jamshíd, and Farídún? They came
From wind and vanished in a breath! Thus too

Have mine own ancestors, pure-born, elect,
And high and holy, gone and left their room
To us. None stayeth in this Wayside Inn.
In this world have I toiled exceedingly
In public and in private to establish
The way of God and wisdom as the guide
Thereto, but when through me the enterprise
Had grown illustrious, and when the hands
Of Áhriman were barred from wickedness,
V. 1715 Fate stretched its lion's claws and brought me down
As though an onager! And now my hope
Is that in Paradise my heart and soul
May reap what they have sown. The son of Zál
Hath slain me not by prowess. Mark what I
Have in my hand—a shaft of tamarisk!
That wood hath closed my lifetime by the practice
Of the Símurgh and of resourceful Rustam,
While Zál himself, the adept in grammarye,
Performed the sorceries."

When Asfandiyár
Spake of that matter Rustam writhed and wept
For agony and, coming to the prince,
Stood pierced by grief and very sorrowful,
Then spake to Bishútan and said in anguish:—
"One should acknowledge prowess in a man.
'Tis as he said; he did not change from prowess
To guile. In sooth 'twas through some felon dív
That fate assigned to me this grievous lot,
For since for prowess' sake I girt my loins,
And sought to fight with chiefs, I have not seen
Arrayed in hauberk and with war-cuirass
A cavalier like to Asfandiyár.
When, after trial of his bow, his breast,
And grip, I left the battle in despair
I sought a shift in mine extremity
To save my head from him for good and all.

I set his destiny upon my bow,
And when his day had come I shot the arrow.
Had fortune been with him how could a shaft
Of tamarisk avail me any whit?
We all shall have to leave this darksome earth;
No caution will prolong our lives one breath.
Good sooth, for this I shall be marked for ill,
And live in story with the tamarisk still!"

§ 28

How Asfandiyár told his last Wishes to Rustam

Then thus to Rustam spake Asfandiyár:— V. 1716
"My time is at an end. Avoid me not,
Arise and come to me, since all our schemes
Are changed, that thou mayst hear my last requests
Upon my son's behalf—my chiefest Pearl.
Use all thine efforts to establish him,
Endowing him with greatness as his guide."
The matchless Rustam hearkened to his words,
Dismounted, wailing, and approached on foot.
He poured down tears of blood for very shame,
And muttered to himself lugubriously.
When Zál gat tidings of that battlefield
He set forth from his palace, like the wind.
Zawára too and Farámarz went forth,
Like madmen, to the indicated spot.
A wail ascended from that scene of strife:—
"The faces of the sun and moon are darkened."
Zál spake to Rustam, saying: "O my son!
I weep for thee betimes in pain of heart,
For I have heard from readers of the stars,
From archimages, and the men of lore:—
'The slayer of Asfandiyár shall be
The prey of fortune, while he liveth see
Both pain and stress, and pass to misery.'"

Thus spake Asfandiyár to Rustam, saying:—
"Thou art not author of mine evil fortune.
This was my fate; what was to be hath been;
None knoweth the secrets of yon azure vault.
Not Rustam or Símurgh or bow and arrow
Have robbed my body of its life in battle,
V. 1717 For that hath been the doing of Gushtásp,
And little blessing hath my soul for him.
He said to me: 'Go and burn up Sístán;
From this time forth I would have no Nímrúz.'
He laboured that the army, crown, and treasure
Should stay with him, and I abide in toil;
And now do thou with loving heart receive
From me the charge of this my noble son,
Bahman, wise, watchful, and my minister,
And what thou hearest from me bear in mind.
Keep him in gladness in Zábulistán,
Remembering what evil men may say,
Instruct him to array the host and order
The chase, the combat, and the festival,
The revel, minstrelsy, and polo; make
A great man of him both in deed and word.
Jámásp, once famed, and may he prosper never!
Said that Bahman would keep my name alive,
And be a greater king, and that his seed
Would be illustrious and deserve to reign."
The matchless Rustam, hearing, stood and laid
His right hand on his breast in acquiescence.
"E'en if I die I will not fail herein,"
He said, "but bring thy words to pass, will set
Bahman upon the famous ivory throne,
And crown him with the heart-illuming crown."
Asfandiyár, on hearing Rustam's words,
Replied to him: "O ancient paladin!
Know this, and God Himself will bear me witness
Who is my leader to the good religion,

That in despite of all thy noble acts,
And of thy head exalted by brave deeds,
Thy fame now hath been turned to infamy,
And earth grown clamorous for me. Herefrom
Crooked grew thy spirit's lot; so willed the Maker." V. 1718

Then spake he thus to Bishútan: "A shroud
Is all I need of this world. When I quit
This Wayside Inn take order for the host,
And lead it home. When thou hast reached Írán
Say to my sire: 'Since thou hast gained thine end
Dissemble not; the age is all thine own;
Thy name is written now on every signet.
I had some hope of better things from thee,
Though such a crime befitted thy dark soul.
Reformed by me and by the sword of justice
The world was purged of miscreants' villainies,
And, with the good Faith stablished in Írán,
Both majesty and kingship called for me;
But thou didst speak me fair before the nobles,
And privily dispatch me to be slain.
Now thou hast gained thy heart's desire herein;
Take order then and sit with heart at ease,
And, since thou art secure, ban death itself,
And hold high revel in thy royal halls.
The throne is thine, the stress and toil are mine;
Thine is the crown and mine are bier and shroud.
What said the rustic minstrel old and tried?
"Death followeth hard upon the arrow-point."
Trust not in treasure, crown, and throne. My soul
Will have its eyes on thy career, and when
Thou comest, and we go before the Judge
Together, we will plead and hear His sentence.'
When thou hast left Gushtásp say to my mother:—
'This time 'twas Death that challenged me to fight,
And mail is only wind before his arrows,
For they would penetrate a mount of steel.

O loving mother! follow me with speed;
Grieve not for my sake nor aggrieve thy soul.
Show not thy face unveiled before the folk,
Or lift the winding-sheet to gaze on mine,
For such a sight will but increase thy woe,
And men of wisdom will commend thee not.'
V. 1719 Say likewise to my sisters and my wife,
Those wise and noble dames who shared with me
My private hours: 'Farewell for evermore!
Ill hath befall'n me through my father's crown;
To him my death hath been the key of treasures.
Behold I have sent Bishútan to him
To shame his gloomy soul.'"

He spake, then gasped:—
"This wrong hath come upon me from Gushtásp."
With that his pure soul parted from his body,
Which lay shaft-stricken on the darksome dust,
While Rustam, with his head and face besmirched
With dust, rent all his raiment o'er the prince,
And cried: "Alack! O valiant cavalier,
Whose grandsire was a warrior Sháh, whose sire
A king! I had a good name in the world,
But through Gushtásp mine end is infamous."
Long while he wept and then addressed the slain:—
"O monarch peerless, matchless in the world!
Thy soul hath passed to Paradise above,
And may thy foeman reap what he hath sown."
Zawára said to him: "Make not thyself
Dependent on the mercy of this prince.
Hast thou not heard this adage from the sage,
Who quoteth from the sayings of old times:—
'If thou shalt take a lion's whelp to rear
'Twill grow ferocious when its teeth appear,
And, soon being set on prey and waxen tall,
Will fall upon its feeder first of all'?
Both sides will be perturbed by evil wrath,

Whence first the ill will come upon Írán,
Since such a monarch as Asfandiyár
Was slain; then thou wilt see thine own ill day,
Zábulistán will suffer from Bahman,
The veterans of Kábulistán will writhe.
Mark this, that, when he cometh to be king,
Forthwith he will avenge Asfandiyár."
To him said Rustam: "No one, bad or good, V. 1720
Can strive with heaven. So will I choose my course
That wisdom, seeing, will restore my fame.
Fate will avenge if he doth wickedly,
But do not thou provoke the evil eye."

§ 29

How Bishútan bare the Coffin of Asfandiyár to Gushtásp

Then Rustam made a goodly iron coffin;
He draped the outside with brocade of Chín,
And smeared with pitch the inside, sprinkling it
With musk and spicery. He made withal
The winding-sheet of gold-inwoven brocade,
While all that noble company lamented.
When he had shrouded that resplendent form,
And crowned it with a turquoise coronet,
They sealed the narrow coffin and the Tree
So fruitful and so royal was no more.
Then Rustam chose him forty camels, each
Clad in a housing of brocade of Chín.
One of the camels bore the prince's coffin
With camels right and left, and guards behind
With hair and faces rent. One theme alone
Possessed their tongues and souls—Asfandiyár.
Before the cavalcade went Bishútan.
Asfandiyár's black charger had been docked,
Both mane and tail, its saddle was reversed,

And from it there were hung his battle-mace,
His famous helm withal, surtout and quiver
And head-piece. They set forward, but Bahman
Stayed at Zábul and wept with tears of blood.
Him matchless Rustam carried to the palace,
And tendered as his life.

News reached Gushtásp :—
"The famous prince's head hath been o'erthrown!"
V. 1721 He rent his robes, his crowned head came to dust,
A bitter wail rose from Írán, the world
Rang with Asfandiyár. Throughout the realm,
Where'er the tidings came, the nobles doffed
Their crowns. Gushtásp exclaimed: "O pure of Faith!
Time and the earth will not behold thy like,
For ever since the days of Minúchihr
There hath not come a chief resembling thee
Who fouled the sword and fulled the Faith, and kept
The world on its foundations."

In their wrath
The nobles of Írán put off all awe
For Sháh Gushtásp, and cried: "Thou luckless one!
To save thy throne thou sentest to Zábul,
For slaughter there, the great Asfandiyár
That thou mightst don the crown of all the world.
May thy head shame to wear the crown of Sháhs,
Hot-foot thy star desert thee!"

In a body
They left the palace, and the monarch's crown
And star were in the dust.

Now when the mother
And sisters of Asfandiyár had heard,
They came forth from the palace with their daughters,
Unveiled, with dust-fouled feet, and raiment rent.
When Bishútan came weeping on his way,
And after him the coffin and black steed,
The women hung on him, wept tears of blood,

And cried: "Undo this narrow coffin's lid,
Let us too see the body of the slain."
He stood among the women, full of grief,
Mid groans and sobs and beatings of the cheeks.
Then said he to the smiths: "Bring sharp files hither,
For this is Resurrection Day to me."
He oped the covering of the narrow coffin,
And gave fresh cause for weeping. When the mother
And sisters of Asfandiyár beheld
His visage steeped in musk, and sable beard,
The hearts of those chaste ladies crisp of lock V. 1722
Filled to o'erflowing, and they swooned away.
Revived, they prayed to glorious Surúsh,
Departed from the pillow of the prince,
And went with wailing to his sable steed,
Whose neck and head they fondled lovingly,
And Katáyún flung dust thereon. The prince
Had ridden that charger on the fatal day,
And perished on its back. The mother said:—
"O thou of luckless feet! the Kaian prince
Was slain on thee. Whom wilt thou bear to battle
Henceforth and yield up to the Crocodile?"
They clasped its neck and strewed its head with dust,
The host's cries reached the clouds, and Bishútan
Approached the palace. Coming to the throne
He kissed it not, nor did the Sháh obeisance,
But cried: "O chief of chiefs! the sign hath come
Of thine undoing. Herein thou hast done ill
To thine own self by robbing kings of breath.
Both Grace and wisdom have abandoned thee,
And thou wilt suffer chastisement divine.
Thy main support is shattered, famous Sháh!
And henceforth thou wilt grasp but wind alone.
To keep thy throne thou giv'st thy son to slaughter,
And may thine eye behold not crown and fortune.
The world is full of foes and evil men,

Thy crown will not endure eternally,
Abuse will be thy portion in this world,
And inquisition at the Judgment Day."
This said, he turned his face toward Jámásp,
And cried: "O impious wretch and ill of rede!
Thou never speakest aught but lying words,
And thou hast made thy fame by knavery.
V. 1723 Thou art the cause of feud between the Kaians,
And settest them the one against the other.
Thou canst not teach them aught but wickedness,
To break away from good and take to ill.
In this world thou hast sown one seed, and thou
Wilt reap the fruits in public and in private.
A magnate hath been slaughtered through thy words:
Thou saidst: 'The lifetime of the great is over.'
Thou didst instruct the Sháh in evil ways,
Old ill-adviser and malevolent!
Thou saidst: 'Asfandiyár the hero's life
Is lying in the grasp of famous Rustam.'"
This said, he loosed his tongue and weeping told
The counsel and last wishes of the dead,
And told too how the prince had given Bahman
To Rustam's keeping. Bishútan told all.
The Sháh, on hearing those last words, repented
About the matter of Asfandiyár.
The nobles having gone forth from the palace,
Humái and Bih Áfríd approached their sire,
And in his presence tore their cheeks and plucked
Their hair in sorrow for their brother, saying:—
"O famous monarch! heed'st thou not at all
Asfandiyár's decease, who was the first
To venge Zarír and take the Onager
Out of the Lion's claws, exacted vengeance
Upon the Turkmans and restored thy sway?
But thou didst bind him at a slanderer's words
With heavy yoke and iron bars and lasso.

While he was in his bonds Luhrásp was slain,
And all the army's fortune overthrown.
When from Khallukh Arjásp arrived at Balkh
Our lives were rendered bitter by distress.
Us, who had ne'er appeared unveiled, he bore
Uncovered from the palace to the street,
Quenched Núsh Ázar established by Zarduhsht,[1]
And laid his hand upon the sovereignty.
Thou sawest what thy son achieved by valour; V. 1724
He made thy foes breath, vapour, flying dust,
Restored us to thee from the Brazen Hold,
And guarded both thine army and thy realm;
But thou didst send him to Zábul and give him
No lack of counsel and of parting words
With the intent that he should perish there
To win the crown. The world was grieved and mourned him.
It was not the Símurgh or Zál or Rustam
That slew him; it was thou, so do not weep!
May thine own hoary beard cry shame upon thee,
Who, merely in the hope of reigning on,
Hast slain thy son. There hath been many a world-lord
Before thee, worthy of the royal throne:
They gave not child nor any of their kin,
Or their allies or household, to be slain."

Thereat the Sháh spake thus to Bishútan:—
"Rise and fling water on my daughters' fire."

Then Bishútan departed from the palace,
And took the ladies, saying to his mother:—
"Why mourn him sleeping well and happily,
Tired of the land and of the lord thereof?
Why is thy heart in grief on his account,
For now his conversation is in Heaven?"

The mother took her son's rede and therewith

[1] See p. 92 and *note*.

Resigned her to the justice of the Lord.
For one year afterward in every dwelling
Were wailing and lament throughout Írán;
Both morn and eve the folk mourned bitterly
The tamarisk arrow and Zál's sorcery.

§ 30

How Rustam sent Bahman back to Írán

V. 1725 Bahman stayed in Zábulistán, enjoying
The hunting-field and wine among the roses,
While Rustam taught that enemy of his
To ride, to quaff, and play the monarch's part,
In all things holding him above a son,
And, night and day, embracing him with smiles.
Now when performance was allied to promise,
And when Gushtásp had no door of revenge
Still open, Rustam wrote in deep distress
Of all the matter of Asfandiyár.
The letter first called blessings down on those
Who take excuses and forego revenge,
Then "God is witness" he went on to say,
"And Bishútan herein hath been before me,
How much I pleaded with Asfandiyár
That so he might abandon thoughts of fight.
I offered[1] him my treasure and my realm,
But he preferred all trouble for himself.
His fate was such that when it stood revealed
My heart was filled with pain and love withal.
Heaven turned above us to the destined end,
And Destiny regardeth none. Bahman,
The atheling, is with me now and he
Outshineth even mine own Jupiter.
I have instructed him in kingly parts,

[1] Reading with P.

And paid the debt of thy son's last request
With wisdom. If the Sháh will undertake
To pardon me, and to forget the past,
All—soul and body—that I have are his,
Both crown and treasure and both brain and skin."
Whenas this reached the monarch of the world V. 1726
He was perturbed in presence of his lords,
And Bishútan came forth to testify,
Repeating all the words that Rustam used,
His grief, his counsel, and his last appeal,
And goodly offer of his realm and treasure.
The famous Sháh was reconciled to Rustam,
And ceased thenceforth to inflame his heart with sorrow.
He wrote forthwith a letter in response,
He set a tree within the garth of greatness,
And said thus: "From the circle of high heaven
What time calamity is imminent
Can any keep it back by circumspection
Though much inclined to wisdom? Bishútan
Hath told me what thy real intentions were,
And by thy goodness thou hast touched my heart;
But who escapeth from the turning sky?
A wise man dwelleth not upon the past;
Thou art as ever thou hast been or better;
Thou art the lord of Hind and of Kannúj.
Ask whatsoever thou desirest more
By way of throne and signet, sword and casque."
As bidden by Gushtásp the messenger
Conveyed that answer quickly. It rejoiced
The famous paladin who felt his heart
Released from care.
Meanwhile young prince Bahman
Grew into lofty stature; he was wise,
Instructed, masterful, and shone with more
Than royal Grace and state. Jámásp, aware
That both for good and ill the sovereignty

Would come upon Bahman, said to Gushtásp:—
"O Sháh most worshipful! regard Bahman.
He hath the teaching that his father wished,
And hath arrived at man's estate with lustre;
V. 1727 But he hath tarried long abroad, and none
Hath read to him a letter from thyself.
Thou shouldest write to him a letter like
A tree within the garth of Paradise.
What other memory is left to thee
To banish sorrow for Asfandiyár?"
This thing seemed good to Sháh Gushtásp who gave
Command to glorious Jámásp, and said:—
"Indite me now a letter to Bahman,
And one to glory-loving Rustam, saying:—
'Thank God, O paladin of paladins!
That thou hast made us glad and cleared our mind.
Our grandson, who is dearer than our life,
Is more renowned for wisdom than Jámásp,
And hath acquired with thee both skill and counsel,
Send of thy favour home.'"
That to Bahman
Ran thus: "When thou hast read this quit Zábul,
For we desire to see thee; so make ready,
And tarry not."
Shrewd Rustam, when the scribe
Had read the letter to him, was rejoiced.
Of what he had within his treasury—
Surtouts and daggers made of watered steel,
Bards, bows and arrows, sparths and Indian hangers,
Fresh aloes, camphor, musk, and ambergris,
Gold, silver, jewelry, brocaded stuffs,
With raiment in the piece, slaves of ripe age
And unripe, golden girdles, silvern bridles,
And two gold cups a-brim with precious stones,
All these he gave Bahman, and they that bore them
Accounted for them to his treasurer.

The matchless Rustam journeyed with Bahman
Two stages, then dispatched him to the Sháh.
The face of Sháh Gushtásp was dim with tears
What time he gazed upon his grandson's face.
He said: "Thou art Asfandiyár himself, V. 1728
Thou art like no one in the world but him."
The Sháh bestowed on him the name Ardshír,
On seeing what great courage he possessed.[1]
He was a stalwart warrior, strong of hand,
A wise man, well-instructed, and devout,
And with his fingers dressed beside his legs
His fists extended lower than his knees.[2]
The Sháh awhile made proof of him and marked
His bearing. On the field, at feast, and chase
He proved a warrior like Asfandiyár,
And never tried the patience of Gushtásp,
Who ever gazed upon him with emotion,
And said: "The World-lord gave him unto me,
Gave him to me because I was in trouble.
May my Bahman live evermore since I
Have lost my noble, brazen-bodied son."
The conflicts of Asfandiyár are o'er;
May our Sháh's head live on for evermore,
His heart from travail ever be at rest,
And may the age conform to his behest,
Glad be his heart, his crown uplifted high,
And round his foe's neck may his lasso lie.

[1] Ardshír is a shortened form of Artakhshathra, *i.e.* "great king," but in native etymology was explained to mean "angry lion."
[2] See p. 281.

PART IV

THE STORY OF RUSTAM AND SHAGHÁD

ARGUMENT

The poet tells how he came to hear the story of the death of Rustam, which is as follows :—Zál had by a female slave a son named Shaghád and, as his horoscope was pronounced to be an unfavourable one by the astrologers, sent him to be educated at Kábul. There he married the king of Kábul's daughter, in consequence of which event the king anticipated that Rustam would remit the yearly tribute due from Kábul, but as this did not prove to be the case, the king and Shaghád plot together to bring about the death of Rustam, who perishes accordingly with his brother Zawára. They are avenged by Rustam's son Farámarz. The Part concludes with the death of Gushtásp and the succession of Bahman as Sháh.

NOTE

One might gather from Firdausí's account of the provenance of this story that he received it personally from the authority whom he calls Ázád Sarv, *i.e.* Noble Cypress. This, however, does not seem to be what the poet meant by his statement. He tells us that Ázád Sarv shed lustre on Sahl, son of Máhán, who was no doubt his patron, and that, after Sahl's death, we may presume, he occupied a similar position in relation to Sahl's son Ahmad.[1] Ahmad was sometime lord of Marv, and died A.D. 919-920,[2] about twenty years before Firdausí was born. Chronology therefore renders it highly improbable, though not impossible, that Firdausí and Ázád Sarv ever met. It is worth noting that the name of the king of Yaman, whose daughters married the sons of Farídún, was Sarv,[3] which is clearly fictitious ; also that when Núshírwán, whose reign will appear in a later volume of this translation, had on one occasion an unpleasant dream, and dispatched agents to various regions to find an interpreter, one of them was named

[1] pp. 263, 261 [2] NIN, § 15. [3] See Vol. i. p. 178.

Ázád Sarv, who went to Marv and was the means of introducing Búzurjmihr, the future chief minister, to the notice of the Sháh. It is not at all unlikely that Firdausí, having on the present occasion to refer to a tradition emanating from Marv, used Sarv, as a convenient rhyme word.[1] The poet's meaning is that, instead of following on this occasion his usual authority—the modern Persian prose version of the Bástán-náma[2]—he went elsewhere for his account. In the Bástán-náma, probably, Rustam remained alive till the next reign, and then was slain with all his house by Bahman.[3] Tabarí tells us that Bahman, urged on by his mother, invaded Sístán to avenge on Rustam and his kin the death of Asfandiyár. Bahman killed Farámarz, Zál, and Zawára, but Rustam himself was already dead.[4] Mas'údí says that Bahman made war on Rustam, and killed him and his father Zál.[5] With two or more versions of Rustam's death before him, Firdausí evidently chose the most romantic. It was better for the great hero to perish by treachery than in the stricken field against such a puny antagonist as Bahman.[6] Rustam and Zawára therefore are disposed of finally during the reign of Gushtásp and before Bahman's expedition to Sístán takes place.

We have had already several instances of the enmity between brothers so characteristic of Oriental life. We have seen how Purmáya and Kaiánúsh attempted the life of Farídún,[7] how Salm and Túr slew Íraj,[8] and we have probably another example in the case of Gurazm and Asfandiyár.[9] Now we have the fatal enmity of Shaghád against Rustam. It is only fair to add, however, that there are signal instances of brothers dwelling together in unity —*e.g.* Rustam and Zawára,[10] Gushtásp and Zarír,[11] and Asfandiyár and Bishútan.[12]

§ 1

The Prelude

The tale of Rustam's slaying I present V. 1729
In mine own words but based on document.
There was an ancient man, hight Ázád Sarv,
Who erst lived with Ahmad, Sahl's son, at Marv.

[1] Vol. i. p. 74. [2] *Id.* p. 66 *seq.*, but *cf.* NIN, § 15. [3] *Id.*
[4] ZT, i. 507. [5] MM, ii. 127. [6] *Cf.* p. 186.
[7] Vol. i. p. 160. [8] *Id.* 199. [9] p. 78, and *cf.* p. 12; JZ, 117.
[10] Vol. ii. pp. 110, 115. [11] Vol. iv. pp. 321, 362, and p. 65.
[12] Parts II. and III.

A paladin in form and face was he,
And storied in the royal legendry.
His head was full of speech, his heart of lore,
His tongue of phrases of the days of yore.
From Sám, the son of Narímán, he drew
His line and many a fight of Rustam's knew.
What I received from him I will rehearse,
And interweave it, word with word, in verse.
If in this Wayside Inn I still shall bide,
With mind and wisdom acting as my guide,
I will complete this story of the past,
And then on earth my record too will last.

In his name then who hath made earth his own—
Mahmúd, that glory of the crown and throne,
Lord of Írán, Túrán, and Hind, through whom
The world hath grown to be like silk of Rúm!
He lavisheth his treasures which will be
Replenished by his fame and policy,
And he is mighty and in future ages
Will live upon the lips of all the sages.
The world is full of his memorials—
Wars, bounties, huntings, lore and festivals—
But they among mankind are blest the most,
Who look upon his crown, his court, and host.

Mine ears and feet begin to fail at length;
Old age and want have robbed me of my strength;
V. 1730 Misfortune hath so fettered me that I
Mourn stress of years and evil destiny;
Yet am I ever instant in the praise
Of our just world-lord all my nights and days,
And all the folk are one with me in that,
Though faithless and malign, for since he sat
Upon the royal throne he hath subdued
The hand of evil and the gate of feud,
Restraining him that doth presumptuously,
However overweening he may be,

While bountifully largessing the sage
That heedeth the prescriptions of his age.
I raise him in this world a monument,
Which, while men live, shall be still evident
In this my story of the Sháhs of old,
Of bygone horsemen and the great and bold,
Compact of feast and fight, of ancient lore
And rede, of many a gest of days of yore,
Of knowledge, Faith, of scruple and advice,
And guidance furthermore to Paradise.
Of all the things that earn our monarch's praise,
The things of chiefest profit in his days,
This best will serve to keep his memory rife,
And live as part and parcel of his life,
And I am hoping to live too till I
Receive his gold that, when I come to die,
I too may leave my monument with things
Drawn from the treasury of the king of kings.
And now I turn back to the words of Sarv,
The Light of Sahl, son of Máhán, at Marv.

§ 2

How Rustam went to Kábul on behalf of his Brother Shaghád

Thus saith the ancient sage, that storied man
Of parts and eloquence:—Behind Zál's curtains
There dwelt a slave—a harpist and reciter—
And this handmaiden bore to him a son
As radiant as the moon, a horseman Sám
In form and aspect, and a cause of joy V. 1731
To all that noble house. The astrologers
And men of science—chosen cavaliers
Both from Kábul and from Kashmír, alike
The worshippers of God and of the Fire—
Went with their Rúman tables in their hands,

And each one took the aspect of the sky
As to its favour toward the little child.
The gazers found a portent in the stars,
And looked at one another. Then they said
To Zál, the son of Sám, the cavalier:—
"O thou remembered by the stars of heaven!
We have explored the secret of the sky:
'Tis unpropitious to this little child,
For when this pretty infant shall grow up,
And reach the days of strength and hardihood,
He will destroy the family of Sám,
The son of Narímán, and wreck their sway.
Through him Sístán will be fulfilled with uproar,
Írán embroiled, and all folks' days embittered,
But afterward his tarriance will be brief."

Zál, son of Sám, was grieved thereat, invoked
The Judge of all, and prayed: "O Guide of men,
Sustainer of the turning sky, my Refuge
And Stay in everything, who showest me
What rede to follow and what way to go,
And madest heaven and the stars withal,
Have we misdoubted of such excellence?
Be ours contentment, rest, and happiness."

The chieftain gave his son the name of Shaghád.
He kept the child till he was weaned and grew
Observant, full of charm, and talkative;
Then, when the boy was growing strong of limb,
Dispatched him to the monarch of Kábul.
Now when Shaghád became a lofty Cypress
In height, a horseman puissant with the lasso
V. 1732 And mace, that potentate took note of him,
Esteemed him fit for royal crown and throne,
Rejoiced to look on him and on account
Of his high birth bestowed on him a daughter,
And with that noble daughter sent besides
Fit presents from the spacious treasury,

And guarded him, as he were some fresh apple,
That ill might not befall him from the stars.
The nobles of Írán and Hindústán
Had much to say of Rustam, for he took
An ox-skin full of money from Kábul
Each year as tribute,[1] wherefore when the king
Had made Shaghád his son-in-law he thought
That Rustam of Zábul would heed no more
The money from that time; so when 'twas due,
And taken as before, Kábulistán
Was deeply moved. His brother's conduct vexed
Shaghád who spake not of it publicly,
But told the king in private: "I am weary
Of this world's doings. I can not respect
A brother who hath no regard for me.
Not recking whether he be wise or mad,
An elder brother or an alien,
Let us concert a plan of snaring him,
And win us in the world a name thereby."
They plotted till they soared above the moon
In their imaginations. Hear the sage:—
"The evil that men do they live to rue."
One night until the sun rose o'er the mountains
Sleep came not to the twain, and thus they said:—
"We will destroy his glory in the world,
And fill the heart and eyes of Zál with tears."
Shaghád said to the monarch of Kábul:—
"If we would do full justice to our scheme
Prepare a festival, invite the nobles,
And call for wine and harp and minstrelsy.

[1] Mohl's view is that the tribute was merely a nominal one—an empty ox-skin, worth one drachm—but in the latter part of the poem at all events ox-skins of coin frequently are mentioned in connexion with the payment of tribute, and it seems on the whole more likely that this particular ox-skin resembled the others and was not an empty one. Mohl's "de la valeur d'un dirhem" is hardly justified by the original, which rather means "in the matter of the money," *i.e.* of the tribute.

While we are in our cups speak coldly to me,
And then insult me. I, dishonoured thus,
v. 1733 Will set forth for Zábulistán, complain
About the monarch of Kábulistán
Before my brother and before my sire,
And call thee both discourteous and ill-natured.
Then Rustam will be wroth on mine account,
And come to our famed city. Then do thou
Select upon his route a hunting-ground,
And there dig divers pitfalls large enough
To take both him and Rakhsh, and plant long swords,
With spears and blades of steel with double edges,
The handles downward and the points erect,
About the bottoms of the pits. Of these
It will be better to make ten than five
If thou desirest to be freed from care.
Employ a hundred cunning workmen, dig
The pits, and keep the secret from the wind;
Then make the surface good and hold thy peace."

The monarch went, put prudence from his mind,
And made a feast as that insensate said,
Invited great and small throughout Kábul,
And seated them before a well-spread board.
When they had eaten they prepared for revel,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.

Now when folks' heads were flown with royal wine
Shaghád designedly grew insolent,
And spake thus to the monarch of Kábul:—
"I am exalted over all the folk;
With Rustam for my brother, Zál for father,
What nobler strain can any one possess?"

The king seemed wroth and said: "Why do I keep
This matter so long hidden? Thou art not
By race from Sám, the son of Narímán,
And neither Rustam's brother nor his kin.
Zál, son of Sám, hath never mentioned thee;

How then shall such an one be called thy brother?
Thou art slave-born, a menial at his gate,
And Rustam's mother would not own thy claim."
Shaghád, as angered at the monarch's words, V. 1734
Departed in a passion to Zábul
With certain of Kábul in company,
Revenge at heart and sighs upon his lips.
He reached his glorious father's court, his heart
All machination and his head all vengeance.
Zál at the instant that he saw his son,
So tall and stately, with such Grace divine
And thews received him kindly, questioned him,
And sent him on to Rustam presently.
That paladin rejoiced at seeing him,
To see him sage and of an ardent soul,
And said to him: "The seed of Sám, the Lion,
Produceth only strong and valiant men.
How do things stand betwixt Kábul and thee?
What doth he say of Rustam of Zábul?"
Shaghád replied: "Nay, speak not of the king.
He used to treat me kindly and to bless me
Whene'er he saw me; now he seeketh a quarrel
Against me in his cups and holdeth high
His head o'er all. He humbled me in public,
And showed his evil bent. He said to me:—
'How long shall we submit to pay this tribute?
Are we unable to resist Sístán?
Henceforth I will not mention Rustam; I
Am equal to him both in strength and parts.'
He further said: 'Thou art no son of Zál,
Or if thou art so he himself is naught.'
My heart was pained because of those chiefs present,
And so with pallid cheeks I left Kábul."
When Rustam heard it he was wroth, and said:—
"No matter lieth hidden for all time.
Have no more thought of him or of his realm,

And may his crown and sovereignty both perish.
I will destroy him for his words and wring
His heart and eyes, will seat thee on his throne
In joy, and lay in dust his head and fortune."
V. 1735 He entertained Shaghád for many days,
Assigned a stately palace for his use,
And from his army chose the fittest men—
Those famed in battle—bidding them prepare
To leave Zábul and occupy Kábul.
When all was ready, and the paladin
Freed from anxiety, Shaghád approached
That man of war, and said: "Think not of fighting
The monarch of Kábul. Were I to limn
Thy name on water merely none would rest
Or slumber there, for who would venture forth
To strive with thee, or who abide thy coming?
Sure am I that the monarch is repentant,
That he would fain atone for my departure,
And even now is sending from Kábul
Picked chiefs in numbers to apologise."
Then Rustam answered him: "That is the way.
Against Kábul I need no host of men;
Zawára with a hundred cavalry
And infantry of name will do for me."

§ 3

How the King of Kábul dug Pits in the Hunting-ground and how Rustam and Zawára fell therein

Now when ill-starred Shaghád had left Kábul
The monarch hurried to the hunting-ground,
And took a hundred sappers, men of note
Among the troops. They honeycombed the chase
With pits, arranging them beneath the rides,
And in them set haft-downward hunting-spears,

Swords, double-headed darts, and scimitars,
And made a shift to mask the openings
That neither man nor eye of beast might see them.
When Rustam had set forward in all haste
Shaghád dispatched a rapid post to say:—
"The elephantine hero hath come forth V. 1736
Without an army. Come to him and ask
To be forgiven."
The monarch of Kábul,
Pleas on his tongue and poison in his soul,
Came from the city and, on seeing Rustam,
Alighted from his steed, advanced a-foot,
Took off the Indian turban that he wore,
And clasped his naked head between his hands,
Drew off his boots and in his deep abasement
Made his eyelashes drip with his heart's blood.
He laid his cheeks upon the dusty ground,
Excusing his behaviour to Shaghád,
And saying: "If thy slave was drunk or crazy,
And seemed rebellious in his senselessness,
Vouchsafe to pardon this offence of mine,
And let me be anew as once I was."
Bare-footed, dust on head, his heart all guile,
He went before the chief, who pardoned him
His fault, increased his standing, bade him cover
His head and feet, mount saddle, and proceed.
There was hard by the city of Kábul
A pleasant, fertile spot with wood and water,
And there they willingly encamped. The king
Provided provand lavishly and furnished
A pleasant banquet-house, brought wine, called minstrels,
And placed the chiefs on royal thrones. Thereafter
He spake to Rustam thus: "When thou wouldst hunt
I have a district where on plain and hill
Game throngeth. Wild sheep, onager, gazelle
Fill all the waste. One with a speedy steed

Will capture there gazelle and onager;
One should not overlook that pleasant place."
Now Rustam grew excited at his talk
Of watered plain, of onager, and game,
For, when one's fate approacheth, anything
Will lead the heart wrong and pervert the mind.
V. 1737 This whirling world of ours behaveth thus,
And will not make its secrets known to us.
The crocodile in water, pard on land,
And battle-braving Lion deft of hand,
Are in death's clutch no less than ant and fly;
To tarry here transcendeth subtlety.
He bade to saddle the steeds and fill the waste
With hawks and falcons, cased his royal bow,
And rode out to the plain, he and Shaghád.
Zawára too was of the company,
And many another of their noble friends.
The retinue were scattered in the chase,
But all to quarters where no pits were digged,
While Rustam and Zawára took the path
Among the pits because Fate willed it so.
Rakhsh sniffed fresh earth, spun like a ball, and shied,
Suspicious of the smell, and tore the ground
To pieces with his iron shoes. Howbeit
That fleet steed picked his steps right warily
So as to make his way between two pits;
But Rustam's heart was filled with wrath at Rakhsh,
And fortune veiled discretion from his eyes.
He raised his hunting-whip and in his dudgeon
Lashed Rakhsh though lightly and thus flurried him
Just as, environed by the pits, he sought
To 'scape Fate's clutch. Two of his feet went through;
He had no purchase; all below was spear
And sword; no pluck availed; escape was none;
And so the haunches of the mighty Rakhsh,
And Rustam's legs and bosom, were impaled;

Yet in his manhood he uplifted him,
And from the bottom bravely gained the brim.

§ 4

How Rustam slew Shaghád and died

When Rustam wounded as he was looked forth,
And saw the hostile visage of Shaghád,
He recognised the author of the plot, V. 1738
And that the traitor was his foe, and said:—
"O man of black and evil destiny!
Thine action hath laid waste a prosperous land;
But thou shalt yet repent thee of this thing,
Writhe for this wrong, and never see old age."
The vile Shaghád replied: "The wheel of heaven
Hath dealt with thee aright. For what a while
Hast thou engaged in bloodshed, strife, and pillage
On all sides! Now thy life shall end, and thou
Shalt perish in the toils of Áhriman."
With that the monarch of Kábul came up
Upon his way toward the chase, beheld
The elephantine warrior thus wounded,
With all his wounds unbound, and said to him:—
"O thou illustrious leader of the host!
What hath befallen thee on the hunting-field?
I will depart forthwith, bring hither leeches,
And weep in tears of blood on thine account;
No need to weep though if thou art made whole."
But matchless Rustam answered: "Crafty villain!
The time for leech is passed. Weep no blood-drops
For me. Though thou liv'st long the end will come;
None can evade the sky. My Grace divine
Surpasseth not Jamshíd's, and he was sawn
Asunder by a foe,[1] or Farídún's,

[1] Vol. i. p. 140.

Or Kai Kubád's—those mighty, high-born Sháhs—
And when had come the time of Siyáwush
Gurwí, the son of Zira, cut his throat.[1]
Kings of Írán and Lions in the fight
Were they, and they have gone. We have outstayed them,
And loitered like great lions on our way;
V. 1739 But Farámarz my son—mine Eye—will come
And will require my vengeance at thy hands."
He said to foul Shaghád: "Since such an ill
Hath come on me uncase my bow for me,
And let it serve as mine interpreter.
String it and lay it by me with two arrows.
It is not fit that lions on the prowl,
And coming on the plain in quest of quarry,
Shall see me fallen here and sorely wounded,
For evil will betide me, and my bow
Will stay their rending me alive. My time
Is come, I lay my body in the dust."
Shaghád drew near, uncased the bow, and strung it.
He drew it once, then laid it down by Rustam,
And laughed exulting at his brother's death.
The matchless hero clutched it lustily,
Though tortured by the anguish of his wounds,
What while Shaghád in terror at those arrows
Made haste to shield himself behind a tree—
An ancient plane still boughed and leaved but hollow—
And there behind it skulked the miscreant.
When Rustam saw this he put forth his hands,
Sore wounded as he was, and loosed a shaft.
He pinned his brother and the tree together,
And gladdened in the article of death.
Shaghád, when he was stricken, cried out "Ah!"
But Rustam had not left him time to suffer,
And cried: "Now God be praised, and I have known Him

[1] Vol. ii. 321.

Through all my years, that even when my soul
Hath reached my lips day hath not turned to night
O'er my revenge, but He hath given me strength
Before my death to wreak me on this traitor."
He spake, his soul departed from his body, V. 1740
And all the folk bewailed him bitterly.
Within another pit Zawára died;
Remained no horseman high or low beside?

§ 5

How Zál received News of the Slaying of Rustam and Zawára, and how Farámarz brought their Coffins and set them in the Charnel-house

One of those noble cavaliers escaped,
And made his way on horseback and a-foot.
When he had reached Zábulistán he said: –
"The mighty Elephant is with the dust,
So are Zawára and the escort too,
And not another horseman hath escaped!"
Rose from Zábulistán a cry against
The foe and monarch of Kábulistán,
Zál scattered dust upon his shoulders, tore
His breast and face, and cried: "Alas! alas!
Thou elephantine hero! would that I
Were in my winding-sheet! Zawára too,
That noble warrior, that valiant Dragon,
That famous Lion! Luckless, cursed Shaghád
Hath dug up by the roots that royal Tree.
Who could imagine that a wretched Fox
Would meditate revenge in yonder land
Upon a Lion? Who can call to mind
Such a misfortune, who could bear to hear
From his instructor that a Lion like Rustam
Had died in dust and through a Fox's words?

Why died I not before them wretchedly?
Why am I left as their memorial?
V. 1741 Why need I life and fame now that the seed
Of me, the son of Sám, hath been uprooted?
O chieftain! lion-taker! hero! lord!
O man of valour and world-conqueror!"
He sent an army under Farámarz
Against the monarch of Kábul forthwith,
To gather those slain bodies from the dust,
And give the world good cause for sorrowing.
When Farámarz arrived before Kábul
He found no man of name within the city.
They all had fled, the people were in tears,
And seared with grief for world-subduing Rustam.
Then Farámarz went to the hunting-ground—
The plain wherein the pitfalls had been dug.
He ordered that a stretcher should be brought,
And to lay out thereon that noble Tree,
Unloosed that belt which marked a paladin,
And stripped the body of its royal raiment.
Then first of all they laved in tepid water
The bosom, neck, and beard right tenderly,
Burned musk and ambergris before the corpse,
And sewed up all the gashes of its wounds,
Poured o'er the head rose-water and disposed
The purest camphor over all the form.
Then, when they had arrayed it in brocade,
They requisitioned roses, musk, and wine.
The man who sewed the shroud shed tears of blood
On combing out that beard of camphor hue.
Two stretchers scarce sufficed to hold the body;
Was it a man's trunk or a shady tree's?
V. 1742 They fashioned out of teak a goodly coffin
With golden nails and ivory ornaments.
The apertures were all sealed up with pitch,
Which they o'erlaid with musk and spicery.

They drew Zawára's body from the pit,
Washed it, sewed up the gashes that they found,
And placed it in a shroud made of brocade.
They sought about to find an elmtree-trunk,
And skilful carpenters went forth and cut
Some mighty planks therefrom. They drew the body
Of Rakhsh out of the pit—that steed whose like
None had beheld on earth—a two days' task,
And then they hoised it on an elephant.
Kábulistán up to Zábulistán
Was like a place of public lamentation,
And men and women stood there in such throngs
That none had room to move, and so they passed
The coffins on from hand to hand and thought,
Such were their multitudes, the travail wind.
They reached Zábul in two days and a night,
And neither bier was seen to touch the ground.
The death of Rustam filled the age with wailing;
Thou wouldst have said: "The very waste is moved!"
They made the charnel-house within a garden,
And raised the summit of it to the clouds.
They set two golden thrones there face to face;
It was the blessèd hero's place of rest.
Then all of those who were his servitors,
The free by birth and honest-hearted slaves,
When they had mingled musk and roses poured them
Out at the elephantine hero's feet,
And every one exclaimed: "O famous man!
Why need'st thou gifts of musk and ambergris?
Thou hast no part in sovereignty and feast, V. 1743
No longer toilest in the battle-tide,
No longer lavishest thy gold and treasure.
In sooth such things are worthless in thy sight.
Be happy now in jocund Paradise,
For God compacted thee of manliness

And justice."

Having closed the charnel's door
They left him there. That famed, exalted Lion
Had passed away. Beside the door they made
A tomb for Rakhsh as of a horse upstanding.
What wouldst thou with this Wayside Inn—this gain
Of treasure first but in the end of pain?
Serve God or Áhriman yet still thou must,
Though made of iron, crumble into dust,
Yet lean to good while here thou shalt abide,
Elsewhere perchance thou wilt be satisfied.

§ 6

How Farámarz led an Army to avenge Rustam and slew the King of Kábul

When Farámarz had made an end of mourning
He led his whole host onward to the plains,
And having opened Rustam's dwelling-place
Provided pay and outfit for the troops.
At dawn the noise of clarions arose,
Of kettledrums withal and Indian bells.
Kábul-ward from Zábul he led a host
That veiled the sun. The ruler of Kábul
Heard of those chieftains of Zábulistán,
And massed his scattered troops. The earth grew iron,
Air azure-dim. He marched 'gainst Farámarz,
And light departed from the sun and moon.
When those two hosts confronted, and the world
Rang with the shouting of the warriors,
Within the woods the lions lost their way
Frayed by the throng of steeds, the dust of troops.
A wind arose, the azure dust-clouds whirled,
And earth seemed one with heaven. Farámarz
V. 1744 Came forth and charged the centre of the foe,
The world was darkened by the horsemen's dust,

The monarch of Kábul was taken captive,
And all his mighty armament dispersed.
The warriors of Zábulistán like wolves
Attacked the enemy on every side,
Pursuing those that fled away, and slaying
So many warriors and haughty chiefs
Of Sind and Hind, that all the field turned mire,
And all the troops of Hind and Sind were scattered
They gave up land and home, abandoning
Both wife and child. The monarch of Kábul,
All bathed in blood, was flung within the tower
Upon an elephant, and Farámarz
Led on his army to the hunting-ground
Whereon the pits were dug. He bare with him
The foe in chains and two score more withal—
Kin to the king and idol-worshippers.
He tore the monarch's back to strips until
The bones showed bare, then hung him, foul with dust,
His mouth all blood, head-downward in a pit,
And burned his forty kin; then sought Shaghád,
There made a conflagration mountain-high,
And burned him with the plane[1] and ground beneath.
The troops returning to Zábulistán
Took all the ashes of Kábul to Zál.
When Farámarz had cut the tyrant off
He made a Zábulí king in Kábul,
Where no one of the royal stock remained
That had not read the patent of his sword.
He came back from Kábul all seared and smarting
The brightness of his days was overcast.
Zábulistán and Bust lamented loudly, V. 1745
And no one wore a robe unrent. The folk
All came to welcome Farámarz again
With bosoms lacerate and full of pain.

[1] See p. 272.

§ 7

How Rúdába lost her Wits through Mourning for Rustam

For one year there was mourning in Sístán,
And all the folk were clad in black and blue.
Upon a day Rúdába said to Zál:—
"Lament and wail because of Rustam's death,
For surely since the sun hath lit the world
No man hath seen a darker day than this."
"O foolish woman!" Zál replied to her,
"The pain of fasting passeth that of grief."
Rúdába was enraged and swore an oath:—
"Henceforth my body shall not sleep or eat.
It may be that my soul will see again
The soul of Rustam midst yon company."
She fasted for a week that she might hold
Communion with his soul. Her eye grew dim
Through abstinence, her noble body pined.
For fear of harm slaves followed her about.
Ere that week ended she had lost her wits,
And in her frenzy sorrow turned to feasting.
She went forth to the kitchen in the night,
And saw a serpent lying dead in water.
With trembling eagerness she seized its head,
And was about to eat. The attendants snatched it,
And clasping her withdrew her from that place
Of unclean hands, bare her to her apartments,
And, having set her in her wonted seat,
Brought forth a trencher and set food thereon.
She ate of all till she was satisfied,
And then they spread soft garments under her.
She slept and rested from her care and trouble,
From grief at death and sorrows of possession.
V. 1746 As soon as she awoke she asked for food,
And they provided her abundantly.

When sense returned to her she said to Zál:—
"That word of thine consorted well with wisdom;
Grief at a death and feast and festival
Are one to him that eateth not nor sleepeth.
Our son hath gone and we shall follow him.
Trust we the Maker's justice."
She bestowed
Her treasures on the poor, and prayed to God:—
"O Thou who art above both name and place!
Cleanse from all fault the soul of matchless Rustam,
Assign him Paradise for his abode,
And joyance of the fruits that here he sowed."

§ 8

How Gushtásp gave the Kingdom to Bahman and died

Since matchless Rustam's life hath ceased to be
I will present another history.
When fortune's face grew louring to Gushtásp
He called Jámásp before the throne, and said:—
"Time hath inspired in me so much remorse
About the matter of Asfandiyár
That all my days are passed unjoyously,
And I am troubled by the vengeful stars.
Now after me Bahman will be the Sháh,
With Bishútan as confidant. Reject not
Bahman's behests, but serve him loyally,
And be his guide in every circumstance,
For he is worthy of the crown and throne."
The Sháh then gave Bahman the treasury-key,
And, sighing deeply, said: "My work is over;
The floods have overtopped me. I have sat
As Sháh for six score years and never seen
My peer; and now do thou bestir thyself,
Be just to every one and, being just,

Exempt from grief. Make glad and keep the wise
Near thee, but make the world dark to thy foes,
And follow right for that ne'er causeth loss.
V. 1747 I who have undergone much pain and travail
Resign to thee throne, diadem, and treasure."
He spake, his lifetime ended, and his past
Bare[1] no more fruit. They made a charnel-house
Of ebony and ivory, and hung
His crown above his throne. He had his share
Of treasure and of toil, and, after joying
In sweet and antidote, found bane at last.
If such is life whence do its pleasures spring?
Death equaleth the beggar and the king.
Enjoy thy having, shun ill-enterprise,
And hearken to the sayings of the wise.
My fellow-travellers have gone while I
Remain and tell at large of days gone by.
Each traveller hath reached his place of rest,
And, if he sought the good, achieved his quest.
Let virtue, virtue only, grasp thy hand
That thou mayst list to those that understand.
The doings of Bahman I now essay,
And will recount thee things long passed away.

[1] Reading with P.

XVI

BAHMAN, SON OF ASFANDIYÁR

HE REIGNED NINETY-NINE YEARS

ARGUMENT

Bahman, on ascending the throne, announces his purpose of taking vengeance on the family of Rustam for the death of Asfandiyár. He marches against Zábulistán, takes Zál and Farámarz prisoners, pardons the former but executes the latter. He then returns home, marries his own daughter Humái, arranges the succession to the throne, and dies.

NOTE

Originally Bahman appears to have had no connexion with the historical Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 464–424), with whom he has been identified by various writers. Artaxerxes, however, was a familiar name in its Persian form in Sásánian times owing to the fact that another Artaxerxes had overthrown the Parthian, and founded a native Íránian, dynasty. The compilers of the Bástán-náma, who seem to have become acquainted through some Syriac writer, who drew his material from a Greek chronographer, with the first Artaxerxes, readily identified him with Bahman [1]—the only traditional Íránian ruler available. Luhrásp and Gushtásp on one side, and Dáráb and Dárá on the other, were alike out of the question, while Humái was a woman. Accordingly Bahman received the name and distinguishing title of the Achæmenid, and became known as Ardshír—a form of Artaxerxes—and as Dirázdast—a translation of the Greek Μακρόχειρ. The expression "of the long hand" or "the long handed" is well illustrated by a passage in Tennyson's "Princess."

> "But my good father thought a king a king;
> He cared not for the affection of the house;

[1] NIN, § 12.

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and picked offenders from the mass
For judgment."

In time, as so often happens, the metaphor was taken literally, and we find Firdausí saying of Bahman :—

"And with his fingers dressed beside his legs
His fists extended lower than his knees."[1]

How Artaxerxes obtained his title expressive of far-reaching power does not seem to be known. He may have assumed it himself, or received it from his subjects or from the Greeks. The earliest mention of it is by the Greek writer Dinon, or Deinon,[2] in the days of Alexander the Great. The view which identifies Bahman with Artaxerxes Longimanus has been supplemented by the further identification of Artabanus with Rustam and Xerxes with Asfandiyár.[3] If this is accepted we may trace in the contention of Rustam with Asfandiyár, the former's patronage of Bahman, Bahman's accession to the throne and his subsequent vengeance on the race of Zál, a poetical version of the palace conspiracy whereby Artabanus, the captain of the guard, leagued with Artaxerxes, slew the latter's father Xerxes, and placed Artaxerxes on the throne only to be destroyed himself shortly afterward with all his house by the Sháh whom he had set up. If, however, the view expressed at the beginning of this note is correct, and it is substantially Professor Nöldeke's, that the title of the Long-handed was derived through the Syriac from Greek sources and bestowed on a wholly mythical personality, we may conclude that other events of the reign of the Long-handed were borrowed from the same foreign source and reflected back in the like manner, in which case of course the above identifications are historically valueless. In the translation we always speak of Bahman, not Ardshír.

§ 5. We have here one of the fictitious genealogies by which it was striven to connect the Sásánian with the Kaiánian dynasty. Another will be found in the next volume in the portion dealing with the Ashkánian dynasty.[4]

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[1] p. 259. [2] NIN, § 12, *note*.
[3] See MHP, i. 528 *seq*. *Cf*. too JZ, 133, 160.
[4] See too Vol. ii. p. 3.

§ 1

How Bahman sought Revenge for the Death of Asfandiyár

Whenas Bahman sat on his grandsire's throne V. 1748
He girt his girdle round him, oped his hands,
Bestowed a donative upon the troops,
And granted many a march and many a province.
He held a conclave of the men of wisdom,
The great men, and the officers of state,
And thus he said: "Ye all, both old and young,
Whoever hath an understanding mind,
Wot of the slaying of Asfandiyár,
Of fortune's changes both for good and ill,
Of Rustam's deeds while yet he lived and those
Of Zál, the sorcerer, that ancient man.
Now Farámarz in public and in private
Desireth naught but vengeance on ourselves,
While my head acheth and my heart is full,
And I too think of nothing but revenge:
Two warriors—Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh—
Have given up their lives so wretchedly![1]
By that same token too Asfandiyár—
A man without a peer in all the world—
Was slaughtered in Zábulistán. The beasts V. 1749
Of prey and chase went wild with grief for him.
Yea, for the slaughter of Asfandiyár
The pictures in the palace weep for woe,
And for the blood of those our noble ones,
Our youths and gallant cavaliers withal.
No man that springeth from pure stock will leave
His finest jewel lying in the ditch,
But will come forward, like Sháh Farídún
(And while such men exist all will be well)

[1] See pp. 226, 227.

Who made Zahhák, in that he slew Jamshíd,
To cease among the warriors of the world.
For vengeance Minúchihr led from Ámul
A mighty host 'gainst Túr and valiant Salm,
Invaded Chín, took vengeance for his grandsire,
And levelled earth up to the hills with slain.[1]
When Kai Khusrau escaped Afrásiyáb
He made the world run river-like with blood.
My sire avenged the slaying of Luhrásp,
And like achievements should be told of me.
In vengeance for his father, Farámarz
Exalted to the shining sun his head,
Marched on Kábul, required revenge for Rustam,
And levelled to the dust its fields and fells.
No man could recognise the land for blood:
They made the horses trample on the slain.
More call have I to take revenge who urge
My steed against the elephant and lion,
Because thou wilt not see amongst earth's heroes
Another horseman like Asfandiyár.
What are your views? What answer do ye give
In this regard? Strive to advise me well."
Thereat the assembled loyal lieges cried:—
"Thy slaves are we and have fulfilled our hearts
With love toward thee. Thou art more instructed
Than we about the past and mightier.
Do whatsoe'er thou wilt so long as fame
And Grace divine accrue to thee thereby.
No one will disobey thee; who will dare?"
V. 1750 Bahman, thus answered by his host, grew keener
For vengeance and made ready to invade
Sístán. This settled, the assembly rose.
At dawn the drums beat and the sky grew ebon
With dust of troops whereof there marched along
Sword-wielding horsemen five score thousand strong.

[1] Vol. i. p. 215 *seq.*

§ 2

How Bahman put Zál in Bonds

Now when Bahman was drawing nigh the Hírmund
He choose him out an envoy, one of rank,
Entrusted to him various messages,
And sent him on to Zál, the son of Sám,
To say: "My lot is bitter in the world
Through what hath happened to Asfandiyár,
And through the vengeance owing for Núsh Zád [1]
And Núsh Ázar—two loved and high-born princes.
I mean to ease my heart of this old grudge,
And make the rivers of Zábul run blood."
The messenger arrived and gave the message
To Zál, whose heart grew wed to pain and grief,
And he returned this answer: "If the Sháh
Is thus concerned about Asfandiyár,
Then let him know that what was was to be,
And that the matter filled my heart with anguish.
Thou wast thyself exposed to good and ill,
And hadst from me all profit and no loss.
Now Rustam swerved not from thy sire's commands,
But, as thou sawest, bare a loyal heart.
Thy sire, that great and noble prince, was fey,
And thereupon waxed over-bold. The lion
And dragon of the wood can not escape
The clutch of Fate. Thou must have heard, good sooth,
What deeds of valour Sám, the cavalier,
Accomplished in the past, and thus persèvered
Down to the days of Rustam, who then drew
The trenchant scimitar and wrought with valour
Before thine ancestors in times of strife.[2]
Withal he was the humblest of thy nurses V. 1751
As well as of the mightiest of thy host.

[1] Núsh Zád seems to be variant of Mihr-i-Núsh. [2] Reading with P.

Now miserably hath he passed away,
And all Zábulistán is full of tumult.
If now thou wilt forbear to war with us,
Wilt think upon our case considerately,
Wilt come and, putting vengeance from thy heart,
Enchant our land with lovingkindliness,
I will present to thee upon thy coming
Sám's wealth, brocade, dínárs, his golden girdles,
And golden harness, for thou art the Sháh;
The nobles are thy flock."
He gave the envoy
A steed, dínárs, and many other gifts.
Now when the noble envoy reached Bahman,
He told what he had heard and seen with Zál.
Bahman, the fortune-favoured, when he heard,
Rejected the excuse, was very wroth,
And reached the city with an aching heart,
With vengeful thoughts and sighs upon his lips.
Then Zál, the son of Sám the cavalier,
Attended meanly by two horsemen, went
To meet Bahman and, coming to the presence,
Alighted from his roadster, did obeisance,
And spake thus, saying: "Wise and prudent Sháh!
Deign to regard us with the eye of wisdom.
By all the services that we have paid,
And by our care for thee when thou wast young,
Forgive us, speak no more about the past,
Be great and seek not vengeance for the slain."
Enraged with Zál, whose hopes were foiled, Bahman
Put him forthwith in fetters, heeding not
What minister or treasurer might say.
Then from the halls of Zál, the son of Sám
The cavalier, they loaded up the camels
v. 1752 With money and with jewels in the rough,
With thrones and tapestries, whate'er there was,
With golden tissue and with golden crowns,

With silvern tissue and with belts and earrings.
They took the Arab horses trapped with gold,
The Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
The prisoners and sacks of drachms, of musk,
And camphor, and the treasures more or less
That Rustam had collected by his toil
From Sháhs and chiefs. Bahman delivered all
Zábulistán to pillaging and then
Gave crowns and purses to his mighty men.

§ 3

How Farámarz fought with Bahman and was put to Death

At Bust, upon the frontier, Farámarz,
In dudgeon for his grandsire, steeped his hands
In vengeance, gathered troops, marched 'gainst Bahman,
And oft recalled the wars of matchless Rustam.
When news of this had reached the monarch's ears
He raged upon the throne of king of kings,
Packed up the baggage, called the troops to horse,
Marched to the burial-place of Rustam's race,
And tarried there two weeks. Then with the din
Of trumpets and of Indian bells the mountains
Shook to their cores, heaven bathed the world in pitch,
And from that pitch the arrows showered like hail,
While at the clash of ax and twang of bow
The earth out-quaked the sky. Three days and nights
Upon that field steel swords and maces rained,
And clouds of dust collected overhead.
Upon the fourth day there arose a storm:
Thou wouldst have said: "The day and night are one."
The blast was in the face of Farámarz. V. 1753
The world-lord joyed and, following up the dust
With trenchant sword, brought Doomsday on the foe.
The men of Bust, the warriors of Zábul,
The gallant swordsmen of Kábulistán,

Had not a horseman left upon the field,
No chief was left of all those men of name,
For one by one they turned their backs in flight,
And shamefully deserted Farámarz.
The battlefield was heaped up mountain-like
By slain struck down pell mell from both the hosts.
Albeit with a paltry band of heroes
Right bravely Farámarz still faced the foe,
Himself a lion and a lion's whelp,
With all his body hacked by scimitars,
Until at length that noble warrior
Was ta'en by brave Ardshír who carried him
Before Bahman. That vengeful monarch gazed
Upon him for a while but would not spare,
V. 1754 Bade rear a gibbet and hung Farámarz
Alive thereon, his elephantine form
Head-downward. Then in wreak, with arrow-rain,
Bahman,[1] that famous Kaian, had him slain.

§ 4

How Bahman released Zál and returned to Irán[2]

Now noble Bishútan, the minister,
Was sorely troubled by this butchery,
And rising in the world-lord's presence said:—
"Just monarch! if revengement was thy due,
And 'twas thy heart's desire, that wish of thine
Is perfected in loss. Cease to enjoin
Raid, slaughter, turmoil, strife. Approve them not,
Refrain thyself, fear God, and think of us.
Consider well the turns of fortune's wheel,
How it exalteth this man to the clouds,
And putteth that man into sorry plight.
Thy sire, that world-lord and the army's Lustre,
Did he not go Nímrúz-ward for a bier,

[1] Ardshír in the original. See p. 282. [2] Reading with C and P.

And did not Rustam too when at Kábul
Go to the chase and perish in a pit?
While thou dost live, O king of pure descent!
Vex not a man of birth, for if the son
Of Sám, the son of Narímán, shall cry
Against his bondage to the great All-giver,
Thou wilt be pinched, successful as thou art,
When he appealeth to the Omnipotent.
To Rustam, warder of the Kaian throne,
Who used to gird his loins for every toil,
Thou wast indebted for this crown and not
To Sháh Gushtásp or to Asfandiyár.
Trace downward from the days of Kai Kubád
To those of Kai Khusrau of holy rede;
All owed their greatness to his scimitar,
And held the mightiest his inferiors.
If thou art wise release Zál from his bonds,
And turn thy heart back from the evil way."
The Sháh repented of those deeds of his
When he had heard the words of Bishútan.
A proclamation issued from his court:— V. 1755
"Ye paladins, ye just and upright men!
Make preparations for returning home,
And keep from pillage and from massacre."
He bade them to release the feet of Zál
From bonds and give him much good counselling.
They built a charnel-house to hold the slain,
Such was the rede of righteous Bishútan.
When Zál returned from prison to his palace
His noble spouse wept o'er him bitterly,
And cried: "Alack thou brave, heroic Rustam,
Thou scion of the hero Narímán!
When yet thou wast alive who recognised
Gushtásp as Sháh? But now thy hoards are sacked,
Zál hath been captive, and thy son slain vilely
By showers of arrows! Oh! may none e'er see

Another day like this, and may the earth
Be void of offspring from Asfandiyár."
Now tidings of this matter reached Bahman,
As well as glorious Bishútan, who grieved
For her; his cheeks grew wan at her complainings.
He spake thus to Bahman: "O youthful Sháh,
As 'twere a new moon in the midst of heaven!
At daybreak lead thy host forth from this land,
For matters here are grave and troublesome.
May evil eyes be distant from thy crown,
And may thy whole time be a festival.
The king of kings should stay not long beneath
The roof of Zál, the son of Sám the hero."
Whenas the hills became like sandarach,
And when the sound of drums rose from the courtgate,
The monarch led the army from Zábul
Toward Írán—the country of the brave.
He rested, sat rejoicing on the throne,
And ruled the world by precedent and justice.
Great was the largess that the poor received,
And many men rejoiced in him or grieved.

§ 5

How Bahman married his own daughter Humái and appointed his Successor

Bahman[1] possessed one lion-taking son,
On whom he had bestowed the name Sásán;
V. 1756 He had withal a daughter named Humái,
Considerate, accomplished, and discreet.
They used to call her by the name Chihrzád.[2]
Her father's greatest joy was seeing her.
He took her for his wife, which in the Faith

[1] See p. 288, *note*.

[2] The name may mean "Born of the seed" or if = Chihr Ázád, "Of noble seed" or "Of noble mien."

That thou call'st olden was a goodly deed.
Humái, that heart-refreshing shining Moon,
In course of time grew pregnant by the Sháh.
Now when six months had passed she 'gan to ail,
And he, at seeing this, fell sick himself,
And, prostrated with suffering, summoned her.
He summoned too the nobles and the magnates,
And, seating them where great men use to sit,
Thus said: "This chaste Humái hath had small joy
Of this world, and I leave her crown, high throne,
The host, the treasure, and preeminence.
She shall be my successor in the world,
She and the babe withal that she shall bear,
For, whether it shall prove a son or daughter,
It shall succeed to crown and throne and girdle."
Sásán, on hearing this, was all astound:
His heart was darkened by his father's words,
And, like a pard, in three days and two nights
He journeyed from Írán abroad in shame,
And reached in haste the town of Nishápúr
In dudgeon and an alien from his sire.
He asked a lady of high rank in marriage,
But kept himself down level with the dust,
Withheld the secret of his Kaian birth,
And spake to no one of his quality.
His chaste wife bare to him a holy son,
Whose steps were happy and whose birth was blest,
A son to whom he gave the name Sásán, V. 1757
And died anon. Whenas the child grew up,
And saw his home a prey to poverty,
He tended for the king of Nishápúr
The herds that roamed at will o'er plain and mountain,
And was for long the herdsman of the king:
His dwelling was on height and wilderness.
Now turn I to Humái to tell her case
When she, Bahman deceased, assumed his place.

XVII

HUMÁI

SHE REIGNED THIRTY-TWO YEARS

ARGUMENT

Humái, in order to keep the throne for herself, casts away her son, when an infant, in an ark on the Euphrates. The babe is found by a launderer, adopted by him and his wife, and named Dáráb. Dáráb's kingly qualities early assert themselves, and, refusing to follow his foster-father's trade, he enters the Persian army. A portent calls the general's attention to him. He displays great valour in war against the Rúmans, and is recognised by Humái, who owns him as her son and resigns the throne in his favour.

NOTE

The goddess of love, worshipped in many lands and under many names, had one of her oldest seats at Ascalon.[1] Beside her dove-haunted temple was a lake, abounding in fish, to which at stated times the image of the goddess—a woman to the waist and a fish below—was borne in procession. Her local name was Derketo. The cult of the goddess gave rise to a legend that Derketo originally was a girl who, as the result of a love-affair with a Syrian youth, gave birth to a daughter whom she exposed to perish among rocks in a desert, threw herself into the lake, and was changed into a fish. Her abandoned babe was cared for and fed by the doves till about one year old, when it was found by the herdsmen of Simmas, the keeper of the flocks of Ninus, king of Assyria. Simmas, who was childless, brought up the babe as his own, and gave her the name of Semiramis. In after years Onnes, the viceroy of Syria under king Ninus and his chief counsellor, saw, fell in love with, and married her. She bore him two sons, Hyapates and Hydaspes. Then Ninus himself became infatuated

[1] Herodotus, Book I. c. 105.

with her, Onnes hung himself, and Semiramis became queen. By Ninus she had a son named Ninyas. When Ninus died he left her the throne. Her career as supreme ruler was magnificent rather than moral. She governed all Asia as far eastward as the Indus, and was the reputed builder of Babylon, its hanging gardens, and the temple of Bel. In fact all great achievements of building or engineering in those parts were attributed to her. After a reign of forty-two years, and at the age of sixty-two, she resigned the throne to her son Ninyas, and either made away with herself by suicide or else turned into a dove and flew off in company with a flock of those birds. Such in brief is a legend that was much in vogue in the days when Ktesias was court physician in Persia between the years B.C. 417 and B.C 398. He recorded it in his *Persica*, Diodorus epitomised it in his *Bibliotheca*, Books I. and II., and through his epitome it has come down to us. The legend has been given here because it seems not unlikely that in Humái we have a reminiscence of Semiramis. The two legends certainly have much in common. We have two queens, both of whom, after the death of their husbands and by their express sanction, oust—to employ a convenient phrase—the rightful heir; both of them have a foundling story connected with them, and both in the end resign their thrones to their sons. Both too are represented in legend as having been great builders; Humái is credited, though not in the Sháhnáma, with the edifices whose ruins still exist in the neighbourhood of Istakhr (Persepolis) in Párs.[1] Moreover Mas'údí tells us that Humái's mother was a Jewess, *i.e.* a Syrian.[2] Two attempts seem to have been made to connect Humái with the old legendary line of kings, and both characteristically Persian. In one she is the daughter of Gushtásp and marries her brother Asfandiyár; in the other she is the daughter of Bahman and marries her father. The foundling legend is transferred from her to her son Dáráb. Several such legends are in existence. The oldest probably is that of Sargon I. of Agani, an ancient Babylonian king. "My mother," he says, "placed me in an ark of bulrushes: with bitumen my door she closed up: she threw me into the river,[3] which did not enter into the ark to me. The river carried me: to the dwelling of AKKI the water-carrier it brought me. AKKI the water-carrier in his goodness of heart lifted me up from the river. AKKI the water-carrier brought me up as his own son."[4] Similarly Romulus and Remus, the twin sons of the Vestal Silvia, were set afloat on the

[1] ZT, i. 510, NT, p. 8 and *note*, MM, iv. 76.
[2] MM, ii. 123.
[3] The Euphrates.
[4] RP, v. 3.

Tiber in a trough, and afterward brought up by a shepherd and his wife.[1] There is too the case of Moses and of others.

Humái appears in the Zandavasta as "the holy Huma."[2] She is the earliest of the three queens or female Sháhs that, according to the partly legendary, partly historical, dynastic scheme of the Sháhnáma, ruled in ancient times over Irán. She is also by far the most important of the three. The other two—Púrándukht and Ázarmdukht—reigned in succession for six and four months respectively during part of the troublous period (A.D. 628–633) that intervened between the deposition of Khusrau Parwíz and the accession of Yazdagird III.

§ 1.

How Humái cast away her son Dárá on the River Farát in an Ark

Bahman died of his malady and ceased
To be concerned about the crown and throne.
Humái came, set the crown upon her head,
And ordered things anew, admitted all
The army to her court and, opening
The portal of her treasures, gave dínárs.
In rede and justice she excelled her sire:
The whole world prospered through her equity.
She said: "Be this crown glorious, our foes' hearts
Uprooted, our profession every good,
And may none see distress and care through us.
I will enrich all mendicants and those
Who earn their own subsistence by their toil,
And harass not the great possessed of treasure."
Whenas the time of her delivery came
She kept it from the people and the host,
Because she loved the throne of sovereignty,
And found it profit to possess the world.
She bare a son in secret, kept it close,
And had the little Treasure hid away,
Procured for nurse a woman of free birth,

[1] Livy, Book I. c. 4. [2] DZA, ii. 224.

Pure, full of modesty, and other virtues,
And privily made o'er to her the babe,
That Shoot so flourishing and full of promise,
And, when they asked Humái about her son,
She used to say: "The noble child is dead."
Moreover she assumed the royal crown,
And held the throne in triumph and in joy.
She sent her hosts where'er were hostile chiefs,
And was apprised of everything that passed
For good or evil in the world around.
She only sought for what was just and good,
And ordered all the world aright; her justice
Safeguarded it; it spake of her alone.
Thus eight months passed away, but when the boy
Began to favour the departed Sháh
She ordered that a skilful carpenter
Should choose material for fine joinery,
And make a goodly ark of seasoned wood.
They smeared it with a coat of pitch and musk,
And lined it softly with brocade of Rúm,
Bedaubing it without with lime and wax.
She placed within a pillow for a bed,
And filled it full of pearls of splendid water.
They poured in quantities of ruddy gold,
Mixed with cornelians and emeralds.
They bound one jewel, such as kings might wear,
Upon the arm of that unweanèd child
And, when the little one was fast asleep,
His nurse, so deft of hand, went wailingly,
Disposed him tenderly inside the ark,
Enwrapped him warmly in fine silk of Chín,
And then they made the cover water-tight
With lime, pitch, wax, and musk. When midnight came
They carried forth the ark, without a word, V. 1760
And, hasting from Humái, set it adrift
Upon the stream of the Farát. Two men

Ran after it to notice how the suckling
Fared on the stream. The ark went like a boat,
And those that watched had to bestir themselves.
Now when the morning rose above the mountains
The ark brought up beside a watercourse,
Where was a laundering-place; the workers there
Had made with stones the channel's inlet narrow.
A launderer beheld the little ark,
Ran up, and drew it from the laundering-place.
When he had oped the ark, and had removed
The coverings, he stood in wonderment,
Wrapped it in heaps of clothes and hurried off,
All eager expectation and delight,
Whereat a watcher ran to tell the mother
Of ark and launderer. Said that shrewd queen:—
"Thou must keep hidden that which thou hast seen."

§ 2

How the Launderer brought up Dáráb

Now when the launderer came back from the stream
At that untimely hour his wife exclaimed:—
"Is this thy husbandry to bring the clothes
Half dried? Whoe'er will pay thee for such work?"
The launderer, heart-withered then by grief
Because his own bright little one was dead,
For whom his wife was all disconsolate
With lacerated cheeks and darkened soul,
Replied: "Cheer up! Henceforth for thee to wail
Will be but scurvy, for if my good wife
Can keep a secret I will tell a thing:
Upon the watercourse, against the stone
Whereon I beat the clothes and rinse them out
When I have finished cleaning them, I spied
An ark, and hidden in it was a babe—

A little one that thou wilt love at sight V. 1761
As soon as ever I uncover it.
'Tis true that we have had one of our own,
Though for a little while and he is dead,
But now thou hast one unawares—a son
All furnished with dínárs and jewelry!"
With that he set the clothes upon the ground,
And lifted up the cover of the ark.
The launderer's wife beheld and in her wonder
Exclaimed: "God bless it!" for she saw a cheek
Aglow amid the silk—Bahman's own image!
His pillow was all pearls of finest water,
With emeralds and cornelians for his footstool;
Upon his left hand there were red dínárs,
And on his right hand jewels in profusion.
The woman suckled him immediately,
Rejoicing over that entrancing babe,
Whose beauty and whose wealth consoled her heart.
The launderer said to her: "We must be ever
Prepared to give our lives up for this child,
Because he is the son of some great man,
May be a king himself."
The launderer's wife
Cared for the child as it had been her kin,
As it had been her very son indeed,
And on the third day named the babe Dárâb,
Because they found his cradle in the stream.[1]
It happened that one day the careful wife
Was talking to her lord of many things,
And said to him: "How wilt thou use these gems?
Let wisdom be thy counsellor therein."
"Good wife!" the launderer answered, "hoarded jewels

[1] Dar áb=in water. According to Tabarí (ZT. i. 509) Humái, hearing that her son had been found by a miller, sent for the latter, inquired about the babe, and said, "Dár," *i.e.* "Take him." Hence the form "Dárá." Both forms occur in the text, and both etymologies are of course worthless. The ancient form of the word was "Dárayavahush."

And dust are one to me. 'Tis best for us
To quit this city, move out to the plains,
Relieved from straits and hardship, and reside
Within some city, where folk know us not,
Content and affluent."
At morn he packed,
Departed, and forgot those fields and fells.
They bore Dáráb with them and carried naught
Beside except the gold and jewelry.
V. 1762 They journeyed from the place for three score leagues,
They made their home within another city,
And there within that alien city lived
Like wealthy folk. A famous magnate dwelt
Therein, and unto him the launderer sent
One of the jewels, taking in return
Apparel, gold, and silver. Thus he did
Until he had exchanged them nearly all,
And there remained one ruby in the house
Of what the ark had held for good or ill.
One day the wife, who was the manager,
Said to her master: "We need work no longer.
Since thou hast made thy fortune give up trade."
He answered her: "Good wife and guide! thou speakest
Of trade. Well, what is better? Trade is ever
The first concern. Tend well Dáráb and mark
What time will yet produce for thee through him."
They cherished him so dearly that he felt
No ill from any blast. When heaven had wheeled
Above him for some years he grew to be
A youth of stature and of Grace divine,
And wrestled with his playmates in the street,
Where none could match him as to bulk and strength,
Yea, all combined against him and were worsted!
The launderer grumbled at these escapades,
Which made the outlook gloomy for the shop,

And said: "Now beat these clothes upón the stone;
'Tis no disgrace to thee to learn a craft,"
And when Dáráb, as usual, left the work,
And ran away, the launderer used to weep
In tears of blood and wasted nearly all
His time in searching countryside and city,
And coming on the boy with bow in hand,
His breast extended and his thumbstall on,
Would seize the bow and cry indignantly:—
"O thou destructive and pugnacious Wolf!
Why dost thou hanker after bow and arrows?
Why art thou set on evil while so young?"
Thereat Dáráb would answer: "O my father! V. 1763
Thou turn'st the brightness of my life to gloom.
Provide me first of all with men of lore,
That I may get by heart the Zandavasta,
And then command my toils for trade and stream,
But do not yet require this drudgery."
The launderer, having often rated him,
At last consigned him to the care of teachers.
He learned accomplishments, grew masterful,
And wholly past fault-finding and reproach.
"My father," said he to his foster-sire,
"This laundry business is not fit for me;
Be not at all concerned on mine account,
But bring me up to be a cavalier."
The launderer thereupon selected one
Of good repute and skilled in horsemanship,
And long committed to his charge the youth,
Who learnt from him whate'er was requisite—
The way to handle rein and lance and buckler,
And wheel his charger on the battlefield,
To play at polo, shoot with bow and arrow,
And outwit foes, till he attained such might
That leopards would not close with him in fight.

§ 3

How Dáráb questioned the Launderer's Wife about his Parentage, and how he fought against the Rúmans

One day Dáráb said to the launderer:—
"Albeit that I never mention it
Affection stirreth not in me for thee,
Nor is my face like thine. I feel astounded
Whene'er thou call'st me son and seatest me
Beside thee in the shop."
The launderer said:—
"What words are these? Alack for all the pains
Bestowed on thee! If thou out-classest me
Seek for thy sire; thy mother hath thy secret."
It happened that the launderer one day
Went from the house and hastened to the stream.
V. 1764 Dáráb made fast the door and then approached
The goodwife, took in hand his scimitar,
And said to her: "Attempt not to deceive me,
And to obscure the issue; speak the truth
In answer to my questions. How am I
Related to you both and wherefore dwelling
Thus with a launderer?"
In fright the woman
Begged for her life and called on God for succour.
She said: "Seek not my blood, and I will tell thee
All as thou biddest."
She recounted all,
With neither reticence nor subterfuge,
About the ark, the infant yet unweaned,
About the golden coins and royal jewels,
And said: "We were but simple working-folk
Quite unrelated to the quality.
What wealth we have is all derived from thine;
Through thee we rose from low to high estate.

We are but slaves and thine is to command:
What wilt thou? We are thine both soul and body."
Dáráb stood in amaze on hearing this,
Plunged in profound surmise. He said to her:—
"Doth anything remain of all that wealth,
Or hath the launderer spent the whole of it?
Is there enough still left to buy a horse
In this our day of lowliness and want?"
The woman said: "There is and more than that,
And there are money, land, and fruitful gardens."
She gave him all the money that she had,
And showed to him the precious uncut gem.
He spent the money on a noble steed,
A lasso, mace, and saddle of low price.
There was a prudent marchlord, one of weight,
A magnate well approved and well advised,
To whom Dáráb betook himself with soul
O'erclouded and perturbed. The marchlord held him
In highest estimation; no disaster
Befell him any whit.
Now as it chanced
An army marched from Rúm to levy war
Upon that prosperous land, that frontier-chief
Was slain in battle and his army worsted. V. 1765
In those days when the tidings reached Humái:—
"The Rúman hath set foot upon our border,"
There lived a warrior hight Rashnawád—
A captain of the host and sprung from such.
She ordered: "Let him lead a host toward Rúm,
And waste the country with the scimitar."
To that end Rashnawád assembled troops,
Assigned the mustering place and gave out rations;
Dáráb heard, joyed, went, and enrolled his name.
When many troops had gathered, and the muster
Had been completed, glorious Humái,
Accompanied by well affected chiefs,

Came from the palace to review the host,
To count the numbers, and go through the names
Upon the registers. She tarried long
On that broad plain while many troops marched past,
And when she spied Dáráb, his Grace divine,
His bearing, and the steel mace on his shoulder,
When thou hadst said: "He filleth all the plain,
And earth is subject to his prancing steed,"
When too she marked his breast and lovesome face,
The mother's milk stirred in her, and she asked:—
"Whence is this cavalier who is possessed
Of such great limbs and is so tall and straight?
Me seemeth that he is a man of name,
Discreet and yet a warlike cavalier,
A gallant heart, illustrious and mighty;
But his equipment is not worthy of him."
When narrowly she had surveyed Dáráb,
And had approved of all that host, she chose
A favourable season by the stars
Upon the captain of the host's behalf,
As was the fitting course. What time the leaders
Were of one mind they led the army forth
And left Humái. She sent out watchful spies
To keep her well informed and certified
V. 1766 About the army's case for good and ill,
And cut short all surmises of mishaps.
Thus stage by stage the army marched on Rúm;
Its flying dust-clouds filled the heavens with gloom.

§ 4

How Rashnawád learned the Case of Dáráb

It happened that one day a mighty tempest,
With thunderings and lightnings, rain and turmoil,
Brake o'er the host and troubled Rashnawád;
The earth was flooded and the welkin roared;

Men everywhere were fleeing from the downpour,
And making for some shelter on the waste.
Dáráb, like others, was discomfited,
And sought to escape the storm. He looked around,
Beheld a heap of ruins, and observed
A lofty vault, though old and ruinous,
One that had borne the brunt of wind and weather,
Still standing in their midst. He slept perforce
Therein for he was all alone and friendless.
The general was going on his rounds,
And passing by the vault, when from the waste
A voice fell on his ear and made him quail
For his own life; it was a voice that said:—
"O ruined vault! be very circumspect!
Be careful of the monarch of Írán.
He had not any shelter, friend, or mate,
And so he came and slumbered under thee."
Thought Rashnawád: "'Tis thunder on the blast."
Then from the desert came the voice again:
"O vault!" it said, "close not the eye of wisdom,
For 'neath thee is the son of Sháh Bahman.
Fear not the rain and keep these words in mind."
A third time that same voice came to his ear; V. 1767
His heart was strangely straitened at the sound.
He asked a counsellor: "What thing is this?
Some one must needs go thither. Ascertain
Who is reposing there in such concern
About himself."
They went and saw a youth
Of prudent aspect and heroic mien,
His charger and his garments wet and worn,
And he was couching on the darksome dust.
They told the general, whose heart was stirred,
And he commanded: "Summon him forthwith,
And make him hear."
They cried: "Awake, thou sleeper!

Arouse thee from thy slumber on the dust."
He mounted, and at once the vault fell in!
The leader of the army of the Sháh,
On witnessing a portent such as that,
And having scanned Dáráb from head to foot,
Went with him quickly to the camp-enclosure,
Exclaiming: "O just Judge, the only God!
None hath beheld this wonder heretofore,
Or heard of such from the experienced chiefs."
Then garments were supplied at his behest,
And a pavilion got in readiness.
They made a fire huge as a hill and burned
Much aloe-wood and musk and ambergris.
Whenas the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops
The general made all ready for the march.
He bade an archimage—his chief adviser—
To bring a change of raiment, Arab steed
With golden trappings, mail, and gold-sheathed sword.
These he presented to Dáráb, and asked:
"O lion-hearted man and warrior!
Who art thou? Of what country and what race?
'Twere well that thou shouldst tell me all the truth."
Dáráb, on hearing this, narrated all,
Disclosing every secret of his past;
v. 1768 Just as the goodwife had acquainted him,
So told he everything to Rashnawád,
About the ark, the ruby on his arm,
The money and brocade that lay beside him,
And of his rest and slumber in the vault.
Then Rashnawád dispatched a man forthwith,
And to that messenger he said: "Bring hither,
As swift as wind, both Mars and Venus, bring
The launderer, his wife, and signet-ring."

§ 5

How Dáráb fought against the Host of Rúm

This said, he broke up camp and marched on Rúm.
He made Dáráb the leader of the scouts,
And issued to them lances tipped with steel.
The scouts drew near to Rúm, and from that side
The warden of those marches came to meet them.
All unawares they countered. Battle's dust
Arose forthwith. They mixed in fight and shed
Blood like a river. When Dáráb beheld
That warrior-host he came like flying dust,
And slew so many of the troops of Rúm
That thou hadst said: "The world hath grasped its sword."
He went forth like a lion, under him
A Dragon, in his hand a Crocodile.
Thus fared he till he reached the Rúmans' camp,
And rushed upon it like an angry lion.
Earth seemed a sea of Rúman blood; wherever
His falchion led him went the atheling.
Returning from his triumph o'er the Rúmans
He came to Rashnawád, the noble leader,
And had from him much praise: "May our Sháh's host
Ne'er lack thee. When we quit the land of Rúm,
And when the host is home, thou shalt receive
Such favours from the Sháh that thou wilt be
The richer both by treasure and a crown."
They spent the night in ordering the troops, V. 1769
And furbishing the weapons of the horsemen;
Then as the sun rose o'er the gloomy dales,
And earth became as 'twere a lamp agleam,
The two opposing armies met again,
And darkened with their dust the rising sun;
But when Dáráb advancing led the charge,

And gave his fleet steed rein, there tarried not
A single man before the Rúman lines,
While of the warrior-swordsmen few survived.
He came upon the centre like a wolf,
And scattered utterly that great array.
Assailing then the right wing of the foe
He carried off abundant arms and spoil,
And cut in pieces all the troops of Rúm:
None of their champions seemed himself at all!
The warriors of Írán came with a rush,
Like lions, in his wake right valiantly,
And slew so many of the Rúman host
That all the field was puddled into clay.
Dáráb slew forty of the Christian prelates[1]
Among the magnates and bare off the Cross.[2]
At those great deeds the heart of Rashnawád,
The paladin, swelled with delight. He blessed
And greatly praised Dáráb, and favoured him
The more while blessing him. Night came, the world
Grew pitch-like, and the host returned from fight.
The general rested in the Rúmans' camp,
And loosed the girdle from his loins. He spent
The night apportioning the ample spoil,
And all the army was enriched thereby.
He sent Dáráb a messenger to say:—
"O man of lion-heart and good at need!
Consider now what thou wilt please to take,
And of this spoil what is of use to thee:
Whatever doth not please thee give away;
Thou art more glorious than the lord of Rakhsh.
Dáráb, on seeing this, was well content,

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 373, 378.

[2] No doubt the *Labarum* of the army is meant. The *true* Cross was taken at the capture of Jerusalem by Khusrau Parwíz (Chosroes II.), A.D. 614, and carried off to Persia, whence it was recovered by Heraclius on the conclusion of peace in A.D. 628. BGDF, ii. 300, v. 70, 93.

And for form's sake retained a spear himself,
Dispatching all the rest to Rashnawád, V. 1770
And said: "Mayst thou be conquering and happy."
Whenas the sun's orb left the darksome west
The sky donned black brocade and when one watch
Had passed, and all the sentinels were set,
Their challenges ascended in a roar
As 'twere of lions loose.
Now when the sun
Took up its golden shield, and when the troops
Awoke, the warriors of Írán girt up
Their loins, were instant to pursue the Rúmans,
Made sparks flash from their trenchant scimitars,
And gave up all the cities to the flames.
They sent the dust up both from land and people;
None e'er recalled to mind those fields and fells.
A miserable wail went up from Rúm,
For men abandoned that delightful land,
While Cæsar had not wherewithal for vengeance,
And all the faces of his chiefs were wan.
An envoy came to Rashnawád to say:—
"If thou, the just, hast not abandoned justice
Our warriors have had enough of war;
The head of Rúm's good fortune is brought low.
If thou desirest tribute we will do
Thy bidding and will make new terms with thee."
Moreover Cæsar sent abundant gifts,
With purses, captives, and all manner of wealth,
And Rashnawád received them as enough,
The money and the jewels in the rough.

§ 6

How Humái recognised her Son

Thence they departed homeward joyfully,
Dáráb, the worshipful, and Rashnawád,

Who halted when he reached the ruined vault,
Whereunder he had seen Dáráb asleep.
The launderer, with his goodwife and the jewel,
Were there already, fearful of disgrace.
The general summoned them forthwith; they prayed
To God for succour and appeared before him.
V. 1771 When Rashnawád beheld the man and wife
He questioned them; they called the facts to mind,
And told him all the truth about the matter,
About the ark, about the uncut gem,
Their toils, their nurture of the sucking-child,
Their troubles, and the process of events.
Then Rashnawád said to the man and wife:—
"Success and gladness be for ever yours,
For none on earth hath seen so strange a thing,
Or even heard of such from archimages."
Immediately that man of upright mind
Indited an epistle to Humái
About Dáráb, the storm, his sleeping-place,
His prowess on the battlefield withal,
And also what the launderer had told
About the ark, the infant, and the treasures.
He told about the voice that he had heard,
How he was troubled by the sound, and how,
Just when Dáráb had mounted on his steed,
The vault had fallen in. He told it all,
Dispatched a courier like the blast for speed,
Gave to his charge the ruddy gem, and said:—
"See that thou art the waymate of the wind."
Like wind he went and bare Humái the ruby.
He gave the letter and repeated all
The words of Rashnawád. When she had read
The letter, and beheld the gem, she wept;
She knew that, on the day when she reviewed
The troops, the gracious youth, whom she had marked
Of mighty stature and with cheeks like spring,

Could be none other than her son indeed—
A noble and a fruitful Branch of hers.
Humái said weeping to the messenger:—
"There hath arrived a master for the world.
I was not free from care, but was concerned
About the question of the sovereignty.
I quailed before the world's Judge, having shown V. 1772
Ingratitude to Him, for He had given me
A son whom I renounced and cast away
Upon the waters of Farát. 'Twas I
That bound this jewel on his arm, misprising
The child because his sire was gone. Now God
Hath given him back to me through Rashnawád,
And with victorious fame."
They showered a treasure
Of gold, and mingled jewels, musk, and wine.
Humái gave largess to the indigent,
And the next se'nnight oped her hoarded drachms.
Where'er she knew there were a Fane of Fire,
The Zandavasta, and the Sada[1] feast,
There she bestowed her treasure in like wise,
And lavished gifts through all the provinces.
Upon the tenth day, early in the morning,
The general appeared before the Sháh,
And with him were the chieftains and her son,
But they concealed the case from every one.

§ 7

How Humái seated Dáráb upon the Throne

The Sháh let down the curtain of the court,
And for one se'nnight gave no audience.
She caused a golden throne to be prepared,

[1] See Vol. i. p. 123.

With two seats made of lapis lazuli
And turquoise, with a crown all royal gems,
A pair of armlets, a bejewelled torque,
And an imperial robe of cloth of gold
Wherein were woven divers kinds of jewels.
Before the Sháh there sat astrologers
To search the stars to find a lucky day.
So on the Shahrívar of month Bahman,
At dawn, the Sháh gave audience to Dáráb.
She filled a cup with rubies and another
With ruddy gold, and, when Dáráb approached
The hall of audience, went afar to meet him,
Did him obeisance, showered on him those jewels
Fit for a king, and wept blood on her breast,
V. 1773 Embraced him, kissed him, and caressed his face,
Then brought and set him on the golden throne,
And scanned him wonderingly. When he was seated
She came, gold crown in hand, kissed him and crowned him,
Assuring all men that the crown was his.
When he was thus illustrate with the crown
Humái began to proffer her excuses,
And said: "As touching what is past, know this
That all hath turned to wind. 'Twas brought about
By youth, access to treasure, woman's way,
A sire deceased, a Sháh without a guide.
If still she wrongeth thee yet let it pass,
For mayst thou have no seat except the throne
Of kingship."
He made answer to his mother:—
"Thou hast the royal temperament, and 'tis
No wonder if thy heart be moved, but why
Still harpest thou upon a single fault?
May He that made the world approve of thee,
And anguish fill the hearts of all thy foes.

This story shall be my memorial,
And ne'er grow obsolete upon the roll."
The blest Humái did reverence, and said :—
"Thou shall endure as long as crown endureth."
She gave command to the high priest to call
The men of learning out of every province,
And further bade that of the troops all those
Of name, the illustrious Lions wielding swords,
Should homage that famed world-lord as the Sháh.
As they called blessings down upon his crown,
And scattered jewels thereupon, Humái
Described what she had done in secrecy,
And all the anguish that her act had caused her.
"Know ye," she added, "that of Sháh Bahman
This is the sole memorial on earth.
Ye all must walk according to his bidding, V. 1774
For he is shepherd, warriors are his flock ;
His are the majesty, the diadem,
And kingship : all must look to him for succour."
Then from the palace rose a shout for gladness
Because they saw a glorious Branch sprout forth ;
The Sháh himself was hidden under jewels,
The world was filled with justice and with joy,
And no one recked of sorrow and of care.
Then was it that Humái addressed the chiefs,
And said : "Ye noble and accomplished sages !
I give my son the treasure and the throne—
To me a toil of two and thirty years.
Rejoice ye then, submit to his commands,
And breathe but at his bidding."
When Dáráb
Joyed in the crown of majesty, and donned
The diadem in peace, the launderer
Came with his wife apace. They said to him :—
"Blest be thy sitting on the Kaian throne,
O monarch of the world ! and be the hearts

Of all thy foes plucked out."

Dáráb bade bring
Ten purses filled with gold, a goblet rich
With gems, five bales of raiment of all kinds,
And gave them to the folk that had so toiled
For him. "O busy launderer!" he said,
"Be still engrossed in business. It may be
Thou yet mayst light upon another ark,
And on another infant like Dáráb!"

They went away invoking with their lips
God's blessing on the monarch of Írán.
Then set the launderer's star; he sought again
His shop and carried lye upon the plain.

XVIII

DÁRÁB

HE REIGNED TWELVE YEARS

ARGUMENT

Dáráb establishes himself upon the throne, defeats the Arabs and the Rúmans, and marries the daughter of Failakús, the Cæsar. Conceiving, however, a dislike for his spouse, he sends her back to her father, at whose court her child is born, named Sikandar, for the reason given in the story, and brought up by Failakús as his own son and heir. Dáráb meanwhile marries again, has another son—Dárá—falls into ill-health, appoints Dárá his successor, and dies.

NOTE

At this point in the Sháhnáma, in as much as this and the two following reigns deal almost entirely with the subject of Alexander the Great, who is known to Orientals under the name of Iskandar or Sikandar, there is an important change in the provenance and character of the subject-matter. We have had an instance already in which it seemed probable that recourse was being had indirectly to Greek writers,[1] but in the present case the debt to them is indisputable. The basis of the whole account is Greek, and so in a great measure is the superstructure, but the latter to some extent has been pulled down and rebuilt, modified in detail, and added to, by Egyptian, Arabic, and Persian hands. As a general introduction to the three following reigns, therefore, it will be well to set before the reader in outline such facts as are necessary for the proper understanding of the accounts given in the reigns in question.

Alexander the Great, in his expedition to the East, was accompanied by a literary and scientific staff, in order that the results

[1] See Vol. v. p. 281.

achieved might be handed down to posterity in a way worthy of so great an occasion. Thus Eumenes kept the royal diary,[1] Bæton and Diognetus recorded the distances traversed,[2] Aristobulus was interested in matters geographical, ethnological, and botanical,[3] while Callisthenes and others drew up general histories. Some of Alexander's commanders too, such as Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who became King of Egypt, Nearchus, the admiral, and Onesicritus, the pilot, of Alexander's fleet, also left accounts, as did others who were contemporaries but took no part in the expedition. The result was a large assortment of kindred works, not one of which is extant in its original form, though later writers have preserved a good deal of the substance, and in some cases fragments, of the originals. Thus Arrian, our best authority on the whole subject, based his *Anabasis* on Ptolemy and Aristobulus,[4] and in his *Indica* made much use of Nearchus.[5] Arrian, however, tells us that even Ptolemy and Aristobulus were not always in agreement,[6] and further, that though Alexander's expedition served to explode many fables, it at the same time led to the fabrication of fresh ones.[7] Onesicritus, for instance, who, though only the pilot, claimed in his account to have been the admiral,[8] of Alexander's fleet, heard tell of two dragons, or serpents, measuring 80 and 140 cubits in length respectively,[9] and speaks of whales off the coast of Balúchistán as being half a stade, *i.e.* over 100 yards, long, and broad in proportion.[10] Bæton relieved the prosaic details of mensuration with the account of a sylvan folk—natives of Mount Imaus—who had backward-pointing feet.[11] Again, the question as to whether or no the Amazons visited Alexander split the early authorities into two separate camps.[12] We may conclude, therefore, that the seeds of the Romance that grew up in later times round the personality of Alexander the Great were sown in his lifetime. The growth thus started not merely increased in bulk by a natural process of evolution in succeeding centuries, but also absorbed materials that originally had no connexion at all with him and his undertakings. Thus, for example, when the historic facts of his career had grown somewhat dim in the popular mind, the expedition in B.C. 332 of his uncle Alexander I. of Epirus to

[1] MF, p. 121. [2] *Id.* 134. [3] *Id.* 94.
[4] DAA, Pref., Bk. v. c. 7. [5] DAI, c. 18 *seq.* [6] DAA, iii. 4; iv. 14.
[7] *Id.* v. 4. [8] *Id.* vi. 2. [9] MF, p. 50, fr. 7.
[10] *Id.* p. 57, fr. 30. This, however, was quite a moderate estimate. Pliny, in his *Nat. Hist.*, lib. ix. sect. 2, ed. Ludovicus Janus, speaks of "Balænæ quaternum jugerum."
[11] *Id.* 135, fr. 3. [12] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. 46.

Italy became part of his legend,[1] and he was credited later on with having visited Candace, the Ethiopian queen, at Meroe. We may assume, too, that the experiences of the rank and file of his time-expired veterans, military and naval, lost nothing in the telling. Speaking generally too, the travellers' tales, often based on misunderstood metaphor or misinterpreted natural phenomena —tales such as in after-times were told by the friar Odorico and Sir John Maundeville—would add their quota to the romance of the subject. The reader will find examples of such fables in the reign of Sikandar. Long before his time, however, they had made their way from India to Greece. Homer knew something of them, so did Herodotus, so did Hecatæus probably, and so beyond doubt did Ctesias. Moreover, no form was too monstrous or abnormal for the Indian imagination to conceive with respect to god or demon or beings, like the Rákshasas, who were a blend of demon and of man. The companions of Alexander merely heard over again what earlier adventurers had heard, but their association with Alexander brought about a special association of such tales with him.

It should be noted further that the Greeks, like ourselves, had two Indies—an Eastern and a Western—and consequently the fables derived from and respecting the Indians or, as they were called, Ethiopians, were held to apply to the West as well as to the East.[2]

It was in Egypt—the land which he had delivered from the hated Persians and where Ptolemy and his successors had maintained the Alexandrian tradition and had ruled with so much glory—and it was at Alexandria, which the great conqueror had founded and where he was buried, that the Greek Romance of Alexander, so far as we are aware, first received literary form and expression. The author is unknown, but appears to have written about the third century of the Christian era. The authorship is attributed in one of the extant MSS. of the work to the historian Callisthenes, the relative of Aristotle through whose influence it came about that he accompanied Alexander to the East. His rough comments, however, on Alexander's adoption of Persian customs were not well received by the conqueror; he was imprisoned and died in captivity. The title of "The Pseudo-Callisthenes," by which the Romance now is known, is said to have been bestowed upon it in the first instance by Isaac Casaubon.[3]

The work no longer is extant in what we may call its primitive form, but this, branching in three directions, gave rise to a numerous progeny of MSS., of which some twenty still survive.

[1] NAR, p. 4; MPC, Bk. i. c. 29. [2] See p. 68. [3] MA, ii. 4.

Three of them, known as A, B, and C respectively, are preserved in the National Library in Paris, and to one or other of these three the rest of the MSS. are said to conform in character.[1] The MS. known as A, a very early Latin version of the Romance supposed to have been made by one Julius Valerius early in the fifth century A.D., and an Armenian version of about the same date,[2] are looked upon as representing collectively the nearest approximation that we possess to the original work. The MS. known as B is the only one of the three that attributes the authorship to Callisthenes.[3]

During the seventh century A.D. some Greek text of the Romance, conforming generally to the A type, was translated into middle Persian, or Pahlaví, as it is called, and this Pahlaví version was retranslated shortly afterwards into Syriac. No trace of the Pahlaví version remains, and there is no scrap of historical evidence to indicate that such a work ever existed, but the Syriac version is still extant, and has been edited with an English translation by Budge. We call it BHA, and shall have occasion frequently to refer to it in the ensuing pages.

It was the publication of this Syriac version that led Professor Nöldeke to infer, and satisfactorily to prove, that a Pahlaví version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes once must have existed. Such proofs naturally are very technical, but one example may be given by way of illustration. It concerns the transliteration of proper names unknown to the Syriac translator. Nöldeke found that in the Syriac version the letter *l* was substituted for the letter *r* in such words as Osiris, Abdera, Kraterus, Parmenion, and others, while, on the other hand, *r* was substituted for *l* in Platæa, Eumelus, Candaules, &c. Now, there is nothing in the form of these two letters, as they are written in Greek, Arabic, or in Syriac itself to account for such substitutions and interchanges, but it so happens that in Pahlaví the same sign stands for both *l* and *r*, and the conclusion follows that the Syriac version was made not from the Greek or Arabic, but from the Pahlaví.[4]

Appended to all the MSS. of the Syriac version, distinct from it, but, like it, based upon the Pseudo-Callisthenes, there is

[1] *Id.* [2] MPC, p. xxvi. [3] *Id.* viii. and 1.

[4] The proofs referred to above will be found set out at large in NAR, p. 11 *seq.* The present writer desires to take this opportunity to acknowledge generally and once for all his indebtedness not only to this work, but also to Professor Nöldeke's edition of the Kárnámak-i-Ardshír-i-Pápakán (NK) and of Tabarí's History of the Sásánians (NT). The first two concern the present volume of this translation only, but the last will be in constant requisition till the end. All three, and to them we must add the Íránian National Epos (NIN), are invaluable.

extant a Syriac Christian Legend of Alexander which claims to be taken from the manuscripts in the house of the archives of the kings of Alexandria.[1] This Legend was composed about the years A.D. 514 or 515, and seems to have been suggested by an incursion of the Huns through the Caucasus, which took place at that time. The author writes as one horror-stricken at the uncouth aspect and savagery of the invaders, and at the ruin caused by them. Shortly after its composition, it was turned into verse, with some additions by the Syriac poet, Jacob of Sarúg, who died in A.D. 521. The legend, and the additions thus made to it, derive respectively from branches B and C of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, and their subject-matter became known to Muhammad, who made use of it in the Kurán, where Alexander is referred to under the title of "Zú-'l-karnain," or "The Two-horned," that name having been suggested by the Legend, where we read: "The Lord said to him (Alexander), 'Behold I have magnified thee above all kingdoms, and I have made horns of iron to grow on thy head, that thou mayest thrust down the kingdoms of the earth with them."[2] Naturally, Zú-'l-karnain became an interesting personality to the followers of Muhammad. The passage in the Kurán referring to him was much commented on, and the Syriac accounts of him were translated into Arabic. Now it was to the interest of learned Persians, living under Arab rule in the centuries succeeding the Muhammadan conquest of Írán, to impress their masters with the sense of the past greatness of the empire that they had subdued, and for this purpose the legends of the vanquished race were translated into Arabic. It obviously was desirable that so great a hero as Alexander, and one so interesting to the followers of the Prophet, should be utilised, and in order to effect this the whole Persian traditional view of Alexander was altered. As we have seen already,[3] he was held in hate and horror in Sásánian times as the arch-persecutor and would-be exterminator of Zoroastrianism; he was one of a trinity of ill, of which the other two were Zahhák and Afrásiyáb. Persians, however, that had been converted to, or had been brought up in, the Muhammadan Faith soon came to regard Alexander from another standpoint. To them he was no longer an evil being who had striven to uproot the true religion, but the hero commissioned by God to overthrow a false one, in fact another Asfandiyár with other and better aims, for had not his credentials been countersigned by the

[1] BHA, p. 144.

[2] *Id.* 156. There is a similar passage, p. 146. For the Syriac Legend generally see NAR, 27 *seq.* For the passage in the Kurán see pp. 77–78.

[3] See Vol. i. pp. 59, 61, 63, and *cf.* pp. 224, 240.

Prophet himself? This change of view robbed such memories as still survived of Alexander's triumph over Darius Codomanus of much of their bitterness, and it only remained to abate it altogether by legitimating the conqueror's position. This was easily managed, for the author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes had suggested a way. Concerned for the honour of his country by birth or adoption, he had made Alexander out to be the son of the last native king of Egypt—Nectanebus II.—who had succeeded, it was said, in passing himself off to Olympias, the wife of Philip II. of Macedon, during the latter's absence at the wars, as no less a person than Amen-Ra, the two-horned god of Egypt. The Egyptians were old hands at this sort of falsification. Herodotus tells us[1] that Cambyses, after his conquest of Egypt, was made out by the Egyptians to be the son of Nitetis, a daughter of Apries. What Egyptians had done the Persians could do, the necessary story was substituted for that of Nectanebus, as we shall read in this reign, Sikandar became the eldest son of Sháh Dáráb, and the oppressor of Írán one of its national heroes.

At what precise period Alexander assumed his station in the long line of the Sháhs is not known, and probably never will be. In the Pahlaví version, made, it would seem, by some one who was neither an orthodox Zoroastrian nor an orthodox Muhammadan, he was still, as we see from its Syriac representative. the son of Nectanebus; in Firdausí he is the son of Dáráb. Between the two accounts there is a space of some three centuries or more. We may reduce the interval somewhat by assuming, as we may, that the metamorphosis had been completed in the days when Firdausí was growing up, and a new edition of the Bástán-náma in modern Persian was being compiled in the middle of the tenth century by order of Abú Mansúr.[2] This, we may assume, contained a version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes as it existed after centuries of adaptation by Persian and Arabic hands. The ascription of a Persian paternity to Alexander can be traced further back. It was known to Tabarí who died in A.D. 922, and to Dínawarí who died in A.D. 896.[3] Neither of them endorses the story, but merely gives it a place among the other accounts that, in accord to the method of Arabic historians, they give of the same event. As these accounts consist of the statements of older authorities, we may consider that the story was current early in the ninth century A.D. Most unfortunately the work that, more than all others, would have thrown light upon that and many another point, and taken us back to the middle of the eighth century, is no longer extant. This was the Arabic translation of the

[1] Bk. iii. c. 2. [2] See Vol. i. p. 67 *seq.* [3] See NAR, pp. 35, 44.

Bástán-náma made by Ibn Mukaffa. He was a Zoroastrian who became a Muhammadan late in life, thereby, as was said of him, merely exchanging one corner of hell for another, as his orthodoxy was more than suspect. He was learned both in the Pahlaví and in the Arabic, and was put to death about A.D. 760. It is not unlikely that he was responsible for the inclusion of Alexander among the legitimate Sháhs. By all accounts he was just the right man in the right place for such an undertaking.

It is hoped that the above sketch may be sufficient to indicate the provenance of the Romance of Alexander the Great and how it came about that it was incorporated into Íránian national legend. It will be seen that it reached Firdausí in a mingled stream. The basis is Greek, and the Pseudo-Callisthenes itself is based on history. The broad facts are there. It tells us that Alexander was a Grecian king, that he conquered Egypt, invaded and subdued Írán, penetrated into India, defeated Porus, returned, died at Babylon, and was buried at Alexandria. Its author introduced Egyptian elements and additions, and it underwent further adaptations at Persian and Arab hands. These will be noted and dealt with as they occur in this and the two following reigns. The vogue of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, however, is not to be circumscribed within such limits as these. For many centuries it superseded the more historic accounts of Alexander that still are extant; and versions, in addition to those already mentioned, have appeared in Latin, Hebrew, Turkish, Ethiopic,[1] Coptic, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Slavonic, Malay, and Siamese.[2]

Dárâb, the last of the mythical Sháhs, does not appear in the Zandavasta, with which at this point we part company. In order to connect him with the Kaiánian dynasty he was made the hero of a foundling legend, as we saw in the previous volume.[3] His name was suggested by that of his successor Dárá—the historical Darius Codomanus—who was remembered in connexion with the invasion of Persia by Alexander the Great, and his inclusion among the Sháhs was due to the necessity of providing his successor with a father. Later on he was called upon again to act in that capacity to his successor's conqueror.

§ 1. Dárábgird, now Dárâb, is in Párs, some fifty miles south of the salt lake Niris, which also is referred to.

§ 2. Border wars between the Íránians and the northern Arabs were of frequent occurrence.[4] For Shu'íb *cf.* NT, p. 57, *note.*

[1] Also edited and translated by Budge, and referred to in this work as BLEA.

[2] See BHA, p. lxxxviii. *seq.*

[3] Vol. v. p. 294 *seq.*

[4] *Cf.* pp. 322, 330, Vol. i. p. 11, ii. p. 81.

§§ 3–4. The account here given of the incidents that led up to the birth of Sikandar is a Persian substitution for the Egyptian story told in the Pseudo-Callisthenes,[1] and in the Syriac version.[2] The oft-told tale is briefly as follows. Nectanebus[3] was king of Egypt and a great magician. By his magic arts he had triumphed on all occasions over his enemies. At length the time came when he perceived that his spells no longer would avail to protect his country from invaders, so, disguising himself, he fled to Macedonia, where he set up as a soothsayer. His fame soon reached the ears of Olympias, the wife of Philip of Macedon, who then was absent on a campaign. She had heard a rumour that he intended to divorce her and take another spouse. Accordingly she made up her mind to consult Nectanebus, and summoned him. He came, and at once was smitten with her beauty. She sought his advice on the matter of the divorce, and he told her that the rumour was not false, but that he could help her. He then went on to inform her that she would have a son by the two-horned god of Egypt—Amen. With the aid of dreams sent by his magic arts he reconciled first her and then Philip to the situation, personated the god himself, and thus became the father of Alexander the Great, taking good care that the birth of the child should occur at the most auspicious astrological moment.

The foal, stated in the text to have been born at the same time as Alexander, is of course the famous steed Bucephalus, which accompanied him in his campaigns as far as the river Hydaspes, the modern Jhílam, and either was killed by the son of Porus when Alexander was forcing the passage of that river or died shortly afterwards of toil and decrepitude at the age of thirty years. Alexander founded two cities by the river in memory of his charger and of his victory over Porus, and named them respectively Bucephala (Jalálpúr?) and Nicæa (Mong?).[4] It is only in the Persian and Ethiopic versions of the Pseudo-Callisthenes that the births of Alexander and Bucephalus are made to synchronise, which shows that both accounts come from an Arabic source, for as the Syriac version represents a no longer extant Pahlaví version, so the Ethiopic derives from a lost Arabic one. In the Ethiopic version Bucephalus is a mare.[5]

[1] MPC, Bk. i. c. 1–12. [2] BHA, Bk. i. c. 1–12.

[3] Historically, Nectanebus II., or more properly Nekht-neb-f, of the thirtieth dynasty, was the last native king to rule in Egypt. The Persian Sháh, Artaxerxes Ochus, after having been repulsed by him in several campaigns, succeeded in conquering the country in B.C. 343. Nectanebus escaped to Ethiopia.

[4] DAA, Bk. v., c. 14, 19; MCI, p. 110, *note*.

[5] BLEA, pp. 19, 37.

§ 3. We have here a reference to Russia if the reading is correct. P reads "Sús." The word "Rús" (Byzantine Ῥῶς) dates from the ninth century A.D., when Northmen (Scandinavians) founded the Russian Empire. It may be a corruption of *rothsmen*, "rowers."[1] The Russians were in evidence in Firdausí's days.[2]

§ 4. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. i. c. 13, and in the Syriac version *loc. cit.*, Philip is said to have chosen the name Alexander in memory of a dead son, so called, whom he had had by a former wife. According to one of the accounts in Tabarí, the mother of Alexander was the daughter of the king of the Rúmans and named Haláí (Olympias?). The Sháh, her husband, finding that she was troubled by an unpleasant odour, gave orders that means should be found to remedy this. The doctors agreed to exhibit the wood of a tree called in Persian *sandar*. They boiled it and washed her with the extract. This, to a great extent, did away with the smell, but not entirely, and, as the cure was not complete, the Sháh sent her back to her father. She was already with child, however, and when her son was born she composed his name by putting her own and that of the tree together, and called him Haláí-Sandarús, that is the primitive form of Al Iskandarús.[3] Sandar appears to be a shortened form of *sandarâs*, the Arar tree, *Callitris quadrivalvis*, a native of north-west Africa, which produces the resin known as "gum juniper" or "sandarach," the latter a word often used in the Sháhnáma.[4] Firdausí takes a different view of the meaning of Iskandar. He makes that word equivalent to Iskandarús, but he attributes to it apparently its proper meaning. It is derived either from the Greek σκόροδον, garlic; or the Latin *ascalonium*, shallot. In any case the treatment that the lady underwent appears to have been more or less homœopathic in character.

[1] See GDF, vii. 80, and *note*. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., *s.v.* Russia.

[2] *Cf.* Vol. iv. p. 316. [3] NAR, p. 44. [4] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 74.

§ 1

How Dárâb built the City of Dárâbgird

Now from the Maker on earth's king call we
A benediction down. That Sháh sun-faced,
Who, O Abú'l Kásim! the world hath graced
With lovingkindness and with equity,
Doth make of right and justice all his quest,
And in his justice suffereth naught amiss.
Oh! be the world bright with that crown of his—
Mahmúd's—and may his whole career be blest.
May he be young till youth itself be o'er,
And live till life itself shall be no more!

What said the ancient, rustic bard who told
About Gushtásp, renowned Bahman,[1] and chiefs
Whose counsels prospered, told about Dáráb,
And of the rede and usance of Humái?
Now when Dáráb[2] sat on the Kaian throne
He girded up his loins, oped wide his hand,
And thus harangued the archmages and the chiefs,
The magnates and the prudent-hearted sages:—
"I did not woo the world by toil and justice;
God set the crown upon my head, and none
Will see a case in public or in private
More wonderful than mine; while as for me
I can but make return by doing right
That men may bless me after I am gone.
None must be irked by travail for my sake
In this my season for amassing treasure.
May this age prosper under my just rule,
And may my subjects' hearts be jubilant."

[1] Ardshír in the original, but *cf.* Vol. v. p. 282.
[2] Dárá in the original, but *cf. id.* p. 297 and *note.*

Then out of Hindústán and out of Rúm,
From every wealthy march and peopled land,
Ambassadors with gifts and offerings
Came to secure the favour of the Sháh.
It happened that one day he went to view
The herds of horses that were running wild,
And, coming from the lowlands to the mountains,
Observed a deep and boundless lake. He gave
Commandment that from Hind and from the Rúmans
Experienced master-workmen should be brought
To open out a channel from the lake,
And send a river into all the land.
When these skilled men had set the water free
He bade them to erect a splendid city,
And, when the wall around it was complete,
They gave thereto the name of Dárábgird.
He lit the Fire upon the mountain-top,
Whereto the worshippers of Fire resorted,
And then artificers of every craft
Were summoned, and the city was adorned.
The Sháh sent countless hosts to every quarter,
Safeguarded all the world from enemies,
Released it from the fear of any foe,
And rent in twain their hearts that wished him woe.

§ 2

How Dáráb defeated the Host of Shu'íb

It came to pass that five score thousand Arabs,
Brave, spear-armed cavaliers, marched forth. Shu'íb—
A chief sprung from Katíb—commanded them.
The monarch of Írán led forth a host, V. 1777
'Tis said, beyond compute. The armies met;
The world was all in dudgeon at the troops;

The earth could not support them; none had room
To stir within that land. The rain of arrows,
And double-headed javelins, made the soil
A cistern seem of blood. On every side
The war-cry rose, and corpses showed in piles.
Thus for three days and nights the battle waged,
The age was straitened to the combatants.
The Arabs on the fourth day turned away,
And in the night fled from the scene of strife,
Shu'íb himself was slain upon the field
Of battle, and the Arabs' day was done.
A host of Arab steeds with poplar saddles,
A mass of helmets, spears, and coats of mail—
The havings of the fugitives—remained
With that world's lord, the offspring of Humái,
Who gave the whole thereof—the steeds and spears,
The helms and swords—in largess to the troops.
He chose a marchlord, one among the host,
Who understood the language of the folk,
And sent him to demand the tribute due
From those waste parts, that year's and last year's too.

§ 3

How Dáráb fought with Failakús and took to Wife his Daughter

Dáráb marched from the desert of the spearmen
Rúm-ward to war against that prosperous land.
Now Failakús was monarch of the realm;
He and the king of Rús were close allies.
They wrote to say: "The offspring of Humái
Hath led forth countless troops."
On hearing this
The prince of Rúm bethought him of old feuds,

And levied soldiers in 'Ammúriya,[1]
All men renowned upon the day of battle.
The chiefs of Rúm, what time Dáráb drew nigh, V. 1778
Abandoned all the coast and borderland,
While from 'Ammúriya marched Failakús,
He and his captains, warriors, and troops.
They fought two mighty battles in three days,
And on the fourth day when the sun arose
Both Failakús and all his army fled;
Not one retained his helm or Rúman casque.
The Íránians took the wives and children captive,
And slaughtered many with their showers of arrows.
When fleeing from Dáráb the Rúmans reached
The city but two thirds of them arrived,
The other had been slain erewhile or wounded;
The spear had been insistent at their backs.
They sheltered there within that stronghold. Many
Sought peace. An envoy came from Failakús,
Wise, shrewd, a bearer both of weal and woe,
With purses, slaves, and, as an offering,
Two caskets filled with royal jewelry.
This was the message: "Of the only God
I ask for guidance that we may conclude
This fight in feast. Ne'er may we strive again,
But all be honesty and uprightness:
Dark ways and crookèd only end in loss.
If to 'Ammúriya, which is my seat,
Thou comest and art fain to capture it,
My heart will throb for honour and for fame,
And I will leave the feasting for the fighting.
Act in the manner that becometh kings;
Thy father was, and now his son is, Sháh."
Dáráb, on hearing this, convoked his lords,[2]

[1] Ancyra probably, the modern Angora, an important place on the route from Byzantium to Armenia and Syria. There was also an ancient Amorium in Phrygia, not far from the borders of Galatia.

[2] Reading with P.

And told before them every circumstance.
"What say ye," said he, "touching this appeal,
Since Failakús is fain to save his face?"
The chiefs all called down blessings on the Sháh,
And said: "O Sháh, shrewd-hearted, pure of Faith!
The king of kings is greatest of the great,
Let him determine what is best to do.
That famous monarch hath an only daughter
Of cypress-height and spring-like cheek. In Chín
V. 1779 One will not look upon so fair an Idol;
She shineth mid the others like a signet.
The king of kings on seeing will approve her,
And that tall Cypress come within his Garden."
The Sháh called in the ambassador from Rúm,
Told him the counsel of those loyal lieges,
And said: "Go say to Cæsar: 'If thou art
So fain to save thine honour thou possessest
Within thy bower a daughter, one who is
The crown upon the head of womanhood,
A perfect picture whom thou call'st Náhíd,[1]
And settest on a golden throne. Send her,
Together with the tribute due from Rúm,
If thou wouldst dwell untroubled in that land."
The envoy heard and, coming like the wind,
Reported this to Cæsar. Failakús,
And all the army, were rejoiced thereat,
Because the Sháh would be his son-in-law.
The question of the tribute was discussed,
As to how much the king of Rúm could pay,
And they agreed that in the month of Mihr
In every year the Sháh should take from Cæsar
A hundred thousand eggs of solid gold,
And with each egg a royal gem, each egg
To be two score miskáls[2] in weight, each gem

[1] The planet Venus.
[2] A miskál=a dram and three sevenths.

Of highest excellence. First, Failakús
Rewarded all his frontier-chiefs that dwelt
Within the peopled parts of Rúm, and then
Commanded the philosophers, and all
That had an interest in those parts, to give
Their whole attention to prepare a road.
The nobles that escorted the princess
Brought every one his present. They made ready
A golden litter, slaves, and crown of gold,
Ten camels laden with brocade of Rúm
With jewelled patterns on a golden ground,
Three hundred camel-loads of carpetings,
With other presents for the Sháh. Within
The litter sat the entrancing Rúman maid V. 1780
With prelate and with priest conducting her.
Náhíd had sixty damsels in her train,
Each with a golden goblet in her hand.
Within the goblet there were royal gems,
And every Idol wore her crown and earrings.
The bishop gave the fair one to Dáráb,
And paid the jewels to his treasurer.
The Sháh remained no longer on the field,
But marched back to Írán. He came to Párs,
Rejoicing, with his charming spouse, and set
Upon her head the royal coronet.

§ 4

How Dárál sent back the Daughter of Failakús to Rúm, and how Sikandar was born

One night that Moon was sleeping with the Sháh,
All gems and colour, scent and loveliness,
But verily her breathing was not sweet,
And grew disgustful to the king of kings,

Who shrank and turned his head away from her
Upon the couch because her breath was foul.
The monarch of Írán was grieved thereat,
His mind was troubled and his soul all care.
They summoned skilful leeches to Náhíd,
And one of them, a shrewd and prudent man,
Examined till he found a remedy—
A herb whereby the gullet is inflamed,
Called in the Rúman tongue "iskandar." This
He rubbed upon the palate of the queen,
And caused her eyes[1] to water lustily.
The fetor fled away, her palate burned,
Her face shone like brocade; but though the Fair
Was sweet as musk Dáráb had ceased to love her,
The monarch's heart turned coldly from his bride,
And so he sent her back to Failakús.
She was with child but told not any one.
V. 1781 Nine months passed and from that fair dame was born
A babe like radiant Sol. She used to call him
Sikandar[2] since he was so tall, well favoured,
And sweet of breath, for she esteemed the name
Of what had sweetened her own palate lucky,
While Cæsar told each chief: "There hath appeared
A Cæsar of my seed."
None named Dáráb,
Sikandar was the son and Cæsar sire,
For Cæsar shamed to say to any one:—
"Dáráb hath put away my child."
What time
Sikandar's holy mother brought him forth,
And one went to his grandsire with the tidings,
There was within the stable a brown mare,
In body lusty, swift and tall, and she
That very night produced a foal all white,
Short-shanked, and breasted like a lion. Cæsar

[1] Literally eyelashes.

[2] Sikandar = Iskandar.

Exulted o'er that mare because he deemed
That birth would prove a lucky sign for him.
He used at dawn to have the infant fetched,
Would have the trappings put upon the mare,
And then caress the foal on eyes and mane
Because it was coeval with Sikandar.
The sky revolved awhile with matters thus,
And years of varied fortune passed away,
Sikandar came to have a monarch's heart,
The utterance of heroes. Cæsar held him
More dearly than a son and used to place
The due adornments on his martial breast.
He gained in wisdom, aptitude, good sense,
Weight, and intelligence. He was acknowledged
Successor on the throne to Failakús,
Who held him in regard in weal and woe.
He learned from tutors kings' accomplishments,
And thou hadst said that he was made to judge,
To found an empire, and to fill the throne.
Now when Náhíd had gone back to her sire
Dáráb took unto him another wife,
And had by her a son of Grace divine V. 1782
And puissance, and younger than Náhíd's,
Named the same day Dárá in hope that he
Might be yet more successful than his sire.
Thereafter, when twelve years had passed away,
The Sháh failed both in fortune and in limb;
Humái's illustrious offspring 'gan to fade,
And he was summoned to the other world.
He called to him the magnates and the sages,
Conversed at large about the throne of power,
And said to them: "Dárá, son of Dáráb,
Now will become your leader in all good.
Give ear to him, perform what he commandeth
And be his will the music of your souls,
Because this throne of kingship lasteth not,

And when joy cometh it is soon recalled.
Be instant ye, let love unite with justice,
And think on me too gladly."
This he said,
And heaved a sigh. The colour of his cheek
Turned from pomegranate-bloom to fenugreek.

XIX

DÁRÁ, SON OF DÁRÁB

HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

ARGUMENT

After the death of Dáráb, his son Dárá ascends the throne and administers the realm. Meanwhile Failakús dies, and Sikandar succeeds him in Rúm. Dárá sends to demand tribute of Rúm, and Sikandar replies by invading Írán. He visits the camp of Dárá as his own ambassador, and is recognised, but escapes. Three great battles are fought, in which Dárá is defeated, and subsequently murdered by his own ministers. Sikandar finds Dárá mortally wounded, promises to carry out his last wishes, executes his murderers, and universally is recognised as Sháh.

NOTE

With Dárá we enter upon the historic period of the Sháhnáma.[1] In the last reign he was represented as being the younger son of Dáráb, with Sikandar for his elder brother. Historically, Dárá's prospect of ever becoming Sháh had been remote in the extreme. Artaxerxes Ochus, who had put Nectanebus to flight and conquered Egypt, was murdered in B.C. 338, with all his sons, by the eunuch Bagoas, with the exception of the youngest, Arses, whom Bagoas made Sháh. Two years later Bagoas murdered him also, and all his family, and raised a distant collateral of the royal house to the throne, who is the Dárá of the Sháhnáma and the Darius Codomanus of Greek writers. Him too in his turn Bagoas tried to do away with, but was put to death himself instead. Historically, Dárá reigned six years, not fourteen.

§ 2. When Alexander was fourteen years old, his father Philip sent for Aristotle to become his son's tutor.

[1] See Vol. i. p. 49.

For the tribute due from Rúm see p. 24. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions the ambassadors come in Philip's lifetime and are interviewed by Alexander.[1] The golden eggs are mentioned in the Syriac, which, with the Greek, also says that the ambassadors employed a painter to take Alexander's portrait, which they presented to Darius. The Syriac makes the further addition that Darius ordered the picture to be carried to his daughter Roxana, and their several heights to be compared, after which he flung it away in scorn, but Roxana secured it, honoured it greatly, and from that time fell in love with the original.[2]

Sikandar in the text is represented as beginning his expedition to the East by the invasion of Misr (Egypt), but a good deal happened first both in history and romance. Historically, he spent the first eighteen months of his reign in Greece, and crossed into Asia Minor in the spring of B.C. 334, where, having won the battle of the Granicus, he established his power sufficiently to allow him to advance through the passes into Syria. Having encountered and defeated Darius at Issus in the autumn of B.C. 333, he proceeded to make himself master of the coasts of Syria and Palestine, the sieges of Tyre and Gaza together taking about nine months, after which he invaded Egypt. Romantically, after the Granicus and Asia Minor, Alexander sails to Sicily and Italy, where he is well received by the Romans, who present him with a jewelled crown, thence voyages to Africa, where he interviews the Carthaginians, and proceeds by way of the oasis of Ammon to Egypt.[3]

§ 3. This corresponds with the Greek Pseudo-Callisthenes[4] and with the Syriac version[5] in general, but these texts add the picturesque incidents that, after Alexander's flight from the feast, the effigy of King Xerxes, which Darius loved, fell from the wall or ceiling of the banquet-hall, and that Alexander in his flight had to cross a frozen river, on which the ice gave way as he reached the other side, his horse being carried off by the current and drowned, while the pursuing Persians were unable to follow him across.

§§ 4–6. The Syriac version only mentions one battle between Alexander and Darius, at which both were present.[6] In the Sháhnáma there are three, of which the first corresponds with the one in the Syriac. According to Tabarí, who quotes Hisham bin Muhammad, the two kings fought for a year in Mesopotamia.[7]

[1] MPC, Bk. i. c. 23; BHA, Bk. i. c. 23; BLEA, p. 34.
[2] BHA, *id.* and i. 36, *cf.* note on § 8.
[3] MPC, i. 28–31.
[4] MPC, ii. 14, 15.
[5] BHA, ii. 6, 7.
[6] *Id.* ii. 9.
[7] NAR, p. 42.

Firdausí places the scene of at least two of the battles of which he speaks to the west of the Euphrates. He was drawing probably from Arabic sources of information. The three battles cannot be regarded as in any way intended for those of the Granicus, of Issus, and of Gaugamela. The number is perhaps a tribute to the importance of the occasion.[1]

In the Sháhnáma Dárá, after his final defeat, goes to Kirmán. According to the Pseudo-Callisthenes[2] and the Syriac version,[3] he withdrew to his palace, and next is heard of locally in connexion with Ekbatana and the Caspian Gates.[4] This is more accurate historically. Arrian says that Darius, after his defeat at Gaugamela (October 1st, B.C. 331), fled towards Media, rightly supposing that Alexander would march upon Susa and Babylon.[5]

§ 7. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes Darius, in his letter, asks for the return of his wife and family, offering land and treasures in exchange;[6] in the Syriac version he is ready to surrender everything if he may have mercy shown to him.[7] Alexander's reply is softened in the Persian. In the Greek and Syriac he takes the view that he is only recovering his own, Darius having been the aggressor, and in the latter makes no reply to him. Alexander's honourable treatment of Darius' family, whom he had taken at Issus, is a matter of history,[8] and the same sentiment toward them is preserved in the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

§§ 8–9. In the Greek and Syriac versions the letter to Porus is given at somewhat greater length. Darius invites Porus to meet him with an army at the Caspian Gates, and promises him half the spoil and Alexander's horse Bucephalus.[9] Porus, of which the Arabic form Fúr is used in the Sháhnáma, is a dynastic or family name, and represents the Pauravas who are mentioned in the Mahábhárata as reigning in the neighbourhood of Kashmír.[10] The Porus of Alexander's time ruled between the Hydaspes (Jhílam) and the Akesines (Chináb), and was allied to the king of Kashmír.

With regard to the death of Darius at the hands of two of his satraps,[11] the historical account is that, after Gaugamela, he went, accompanied by remnants of his broken army, to Ekbatana (Hamadán), where he endeavoured to raise fresh forces. Alexander, in the meantime, had made himself master of Babylon and Persepolis, and, hearing of Darius' doings, advanced northward

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 349 *seq.*
[2] MPC, ii. 16.
[3] BHA, Bk. ii. c. 9.
[4] MPC, ii. 19; BHA, ii. 11.
[5] DAA, iii. 16.
[6] MPC, ii. 17.
[7] BHA, ii. 9.
[8] DAA, ii. 12.
[9] MPC, ii. 19; BHA, ii. 11.
[10] DHA, iv. 399.
[11] MPC, ii. 20; BHA, ii. 12

against him in the spring of B.C. 330. Darius did not wait for Alexander's arrival, but left Ekbatana, intending to take refuge with his cousin Bessus, the satrap of Bactria. Darius went, of course, by the well-known route that connects western with eastern Irán.[1] He had considerable forces with him, but his counsels were distracted, and his troops gradually deserted him. Alexander reached Rai by forced marches from Ekbatana, but, hearing that Darius was far ahead, abandoned the pursuit, and rested for five days. He then resumed his march, and halted in the neighbourhood of Girduni Sirdarra, which appears to be the Caspian Gates of Arrian, passed through them the second day and heard, when encamped beyond them, that Darius was a prisoner in the hands of Bessus, the satrap of Bactria, of Barsaentes, the satrap of Arachosia and Drangiana (Sístán), and of Nabarzanes, the commander of Darius' cavalry. On this Alexander resumed the pursuit, and, four or five days later, came up with the fugitives, whereupon Nabarzanes and Barsaentes mortally wounded Darius and abandoned him. He was dead before Alexander reached him.[2] This was in July B.C. 330. Nabarzanes soon after surrendered to Alexander, and was pardoned.[3] Bessus and Barsaentes escaped to their own satrapies, where the former assumed royal state and the name of Artaxerxes. Ultimately both were captured and executed.[4] Their resistance to Alexander seems to have been a more serious crime than their removal of his chief opponent. An Arabic account[5] affirms that the death of Darius was brought about with the connivance of Alexander, and although Firdausí's version naturally omits this feature, it in other respects follows the Arabic very closely with regard to the scene between the two kings. The names of the two assassins are in the Pseudo-Callisthenes Bessus and Ariobarzanes,[6] in the Syriac version Bágíz and Ánábdéh, and in the Ethiopic Háshísh and Arsalás. The names in Firdausí seem to be of his own invention. The arrangement made between the two kings that Alexander should marry Roxana or Rúshanak appears in all the versions, and is not historical. She was not the daughter of Darius, but of Oxyartes, a Bactrian chief, whose stronghold Alexander escaladed. He fell in love with her at sight, and married her,[7] B.C. 328. Subsequently, on his return from his

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 28. [2] DA, iii. 19–21.
[3] HQC, vi. 5. [4] DAA, iii. 25, 30. [5] NAR, pp. 44, 50.
[6] Historically, there was a worthier holder of that name who, after Gaugamela, held the entrance to Párs against Alexander, and died, fighting to the last, outside Persepolis. HQC, v. 4.
[7] DA, iv. 19, *cf.* note on § 2.

Indian expedition, he did marry a daughter of Darius—Barsine or Stateira—at Susa in B.C. 324. Rúshanak, the Persian form of Roxana, is a diminutive from the adjective "rúshan," bright.

For the feast of Sada *see* Vol. i. p. 123. Naurúz, New Year's Day, was also the name of a feast then held. *Cf. id.* 74. For Mihr *see id.* 175 and *note*.

The corpse of Darius was sent to Párs.[1] In the Romance the punishment of his assassins follows quickly. In the Greek, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions of it, Alexander announces his intention of "exalting" the doers of the deed, and so induces the culprits to declare themselves, who thereupon are "exalted" on the gibbet, set up over the grave of Darius.[2] Firdausí's version relieves Sikandar from all imputation of sharp practice. In the Arabic account mentioned above, Alexander gives the murderers all that they bargained for, but they had forgotten to include their lives in the compact, and are put to death.

§ 10. Sikandar's proclamation to the Persians and his correspondence with the women-folk of Dárá appear in the other versions,[3] but the correspondence is reserved for the next reign. Here we have a message only. The passage about the handmaids in Firdausí's version of the proclamation runs in the Syriac: "And we command that damsels . . . shall enter into the temple of the god whom my mother Olympias worships, for the space of one year for the service of the gods; and when they have arrived at the age for marriage, they shall go forth from the ministry, and shall receive a dowry of five thousand dínárs from the treasury of the god, and shall marry." Expressions in Firdausí's version show that it came to him, in part at least, through the Arabic.

[1] DAA, iii. 22. For the accounts given in the Greek, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, see MPC, ii. 21; BHA, ii. 13; BLEA, p. 95.

[2] *Id.* [3] *Id.* and *seq.*

§ 1

How Dárá harangued the Chiefs and took Order for the Realm[1]

V. 1783 Dárá, when he had ceased to mourn Dáráb,
Exalted to the sun the Kaian crown.
He was a man of action, young, and lusty:
A sword was blunt contrasted with his tongue.
He took his seat upon the throne and said:—
"Ye princes, noble chiefs, and warriors!
I want not any that hath fallen low,
Nor will I summon such to crown and state,
And if one disobeyeth my commands,
Let not his body count its head its own,
While if he hath disloyalty at heart,
That will I frustrate with the scimitar.
If others too have wealth 'tis not for me
To vex their happy hearts on that account,
And shall I wish for any as a guide,
Who am myself the guide and gladdener?
Sun, fortune, and the right to fealty
Are mine, mine greatness, kingship, and command."
He summoned unto him a ready writer,
And held talk with him of affairs at large.
That worthy wrote a letter from Dárá,
Son of Dáráb, son of Bahman.[2] Wherever
Reigned independent kings the Sháh commanded
To send a letter trenchant as a sword:—
V. 1784 "Whoever turneth him from my behest,
And rede, shall mark how I will scatter heads.
Give all obedience whether I command
To take another's life or yield your own."
He opened up his father's treasure-hoard,

[1] This heading is not in the original.
[2] Dárá and Ardshír in the original. See Vol. v. pp. 282, 297 *note*.

Called out the troops, and gave allowances.
The stipend varied from four drachms to eight;
This had a cupful, that a basonful.
He gave moreover drachms, dínárs, and bards,
As well as breastplates, swords, and massive maces,
Appointing veteran chiefs to provinces,
To one among the notables the marches,
And largessing the troops with things of price.
Ambassadors arrived from every quarter,
From every man of name and potentate,
From Hind, from the Faghfúr, the Khán of Chín,
From Rúm and likewise from the provinces.
Each of them carried tribute, dues, and gifts,
For none could stand or strive against Dárá.
He built a city which he named Zarnúsh—
A cause of much rejoicing in Ahwáz.
He gave to every mendicant his due,
And freely unto those that came to sue.

§ 2

The Death of Failakús and Sikandar's Accession to the Throne

In those days was the death of Failakús—
A cause of trouble for a while in Rúm;
Then sat Sikandar on his grandsire's throne,
Sought virtue, and restrained the hands of evil,
For in those days there lived one known to fame
In Rúm, a joy to all that land and hight
The erudite Arastálís [1]—a man
Of wisdom, vigilance, and influence.
That sage adviser came before Sikandar,
And, as he took his place, held forth, and said:—

[1] Arastátális in the original. Firdausí uses both forms, and there are others.

"O ruler happy in thy full desire!
By acting as thou dost thou wilt abate
Thy fame because the royal throne hath looked
On many such as thee but will not rest
V. 1785 With any. When thou sayest: 'I have gained
Mine end and need not any to direct me,'
Know that there is no greater fool than thou,
If thou wilt hearken not the rede of sages.
We are from dust, are destined from our birth
To go back thither, and must needs submit;
But thou wilt live in fame if thou art good,
And be successful on the throne of kings,
While from ill-doing thou wilt reap but ill,
And never pass a night of peaceful sleep.
Well-doing is a monarch's adjutant,
And none hath won good days by doing wrong."
Whenas Sikandar heard he was well pleased,
And used to court the speaker's company,
Did every act according as he bade
In fight and festival, in war and strife,
Bestowed new favours on him every day,
And, when he came, would seat him on the throne.
It chanced one day that an ambassador,
A Persian shrewd of heart and eloquent,
Came from Dárá to Rúm to ask for tribute
Due from that prosperous land. He came and spake
About it to Sikandar who was irked
By reason of that tribute and old tax,
And said to him: "Go say before Dárá:—
'Our tribute now hath lost its hue and scent,
For since the bird that laid the golden eggs
Is dead the tribute is no more in force.'"
The ambassador, on hearing such an answer,
Was frighted and was seen no more in Rúm.
Sikandar summoned all his troops and told
Of what had passed. He said: "The well-disposed

'Scape not the revolutions of the sky.
I have to tread the world's face and account
Much weal and woe, so now ye must make ready,
And banish home and country from your hearts."
He oped his grandsire's hoards and bade his troops V. 1786
Prepare. At dawn the war-cry rose from Rúm
Both from the city and the young king's court.
The standard that was carried after him
Was red inscribed upon a turquoise ground.
He started on his march by way of Misr,
With troops and trumpets, drums and warriors.
The king of Misr with hostile troops forthwith
Went to encounter him. The armies met
And fought for seven days, but on the eighth
Misr was o'erthrown, Sikandar cut them off,
And at a blow enough were taken captive
To paralyse the taker's hands. Of maces,
Steeds and horse-armour, jupons, Indian daggers,
Of golden girdles, silvern harness, swords
Of Misr with golden scabbards, of brocade
And of dínárs, he compassed such a store
That e'en the beasts of burden could not bear it,
While multitudes of noble warriors,
Of chiefs and cavaliers, came in for quarter.
Sikandar thence made ready to invade
Írán, took lions' hearts and warriors' hands.
Now when Dárá had heard: "A host hath marched
From Rúm and reached our borders and confines,"
So great an army issued from Istakhr,
That e'en the wind was hampered by the spears.
He purposed to advance on Rúm from Párs,
And fire the peopled parts. When he had led
His troops more many than the blades of grass V. 1787
To the Farát he drew up on the shore,
And none could see the stream for armature.

§ 3

How Sikandar went as his own Ambassador to Dárá

Now when Sikandar heard: "The host hath come,"
He marched to meet it, and when two leagues' space
Was left between he called to him the magnates,
Who spake with him at large about Dárá
Until, outworn by his advisers' words,
He said: "There is one way and only one—
That I should go as an ambassador
To him and weigh his state."
He bade to fetch
A girdle decked with jewels fit for kings,
And royal robe embroidered. They brought forth
A led horse all betrapped with gold. A sword
Hung from its saddle in a golden scabbard.
Sikandar chose ten Rúman cavaliers,
Men good at parleying, and left the host
At dawn with those ten famed interpreters.
As soon as he approached the exalted Sháh
He lighted from his steed and did obeisance.
Dárá, the world-lord, called him, greeted him,
And seated him below the throne. The courtiers,
Amazed, invoked the Maker of the world,
Such were Sikandar's aspect, Grace, and prudence,
His stature, limbs, and dignity! He took
His seat but rose forthwith, delivered well
Sikandar's message, blessing first the king,
And said: "For ever may the crowned head live.
Thus said Sikandar: 'O illustrious,
Whose will prevaileth everywhere on earth!
I have no wish to fight against the Sháh,
Or sojourn in Írán. Mine aim is this—
v. 1788 To roam about the earth a little space,
And see the world for once. My whole intent

Is good and honest, and especially
Since thou art now the ruler of Írán.
If thou forbiddest me to use the ground
I cannot travel in the air like clouds,
But thou, unwitting of my purposes,
Hast met me in this fashion with a host.
If thou wilt fight then I will fight with thee,
And not depart without a stricken field.
Choose for thyself the season for the fray,
And hold thereto: let not thy purpose change,
Because I shrink not from a war with chiefs,
However great their host.'"

Now when Dárá
Observed his counsel, courage, eloquence,
His Grace and bearing, so that thou hadst said:—
"It is Dárá[1] upon the ivory throne
With armlets, torque, with Grace and crown," he asked:—
"What is thy name and stock because thy Grace
And limbs denote a king? Thou art no subject.
Methinketh that thou art thyself Sikandar.
Thee with thy Grace and stature, speech and face,
Heaven peradventure nurtured for a throne."
Sikandar answered: "None hath acted thus
In peace or war, and men of eloquence—
The crown of all the sages of the world—
Are not so lacking at Sikandar's portal
That he should take a message from himself,[2]
And he so great a king, the people's head?
Sikandar's wit is not of such a sort
That he should pass from his forefathers' ways.
This was the message that my master gave me,
And I have told the Sháh his words."

They lodged him

[1] Dárá = Dáráb here perhaps.
[2] Or, with stop at "portal," "How should he," &c.

In fitting state. The monarch of Írán,
As soon as they had spread the board, commanded
The chamberlain: "Invite the ambassador."
Forthwith they summoned him and gave to him
The envoys' seat. They eat and then prepared
To revel, calling out for wine and harp
V. 1789 And minstrelsy, but as Sikandar drained
The pleasant wine he lightly laid each goblet
Within his lap till as the cups and wine
Passed round and round their sum passed reckoning.
The server came before Dárá and said:—
"The guest to-day hath cottoned to the cups!"
The Sháh bade: "Ask him: 'Why dost thou thus tender
The wine-cups?'"
Said the server: "Kingly man!
Why keep these golden cups upon thy lap?"
Sikandar made him this reply: "These cups,
Are, my good sir, the envoy's perquisite.
If such be not the usage in Írán
Restore them to the royal treasury."
The monarch smiled to hear of such a custom,
And bade to set within the envoy's hand
A goblet filled with jewels fit for kings,
And lay a ruby on the top thereof.
Just at that moment those that went to make
Demand for tribute from the land of Rúm
Came from outside within the banquet-hall,
Advancing toward the Sháh with measured tread.
He that was envoy recognised Sikandar,
Went to the Sháh, and did obeisance, saying:—
"This is Sikandar—Cæsar's self—who hath
The throne, the mace, and diadem! What time
The Sháh commanded us to go and ask
For tribute he was wroth, entreated us
With scorn, and spake of war with thee, while we

Had to escape by night and urge our steeds.
We saw not any like to him in Rúm.
Now boldly hath he come within thy borders
To weigh thy host, thy treasure, throne, and crown."
The Sháh, on hearing what his envoy said,
Gazed at Sikandar yet more earnestly,
Who apprehended what it was they spake
In secret to the monarch of the world,
But waited till the day was growing darker, V. 1790
And sunlight was declining in the west,
Then gained the entrance of the Sháh's pavilion,
And mounted boldly, saying to his horsemen,
His fortunate and noble followers:—
"Our lives are now dependent on our steeds,
And if they fail us we shall grasp the wind."
Then he and all his meiny plied the spur,
And fled forth from the monarch of the world,
Who missed Sikandar's head and coronet,
Then lost amid night's gloom, and sent his guards
At once to seek his foeman in his tent.
They went to find that wary one departed,
So sleepy was the fortune of the Sháh!
Dárá dispatched a thousand cavaliers,
Bold fighters, in pursuit as swift as wind,
But in the dark they lost their way, beheld
The outposts of the foe, and turned unguerdoned
Save with the travail of their longsome journey.
Now when Sikandar reached his own encampment
The warriors of Rúm approached and found
Their king well pleased that night. "There is," they cried,
"A cup of gems before him!"
Said Sikandar:—
"Hail and exult in this our glorious omen,
For this cup is the triumph of my life;
The stars themselves are subject to me now.

I have obtained the number of the foe;
Their horsemen are much fewer than we heard.
Draw, all of you, your falchions for the fray,
Advance and quit the desert and the plain.
If in this fight ye give yourselves to toil,
The toil shall both enrich you and content you.
The Maker of the world is mine ally,
And fortune's head is lying on my breast."
The mighty men called blessings down on him,
And said: "May all the earth rejoice in Cæsar,
And may our souls and bodies be thy ransom;
To that we pledge ourselves for evermore,
V. 1791 For who among the kings can vie with thee
In stature, goodliness, and bravery?"

§ 4

How Dárá fought with Sikandar and was worsted

Now when the sun rose o'er the Raven's back,
And earth grew as it were a lamp aflame,
Dárá, the world-lord, led his army forth;
The world drew o'er its head a veil of pitch.
He marched his army on from the Farát,
And men were more than grass-blades on the plain.
Whenas Sikandar heard: "A host hath come,"
He beat the kettledrums and marched to fight.
What with the jupons and the Indian swords,
The steeds and armour both for man and horse,
The baggage and the warriors on both sides,
Earth seemed a sea, and dust rose mountain-high.
Both hosts drew up for battle, and the falchions
Flashed in the sun. They led the elephants
Before the army, and the world became
As 'twere the river Nile. The cavaliers
Were in the rear, the elephants in front,

And all men ceased to set their hearts on life.
Thou wouldst have said: "Air is blood-clamouring,
And earth is rocking underneath the cry!"
So loudly sounded horn and Indian bell
That all men's hearts were moved and therewithal,
What with the neighing of the steeds, the shouts
Of captains, and crash of massive maces,
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth is a mount of war,
And heaven with flying dust an Ethiop's face!"
For one whole week those valiant warriors
Confronted. On the eighth day rose a murk
Of dust such that the sun turned azure-dim,
And veiled the Íránians' eyes, who saw but dust
Upon the battlefield. Dárá, the world-lord,
Turned with his noble host of warriors.
The army reached the banks of the Farát, V. 1792
Retreating in confusion from the field.
Sikandár's troops pursued them: of those hosts
One was o'erwhelmed with sorrow, one o'erjoyed.
Sikandar pressed on to the river-bank;
They slew Íránians innumerable,
But turned back at the river; he forbade
To cross and occupied victoriously
The battlefield with his picked soldiery.

§ 5

How Dárá fought with Sikandar the second Time

Whenas Dárá had fled before Sikandar
He sent off cavaliers on every side
In haste and called the chieftains of Írán
And of Túrán. He gave out pay, he summoned
The commissaries and, by next new moon,
Reorganised the troops and filled with bluster
The chieftains' heads. Again he crossed the river

And ranged his army on the spacious plain.
Sikandar, hearing this, marched forth; he went
To meet Dárá and left behind his baggage.
When those two hosts encountered, earth and time
Contended too. They battled for three days
Till all the field was straitened by the slain.
Vast numbers of the Íránians perished there,
The day was lost to the aspiring Sháh,
Who turned in anguish from the battlefield
When sun and moon alike refused him aid.
Sikandar followed swift as flying dust,
Invoking much the Maker of the world.
A proclamation went forth to the troops:—
"Ye subjects who are wandering astray!
There is no fear that I shall injure you,
And ye are no concernment to my troops.
V. 1793 Abide in safety in your own abodes,
And trust your persons and your lives to God.
Ye have escaped the Rúmans safe and sound,
Although ye have imbrued your hands in blood."
The soldiers, quarter being granted, turned
Their faces toward the Rúmans, while Sikandar
Went on the battlefield, collected all
The spoil, and gave it to his troops. His army
Was all equipped anew. They stayed awhile
Upon the field till king and hosts were rested.
Dárá, the world-lord, reached Chahram where lay
His treasures' key. The chiefs all came to him,
Fulfilled with sorrow, misery, and anguish.
There sire lamented, seeing not his son,
And son in like wise, seeing not his sire;
The country of Írán was full of wailing,
And tears like hailstones were in every eye.
Then from Chahram he journeyed to Istakhr—
The Persians' glory. Envoys went on all sides
To all the chieftains and the paladins.

The soldiers mustered at the royal palace,
They set a golden throne for Sháh Dárá,
And when he sat upon that seat of gold
The nobles, faithful still to him, drew nigh,
And he harangued the Íránians: "O ye chiefs,
Ye men of wisdom, Lions, warriors!
Consider now our course."
He spake in anguish,
And wept awhile, then added: "Better die
To-day with fame than live while Rúmans triumph.
Of old our ancestors and Sháhs took tribute
Each year from them; Rúm was submiss in all
To us; but now the Persians' fortune loureth,
Sikandar hath possessed him of all kingship,
Become world-lord, hath compassed throne and crown,
And will not pause, but presently be here; V. 1794
All Párs will be as 'twere a sea of blood,
Men, women, children will be taken captive,
And neither young nor old left in the land.
If ye will give me aid I will avert
This anguish, travail, and calamity.
The Rúmans used to be our nobles' quarry,
They used to be in terror of Írán,
But we are now the quarry, they the leopards,
And in each battle we forsake the field.
Yet still if ye will struggle back to back
Ye shall renew your clutch upon their land,
But if one showeth slackness in the fight,
And striveth not to hazard his own life,
Abandon hope of this world in that Rúm
Is the Zahhák and we are the Jamshíd." [1]
He spake in tears with anguish in his heart;
His lips were livid and his cheeks were wan.
The prudent nobles rose to make reply;
A mournful wail ascended from the court:—

[1] See Vol. i. p. 139.

"We would not have the world without the Sháh.
We all will face the conflict, make the world
Strait to our foes, and bind our skirts together [1]
For conquest or the grave."
Of all that coast
He paid and armed the leaders and the host.

§ 6

How Sikandar fought with Dárá the third Time, and how Dárá fled to Kirmán

Sikandar, ware of what Dárá was doing,
And how he had become upon the throne
The moon's own diadem, led from 'Irák
His powers while all invoked on him God's blessing.
His army had no middle and no end;
Dárá's good fortune was not young withal,
But still the Sháh prepared to meet his foe,
And led so vast an army from Istakhr
V. 1795 That thou hadst said: "The earth can not sustain them,
And heaven itself will have not room to turn!"
Both kings arrayed the forces of both realms,
They all had spear and mace and sword in hand,
And such a shout ascended from both hosts
As split the ears of heaven. The earth became
A sea of warriors' blood, and all the field
Of battle was o'erstrewn with headless trunks,
Paternal love itself grew pitiless,
And heaven revolved indifferent to all.
Night came, Dárá was worsted, while Sikandar
Was girding up his loins for fresh assaults.
The Sháh fell back upon Kirmán and thus
Escaped alive the clutches of his foe;
Meanwhile Sikandar reached Istakhr of Párs—

[1] *Cf.* Vol. iv. p. 85 and *note*.

The crown of Sháhs, the glory of that land.
A proclamation went up at the courtgate:—
"Ye noble men and showers of the way!
Whoe'er desireth quarter for his life,
And is a penitent before his God,
Shall be 'neath my protection, one and all,
And know it if they are but true to me.
All that are wounded will we recompense,
And likewise cease to shed our foemen's blood.
We will forbear the goods of private folk,
And make our wisdom manifest. Since God,
The Conqueror, hath given us Grace divine,
With greatness and the imperial diadem,
A man had better trample on the neck
Of dragons than transgress our ordinance."
Whatever spoil was taken on the field
Sikandar shared in full among his troops.
When from Írán Dárá had reached Kirmán
He missed the more part of the Íránian chiefs.
A wail rose from amid the troops. They saw
Not any one with helmet on his head.
Dárá assembled all the great and wise,
All those who had been with him in the fight.
They came together grievously lamenting,
And burning at the evil of their lot.
Thus spake Dárá: "We verily have brought V. 1796
Heaven's wrath upon ourselves. None in the world
E'er hath experienced such discomfiture,
Or heard of such from statists of old time.
The wives and children of Írán are captives,
Our souls are hurt by fate, our flesh by arrows.
What are your views and what device have ye
To make our enemy repent hereof?
We have no realm, no city, throne or crown,
No kingship, children, treasury or host,
And we are ruined if God pity not!"

The chiefs that still survived wept bitterly
Before Dárá, and cried: "We all, O king!
Are stricken by the evil of the time.
The matter is beyond the host's endeavours,
The waves have risen higher than our heads.
The sire is sonless and the son is sireless,
For so revolving heaven hath decreed.
Our mothers and our sisters and our daughters
Are all within the clutches of Sikandar,
While all the ladies of thy family,
Who trembled for thy safety, all the wealth
Transmitted by thy noble ancestors,
Whereto thou wast the undisputed heir,
The royal offspring and the Kaians' treasure,
Are in possession of thine enemies.
No longer can we stand against our foe
To battle with him in the way of fight.
Complete submission is our one resource,
For none can keep the crown of majesty,
And this same turning sky is passing too
O'er him as every man of wisdom knoweth.
Present thyself in person as his liege,
And make thy court with many flatteries.
Then shall we see how matters will result,
For heaven's process is beyond our ken.
So write a letter unto him and fill
His gloomy soul with thought because the man
V. 1797 Whose tongue is bright with knowledge will make shift
To pluck up evil from its base."
Dárá,
On hearing this, announced his own intent—
One in accord to royal precedent.

§ 7

How Dárá wrote to Sikandar to propose Peace

The Sháh then called a veteran scribe who brought
His paper and musk-scented ink. The Sháh,
In pain and grief, with livid cheeks and eyes
Fulfilled with tears of blood, wrote from Dárá,
Son of Dáráb, son of Bahman, a letter
To lion-capturing Sikandar Cæsar.
He first gave praises to the Omnipotent,
The Author of his good and evil fortune,
Then said: "Assuredly the sage himself
Will not escape the process of the sky
Whereby we are made joyful and appalled,
At whiles exalted and at whiles abased.
The battles of our hosts turned not on valour,
But on the processes of sun and moon.
What was to be hath been. Our heart is sore:
What hath yon azure vault in store for us?
If, heart-repentant now for having sought
The fray, thou wilt consent to terms, the treasures
Both of Gushtásp and of Asfandiyár,
The earrings and the armlets and the torques,
With all that we ourselves have gained, will I
Dispatch now from our treasury to thine.
Moreover I will aid thee in thy wars,
And when thou shalt be instant will not lag.
As for my wives and children, now thy captives,
I should not deem their restoration strange.
They who would rule the world must not be vengeful,
And from revenge on women mighty kings V. 1798
Get nothing but reproach. The lord of wisdom,
Who hearkeneth to knowledge, having read
What I have written will improve thereon."

A cameleer departed from Kirmán
In all haste to Sikandar, the arch foe,
Who, when he had perused the letter, said :—
" May wisdom be the consort of his soul!
Whoever injureth his family,
His ladies or the children of his house,
Shall see no throne except a coffin-board,
Or dangle from the branches of a tree.
I will not trouble any in Írán,
And God forbid that we should take their treasures.
If thou returnest to Íran 'tis well;
The sovereignty is altogether thine.
What thou commandest ne'er will I transgress,
And draw no breath unless advised by thee."
The camel voyaged homeward vessel-wise,
Dárá was filled with anguish, heart and eyes.

§ 8

How Dárá was slain by his Ministers

V. 1799 Dárá, when he had read that answer, mused
In wonder at the process of the world.
At last he said: "'Tis worse than to be slain
For me to gird myself before the Rúman.
A grave is better for me than disgrace,
For, as a wise man said in this regard :—
' When any river riseth in its pride
A drop of rain is viewless in the tide.'
I used to succour every one in war,
But, since disaster hath befallen me,
I see not any helper in the world,
And I have none to cry to, saving God."
As there was no one far or near to help
He wrote to Fúr a humble, flattering letter

In deep distress and, having first of all
Praised God, said: "Ruler of the men of Hind,
Thou man of wisdom, rede, and ardent soul!
Thou surely must have heard of my misfortune:
Sikandar hath led forth a host from Rúm;
No crops or settlements or kin or children,
Or crown or throne or royal diadem,
Or treasury or host are left to us.
Now if thou wilt help me to keep away
Destruction from myself I will dispatch
So many gems to thee out of my treasures
That never shalt thou need to toil for more.
Moreover thou shalt be renowned on earth,
And held in honour by the great."
He sent
Like wind a cameleer who came to Fúr,
The scion of the race of Fúrs.
Sikandar,
On hearing what Dárá, son of Dáráb,
Had done, bade blow the trumpet. There arose
The din of kettledrum and Indian bell.
Sikandar from Istakhr led forth such powers
That Sol was lost in heaven. Dárá too marched
For his part, and his Grace renewed the world. V. 1800
The war-cry rose from both sides and the troops
Had little rest. Sikandar ranged his host,
The air grew dark, earth viewless. When Dárá
Led forth his troops—no army bent on strife,
But broken-hearted and grown sick of war—
The fortune of the Íránians drooped its head.
They closed not with the Rúmans hand to hand;
They were the fox, the Rúmans were the lion,
And all the chiefs asked quarter, having come
Down from their pride to deep humility.
Dárá saw, turned away, and fled lamenting.
With him there went three hundred cavaliers—

The noblest of Írán. He had withal
Two ministers of high degree, who used
To comrade him in fight. The name of one—
An archimage—was Máhiyár, the other
Was called Jánúsiyár. These twain, on seeing
Their efforts fruitless and the star erewhile
So lofty, and the glory, of Dárá
Thus set, held talk and said: "This luckless man
Henceforth will see not crown and throne again;
We needs must poniard him upon the breast,
Or smite his head with Indian sword. Sikandar
Will give to us a province. We shall be
A crown upon the kingdom."
Both of them,
One minister, the other treasurer,
Went with the Sháh; Jánúsiyár, the chief,
Upon the left hand, Máhiyár to right.
Night gloomed, a storm arose, Jánúsiyár
Laid hand upon a dagger, stabbed the king
Upon the breast, that famed head reached its fall,
And then the troops deserted, one and all.

§ 9

How Dárá told his last Wishes to Sikandar and died

The ministers came to Sikandar, saying:—
"O Sháh victorious and endowed with knowledge!
V. 1801 We have surprised and slain thine enemy;
The crown and throne of chiefs are his no more."
Sikandar, having heard Jánúsiyár,
Said thus to Máhiyár: "Where is the foe
Whom thou hast overthrown? Show me the way."
The two led on. The Rúman's heart and soul
Were filled with rage and grief. On drawing nigh

He gazed upon Dárá and saw his breast
All blood, his countenance like fenugreek,
Gave orders to alight and set a guard
O'er those two ministers, and then, dismounting
As swift as wind himself, took on his lap
The wounded monarch's head and, tarrying
Until the stricken should begin to speak,
Chafed with his hands the visage of Dárá,
Removing from the head the royal crown,
Unclasping from the breast the warrior's mail,
While showering tears on him because no leech
Was then at hand to tend upon the wounded,
And saying: "All yet shall be well with thee:
It is thy foemen's hearts that shall be wrung.
Arise and seat thee on this golden litter,
Or, if thou hast the strength, mount on thy steed.
I will have leeches brought to thee from Hind
And Rúm, and mourn thy pain with tears of blood.
I will resign to thee the realm and throne.
When thou art better we will pack and go,
But these that thus have wronged thee will I hang
Head-downward from two gibbets presently.
When yesterday these two old men informed me
My heart flowed over, and I cried aloud,
Because we twain are of one root and piece:
Why for ambition should we wreck our race?"
Dárá, on hearing this, began to speak,
And said: "May wisdom alway be thy mate.
Sure am I that thou wilt be recompensed
By God, the all-holy Judge, for these thy words;
But as for what thou said'st: 'Irán is thine,
Thine are the crown and throne's seat of the brave,'
Death is much nearer to me than the throne;
'Tis quit of ruined men. High heaven so willeth, V. 1802
Whose joy is travail and whose profit loss.
Beware of saying: 'I by mine own might

Prevailed o'er this famed people.' Know that good
And ill are both of God, and while thou livest
Give Him the praise. I illustrate my words,
And am a sign to all. What majesty,
Kingship, and wealth were mine! I injured none.
What arms, what troops withal, what noble steeds,
What thrones and crowns, what children, what allies!
Allies! My brand was burnt upon their hearts!
Then earth and time were bondslaves in my presence,
And thus it was while fortune proved my friend.
Then by this token I grew quit of good,
And captive in the hands of murderers;
I had no hope in children or in kin,
The world was darkened and mine eyes were glazed.
Of all my kindred there is none to help me;
My sole hope is in Him who giveth all.
Thus stricken am I lying in the dust;
The world hath got me in the net of ruin.
Such is the custom of this turning sky
Alike with monarch and with paladin:
All kingship too departeth in the end;
It is the quarry and the hunter death."
Sikandar wept blood-drops upon the Sháh,
Thus stricken in the dust, who at the sight
Of all that heart-felt grief and tears o'erflowing
His pallid cheeks, said: "Weep not, tears are vain,
The smother is my portion of the fire.
He that bestowed so much on me, and fortune
That so illumed me, have apportioned this.
Now give thine ear to this my last request,
Receive and keep it wisely in thy heart."
Sikandar said to him: "'Tis thine to bid:
Say what thou wilt; I pledge to thee my word."
V. 1803 Dárá spake quickly and recounted all
His last requests, beginning thus: "O chief!
Fear thou the almighty Ruler of the world,

For He created the heaven, the earth, and time,
The mighty and the weak. Protect my children,
My kindred, and the consorts that I love;
Ask me for my chaste daughter as thy wife,
And let her share thy throne in happiness.
Her mother used to call her Rúshanak,
And made the world both glad and fair to her.
Thou wilt have no reproaches from my child,
Nor any jibings from the ill-disposed,
For kings have nurtured her, and she is fit
In rede to be the crown upon the noble.
Thou mayst see born to her a youthful prince
Who will revive the name Asfandiyár,
Relume the altar of Zarduhsht, take up
The Zandavasta, heed the presages,
The feast of Sada and the Fanes of Fire,
With glorious Naurúz, Urmuzd, and Mihr,
And lave his soul and face in wisdom's stream,
Restore the customs of Luhrásp and follow
The doctrine of Gushtásp, maintain both high
And low in their degree, illume the Faith,
And see good days."

Sikandar made reply:—

"O monarch of kind heart and honest speech!
I do accept thy rede and last requests,
And I will tarry in thy borders only
To compass these good matters, and herein
Take wisdom for my guide."

The world-lord grasped
Sikandar's hand, began to wail, then pressed
The palm upon his mouth, and said: "Be God
Thy refuge. I resign my place to thee,
Depart to dust, and give my soul to Him."

He spake, his soul passed, and folk wept him sorely. V. 1804
Sikandar rent his garments and strewed dust
Upon the Kaian throne. Then for Dárá,

According to the custom of his race,
And honouring his Glory and his Faith,
Sikandar built a charnel-house. They washed
The monarch's blood away with clear rose-water,
Now that the time of endless sleep was come,
And draped him in brocade of Rúm; the pattern
Was all in jewelry, the ground was gold.
The corpse was hid by camphor; none beheld
Dárá's face more. They set within the charnel
A golden throne, o'erhead a crown of musk,
And laid him out upon a golden bier,
While every eye rained blood, then lifting it
They passed it on from hand to hand. Sikandar
Preceded it afoot, went too the nobles,
Their eyes all charged with blood, and thus he fared
Until the rites were o'er, and thou hadst said:—
"His very skin hath burst!"
When he had placed
The Sháh's bier on the throne, had gone the way
Of royal precedent, left that grand charnel,
And made the lofty portals fast without,
He set a gibbet for Jánúsiyár,
With one for Máhiyár of equal size,
And hung those miscreants alive thereon—
Those regicides—head downward. From the host
Came warriors with stone in hand and slew them
Upon the gibbet all despiteously:
So perish every slayer of a king!

Now when the Íránians saw how much Sikandar
Was troubled for the Sháh—that noble man—
They all of them began to laud his worth,
And hailed him as the ruler of the earth.

§ 10

How Sikandar wrote to the Nobles of Írán

One left Kirmán to go to Ispahán,
Wherein the Íránian chieftains were assembled.
One too—a man of high authority— V. 1805
Approached the women-folk of Sháh Dárá,
Gave greetings on Sikandar's part, recounted
All that had happened to Dárá, and then
Spake thus: "The hearts of foe and friend alike
Rejoice not at the death of lawful Sháhs.
Know ye to-day then that I am Dárá.
If he is hidden I am manifest,
And greater favours are in store for you.
There is no cause to rend your hearts with grief;
We all are born to death, both Sháh and host;
It is the sole way though thou tarry long.
Convey your havings to Istakhr and gain
New glory by affinity to us.
Írán is now as ever it hath been;
May health of body and glad hearts be yours."
They wrote to every province, prince, and peer
As from Sikandar, son of Failakús,
The great, the lord of earth and dread of foes,
A letter to the kinglike potentates,
Brave cavaliers and ready for the fray.
He sent withal a letter to the archmages,
All brilliancy, excuse, and compliment.
This was the heading: "From the king of Kaians
To all the administrators of Írán,"
And, when the pen of Chín had dipped in ink
Gris-ambered, first there came the praise of God,
"The righteous Judge, the Maker of the world,
And things invisible and visible.

Both worlds were made by His creative word:
Thou canst not call in question His decree.
The sky, which thou beholdest thus revolving,
Will, while it lasteth, never scape His ken.
Whate'er He willeth is at His command;
We all are slaves and He is sovereign.
From Him be greetings to the men of name
Above their own deserts. Remember naught
Of all that passeth in this world of ours
Save honest fame, accomplishment, and justice.
Amid my conquests grief hath come to me,
And mourning at a feast. I swear by Him,
V. 1806 The Lord of sun on high, that ne'er I purposed
Harm to Dárá's life. They that wished him ill
Were of his household, and the act was not
A stranger's but a servant's who hath felt
God's chastisement and suffered for his crimes.
Now seek ye justice, do as I command,
And stake your lives upon your fealty
As ye would have success from heaven, would have
At my hands purses, captives, thrones, and crowns.
Mine ardent heart is woeful for Dárá,
And I shall strive to do his last behests.
Whoe'er he be that cometh to my court
Shall have drachms, honours, thrones, and diadems;
But, if he will abide at his own house,
Let him not swerve from his fidelity.
Send ye my treasury its dues, and then
No one shall suffer either pain or travail.
Coin money with Sikandar's superscription,
Be diligent, and break not faith with him;
Maintain henceforth your kings' seat as of old;
Let not your marches be without a guard,
And in this matter let each show his worth;
Take care that there shall be in each bázár
A watch to call our name continually

That thieves may do no harm and ye abide
In all success and joy. Send to our bower,
To those devoted to us, from each city
A goodly handmaiden, a slave of sense
And modesty, fit for our golden chambers,
One knowing all the doctrines of our Faith,
And having no reluctance to be sent,
For wrong must not be done to any captive.
Those strangers who pass through our provinces V. 1807
Afoot, in abstinence, heart-free from vice,
Content to live the life of mendicants,
And called Súfís,[1] distinguish from mere beggars,
And let them stand the foremost on the roll.
If any of you are unfortunates,
Afflicted by an officer of mine,
Break ye the unjust doer's heart and back,
And rase him utterly, both root and branch.
I will suspend alive that miscreant,
Who hath led fair beginnings all astray.
Enrich your hearts by alms and equity,
And make nobility your diadem,
Because your lives will pass and time account
Our every step. Whoever doth trangress
Our will shall suffer for it in the end."

The letter having been dispatched, he went
And took serene possession of the world.
He left Kirmán and coming to Istakhr
Encrowned him with the Kaians' glorious crown.

Seek not the secrets of the world to pry,
It turneth from the seeker's scrutiny;
Make knowledge in this life thy chief pursuit,
For in the next thou wilt enjoy the fruit.

[1] A sect of mystics.

XX

SIKANDAR

HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

ARGUMENT

Sikandar, on ascending the throne, harangues the nobles and marries Rúshanak, the daughter of Dárá. The poet then tells of Sikandar's dealing with Kaid and Fúr (Porus) of Hind, his visit to the Kaaba, to Queen Kaidáfa (Candace), to the Brahmans, to the Western Sea, to the land of Habash and of the Narmpái, to the City of Women, to the Darkness in search of the Water of Life, and to the Angel Isráfíl. Sikandar then again turns eastward, and erects a barrier against Yájúj and Májúj (Gog and Magog), reaches the End of the World, and is warned of his own death by the Speaking Tree. The poet then tells of Sikandar's relations with Faghfúr of Chín, of his visit to Bábil, of his correspondence with Aristálís (Aristotle), and of the circumstances attending his death and burial.

NOTE

The Vullers-Landauer text, from which we have translated thus far, does not extend beyond the reign of Dárá, and from this point to the end we have made our version from the text of Macan. Mohl's edition of the text—the alternative—is, apart from other reasons for our choice, too ponderous for practical purposes; the volume of it containing the reign of Sikandar, for instance, measures $18 \times 13 \times 2\frac{5}{8}$ inches and weighs 17 lbs. 2 ozs.! The principles of our translation remain the same as laid down in the Introduction,[1] but it is necessary to add that in Macan's edition there are many misprints not included in the Errata at the end of his volumes. These misprints we have corrected in our translation, but have not thought it necessary to call attention to them

[1] Vol. i. p. 77.

in footnotes. The corrections for the most part are quite obvious, and sufficiently indicated in our version to any one acquainted with the original.

§§ 2–4. These correspond generally with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Book II. chap. 22, and with the Syriac version, Book II. chap. 14. For Roxana, see p. 32.

§§ 5–11. Alexander on his arrival in India naturally came into contact with the Fakírs—the mendicant and ascetic orders which are such a feature of that country. His pilot, Onesicritus, has left an account of an embassy on which he was sent to them. He describes how he found fifteen men standing, sitting, or lying in various attitudes naked in the sun, and conversed with two of them, Calanus and Mandanes, of whom the latter was the older, the wiser, and the more generally amenable.[1] The former, however, accompanied Alexander back to Persia, where, having fallen into bad health, he was burnt to death by his own request.[2] Calanus is mentioned also by Alexander's admiral, Nearchus,[3] and by Chares of Mytilene.[4] According to Plutarch his real name was Sphinés, and Calanus was a name given him by the Greeks because in salutations he used the word *kale*, "hail."[5] The accounts in the original authorities of Calanus and Mandanes, or Dandamis—a name by which also he is known—were freely used by later writers.[6] Palladius, who was bishop of Helenopolis at the beginning of the fifth century A.D., wrote a treatise on the peoples of India and the Brahmans in which he gives an account of Calanus and Dandamis, drawn from the older authorities. This work was interpolated into Codex A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, where it forms chaps. 7–16 of Book III., thus bringing Calanus into the Romance. Dandamis had appeared already in chap. 6. The passage from Palladius is given in the early Latin version of the Romance by Julius Valerius, but not in the Syriac translation from the Pahlaví. The first oriental mention of the Indian sages seems to be in the little Pahlaví treatise known as the Kárnámak-i-Ardshír-i-Pápakán, which will engage our attention later on in the present volume.[7] In that treatise, which dates back probably to the seventh century A.D., the founder of the Sásánian dynasty consults the wise Indian, Kait. It is true that Ardshír Pápakán lived five centuries after Sikandar, but in the Sháhnáma this would be no bar to the reappearance of the sage. Ya'kúbí, the Arabic historian, writing towards the end of the ninth century

[1] MF, p. 50. [2] DAA, vii. 3. [3] MF, 60, 71. [4] *Id.* 118.
[5] Life of Alexander, chap. 65. There is a Sanskrit word *kalyána*, which means "lucky." See MCI, p. 386.
[6] *Id.* 392. [7] See pp. 195, 256.

A.D., has an account of Sikandar's meeting with a wise Indian king named Kaihan. In Pahlaví the letter *t* well might be taken for the letters *h* and *n*, and these with the short vowel *a* interposed would make Kaihan.[1] The story of the Indian sage seems rapidly to have developed in oriental hands, as is evident from the account given by Mas'údí, who died in A.D. 956, of the dealings of Sikandar with the wise Indian king, Kand.[2] Mas'údí, indeed, professes to give an abridgment only; but his version, with one exception, agrees closely with that of Firdausí. The exception is the introductory matter contained in § 5, which appears to be the poet's own contribution to the story. Kaid's dreams are a veiled presentment of Firdausí's own discontent with the circumstances of his own time, and contain a fierce arraignment of Sultan Mahmúd himself.[3] Kait, Kaihan, Kand, and Kaid evidently represent the same personality, which is none other than that of the Mandanes or Dandamis of classic authors, while the sage whom he sends as one of his four gifts to Sikandar is the historical Calanus.[4] Firdausí adopted the form Kaid for rhyming purposes. Kaid, we are told in § 6, dwelt at Mílád. Historically this would be Taxila, a city situated between the Indus and the Hydaspes (Jhílam) and Attock and Rawalpindi. Omphis, the king of Taxila, who was at enmity with his neighbour King Porus, was on very friendly terms with Alexander. Both Calanus and Mandanes or Dandamis were resident at Taxila. In the Sháhnáma Sikandar's dealings with Kaid are placed correctly before the war with Fúr. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes the interpolation from Palladius[5] is inserted after the account of Alexander's interview with the naked Indian sages in Book III. chaps. 5 and 6, a passage which is an integral part of the work and will be dealt with later on, for the interview is represented both in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and in the Sháhnáma as taking place after the war with Porus (Fúr).[6] In Mas'údí and Mírkhánd the affair with Kaid also takes place after that war.[7] Their account of Sikandar's passage of wits with the sage agrees closely with that of Firdausí in § 11, save that when Sikandar returns the rusted mirror to the sage the latter makes a cup that will float of it; on which Sikandar sends it back filled with earth, and the sage returns it to him without alteration, earth being the last word in all matters. Such symbolism is common in the East, and the whole passage might be interpreted thus. The Sháh begins by suggesting that the sage had better get into training if his wits are to be of any use to his new master. The sage

[1] NAR, 47. [2] MM, ii. 260. [3] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 33.
[4] NAR, 47. [5] See p. 61. [6] See p. 67.
[7] MM, ii. 260; RM, Part I. vol. ii. p. 253.

replies that they are already as sharp as needles. The Sháh retorts that, though they may be sharp they are unpolished, and the sage rejoins that on the contrary they are exceedingly bright. The Sháh then observes that he can soon take the shine out of them, and the sage retorts that he knows a trick worth two of that. At this point the Sháh, hoping to take the sage at a disadvantage, summons him and requests him to interpret what had passed between them, thinking that he may not like to put his symbolism into plain speech. The sage, however, is equal to the occasion, and on the spur of the moment gives an unexpected turn to his interpretation, and one which meets with the Sháh's approval. The true interpretation seems to be this. The Sháh by sending a bowl full of ghee indicates that already he is so charged with knowledge that he has no occasion for the sage's services. The sage, by inserting many needles into the ghee, suggests that there is room for improvement. The Sháh replies that his finer faculties have become too blunted by the cares of his station. The sage rejoins that he can amend that. The Sháh retorts that the improvement will not last, but this the sage denies. Mas'údí adds that ultimately Sikandar allowed the sage to return to his own country.[1]

A similar story is told by Hiuen Tsiang of two great Buddhist saints who lived about the first century B.C. One visited the other to hold discussion with him. The visitor was not admitted at once. The other sent a disciple to him with a begging bowl full of water, symbolising the fulness, depth, and lucidity of the wisdom of his master. The visitor said nothing but dropped a needle into the bowl. The disciple returned and reported what had happened to his master, who at once recognised the worth of the visitor and gave orders that he should be admitted.[2]

§§ 12–15. These correspond with Book III. chap. 1–4 of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version of it, and like them are quite unhistorical, as will be seen from the following summary of what really happened. On quitting Taxila, Alexander marched to the Hydaspes (Jhílam), on the opposite bank of which he found Porus with his forces prepared to dispute the passage. He deceived Porus so often by feints that after a time the latter ceased to believe that Alexander's intention of crossing the river was serious; and Alexander, in a night of storm and rain, succeeded in effecting the passage—one of his most brilliant feats of arms. Immediately after the crossing he was attacked by the son of Porus with a small force, which he defeated without much difficulty, and the son of Porus was slain. The general engage-

[1] MM, ii. 276. [2] BBR, ii. 210, 215 *note*.

ment with Porus himself followed. Alexander was again victorious, and Porus, who had behaved throughout with great gallantry and was wounded, surrendered after Alexander had sent several messengers to beg him so to do. Alexander treated Porus with every consideration, restored his kingdom to him, and enlarged it. The battle with Porus was fought in the late spring or early summer of B.C. 326. Alexander then continued his advance into India, crossed the Akesines (Chináb) and the Hydraotes (Ravi), and reached the Hyphasis (Beas). At this point his army refused to proceed further, and he acceded to their wishes, though with the greatest reluctance. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes such historical features as survive are adapted so as to contribute to the glory of its hero. Thus the protest of the army takes place before the battle with Porus and proves ineffective, because it was incumbent that Alexander should meet with no check. The difficulty of transporting horses across a river on the further bank of which a strong force of elephants was drawn up to oppose them, and the known antipathy of horses to elephants, suggested the device of the iron steeds. A tradition, resting on good authority, that Porus was very tall, "more than five cubits in height" according to Arrian,[1] suggested that Alexander should be made out to be very small. The death of the son of Porus may have suggested, or been mistaken for, that of his father, which naturally is represented as having been caused by Alexander's own hand.

The differences between the Pseudo-Callisthenes and Firdausí are not important and chiefly in matters of detail. In the former Porus begins the correspondence; he has wild beasts as well as elephants in his army. In branches B and C Alexander, disguised as a sutler, visits the city of Porus and has an interview with him. In the battle that ensues Bucephalus falls, in branch A by the hand of Porus. The battle lasts for twenty days, and so forth. In the latter the kingdom of Fúr is situated beyond Kannúj—a city on the Ganges—and it is there that the correspondence with Fúr takes place. After the correspondence comes the protest of the army against proceeding further. Sikandar appoints Sawurg king in Fúr's stead.

§ 16. This is derived, of course, not from the Pseudo-Callisthenes, but from independent Arabic sources. It appears in Dínawarí, who died in A.D. 896.[2] The insertion makes wild work of the geography, for it brings Sikandar back from Kannúj, according to Firdausí, to Mecca. Later on,[3] he has to go eastward again in order to interview the Brahmans.

The neighbourhood of Mecca has been a sacred spot from time

[1] DAA, v. 19. [2] NAR, 39. [3] § 24.

immemorial. The city stands in a sacred territory known as "Harám," *i.e.* "prohibited," and contains the still more sacred Kaaba, into the wall of which, and perhaps most sacred of all, is built the meteorite known as the "Black Stone." The Kaaba itself, according to the Kurán, was built by Abraham and Ishmael.[1] The custody of the Harám—a position of great honour and profit—was in the hands now of one, now of another, of the Arab tribes. In Muhammad's time the Kuraish, whose ancestor was Nasr, son of Katíb, were in charge. Previously it had been in that of the Khuzá'. The fact that the change of guardianship is attributed to Sikandar is an eloquent testimony to his fame.[2] Kahtán, according to Arab tradition, was descended from Shem, and was one of the great progenitors of the race. He was identified with Joktan.[3]

§§ 17–23. We learn from Quintus Curtius that when Alexander was besieging Mazaga, a city situated probably on the Swat River, and the inhabitants despaired of the defence, their queen Cleophis, attended by many noble ladies, came out to him, was received graciously, and confirmed in her sovereignty. Some people, however, were ill-natured enough to say that her personal charms rather than Alexander's humanity brought about this result. At all events she is said to have had a son later on whom she named Alexander.[4] Alexander's relations with Cleophis and his visit to the Oasis of Ammon may have suggested to the author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes the episode which is the subject of the above sections. The story is, of course, unhistorical; but it is easy to see how it would suggest itself to an Egyptian, whether native or naturalised. Both before and after the Christian era Candace seems to have been the dynastic name of the queens, whether sole regnant, consort, or dowager, of that part of Nubia which is bounded by the Nile, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara, and known as the Island or as Meroe, the latter being also the name of one of its two principal cities, the other being Napata. Excavations have brought to light remains of tombs and palace, and reliefs of various queens of a pronounced negroid type. Whether Alexander was introduced into some already existing story, told originally in another connexion, of one of the old queens of Meroe, or whether the whole thing is the invention of the Egyptian author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, it is impossible to say. Firdausí's version of the story corresponds with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. chaps. 18–24, and with the Syriac version of it, Bk. III. chaps. 8–14. The three are closely in accord in most points,

[1] RK, p. 446.
[2] NAR, 39, and *notes*.
[3] Gen. x. 25; 1 Chron. i. 19–20.
[4] HQC, Bk. viii. c. 10.

but there are differences in matters of detail and in the names of the characters in the story. The Kandake (Candace) of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version becomes Kaidáfa in Firdausí, which shows that his account came to him through the Arabic, in which the name, in the absence of diacritical points, could be read either way. Similarly the Kandaules of the Greek, the Kandáros of the Syriac,[1] became Kaidrúsh, the story having passed from Greek into Pahlaví, from Pahlaví into Syriac, from Syriac into Arabic, and from Arabic into Persian again (modern instead of middle) before Firdausí dealt with it. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes and the Syriac version Ptolemy takes Alexander's place when Kaidrúsh is brought into court, and Alexander assumes the name of Antigonus. In Firdausí the latter becomes the name of Sikandar's chief minister (Naitkún), and the two exchange their respective positions. In the Greek and the Syriac the wife of Kandaules is taken prisoner by a hostile king, while Kandaules himself escapes to the camp of Alexander, who regains his wife for him. In Firdausí the pair are taken prisoners by Sikandar while celebrating their wedding-feast in the city of king Faryán, the father of the bride. This version is more considerate of the lady, who does not get off so easily in the Greek and Syriac. In the Greek too the scene of the action is laid in the kingdom of Semiramis, whose descendant[2] Kaidáfa is stated to be. In the Syriac the name Semiramis is corrupted into that of a people. In the Sháhnáma the scene is laid in Andalús, *i.e.* in Spain, which was conquered by the Arabs early in the eighth century A.D. In the Greek, Candace's other son, who had married a daughter of Porus, is unnamed, but is called Charogos in the early Latin version of Julius Valerius. In the Syriac he appears as Kerátór, and in the Sháhnáma as Tainúsh, who is represented there as being the eldest son, as in the Ethiopic, where he is called Kanír.[3] The Ethiopic too alone coincides with the Sháhnáma in giving the dramatic conclusion of the story—the discovery by Tainúsh (Kanír) that the ambassador to his mother was Alexander himself—from which we might conclude that both versions derived the incident from a common Arabic source. Another view, however, may be suggested. The hand of a poet is visible in Firdausí's presentment of the whole story. He enlists our sympathy by making Kaidrúsh and his wife a newly married couple, which is found in no other version, suppresses the worst of the lady's misfortunes, which is

[1] The *l* being read as *r*. *Cf.* p. 14.

[2] Proneptis in the version of Julius Valerius, from which the Greek is restored, MPC, p. 126.

[3] BLEA, p. 206.

expressed or implied in the other versions, and makes two other consequential alterations. Tainúsh is described as being the elder instead of the younger son, because Firdáusí represents him as having been longer married; and Faryán, who stands for the abductor of the lady in the other versions, becomes her own father. Further, the Ethiopic version appears to have been a late production which came into being some time between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries,[1] when the Sháhnáma itself had become a great authority, and it seems not unlikely that the dramatic conclusion in the Ethiopic version was derived through the Arabic from Firdausí's own handiwork.

§ 24. This corresponds with Bk. III., chaps. 5–6, of the Pseudo-Callisthenes and of the Syriac version, in both of which the order of events is the war with Porus, the interview with the Brahmans, the affair with Candace. In Firdausí the order of the last two is transposed. This is due to the interpolation from Arabic sources of Sikandar's expedition to the Kaaba, in § 16, immediately after the war with Fúr. Consequently he has to make a second expedition eastward. His interview with the Brahmans may be regarded as a literary invention based partly on the account of Onesicritus[2] and partly on some other source, which is responsible for his questions and their answers. These appear in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, ch. 64. That historian makes the interview take place in the course of Alexander's voyage down the Indus to the sea. The questions and answers vary in the different accounts. The question as to whether the living or the dead are the most numerous is found in Plutarch, where the answer is, the living, in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

The question whether there is most land or water occurs in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and Julius Valerius. In the Syriac version the question is as to whether the land or the water is the older. In Plutarch the question is whether the earth or sea produces the largest beast. In both cases the answer is, the earth.

The question as to who are the sinners, or the most sinful, is found in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius where it occurs in the form, which is the most cunning of beasts? in the Syriac and in the Ethiopic.

Alexander's question as to what the Brahmans would have of him is found in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

Several of the questions occurring in other versions do not appear in the Sháhnáma, such, for instance, as those in the Syriac

[1] BHA, p. lxxxix.

[2] See p. 61; and *cf.* NAR, p. 6.

as to whether death or life is the mightier; which existed first, day or night; and whether the limbs on the left side of the body or on the right side are the better, and so forth.

§§ 25–27. At this point the adventures of Sikandar become more romantic. In codex A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, and in the Latin version of Julius Valerius, they form the subject of a letter, purporting to be written by Alexander to Aristotle, and come between the visit to the Brahmans and that to Candace. The letter is a long one, and is lengthier still in the Syriac version, which contains incidents no longer extant in the Greek but found in the Sháhnáma. In the Greek the letter forms ch. 17 and in the Syriac ch. 7 of Bk. III.

It may be well to quote here a short passage from M'Crindle's *Ancient India as described by Magasthenés and Arrian*, which is very apposite in the present connexion. Speaking of the ancient Greeks' conception of India, he says:—"They imagined it to be an Eastern Ethiopia which stretched away to the uttermost verge of the world, and which, like the Ethiopia of the West, was inhabited by a race of men whose visages were scorched black by the fierce rays of the sun. See Homer, *Od.* i. 23–24, where we read

> Αἰθίοπες, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίαται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν,
> Οἱ μὲν δυσομένου Ὑπερίονος οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος.

(The Ethiopians, who are divided into two, and live at the world's end—one part of them towards the setting sun, the other towards the rising.) Herodotus in several passages mentions the Eastern Ethiopians, but distinguishes them from the Indians (see particularly Bk. vii. 70). Ktêsias, however, who wrote somewhat later than Herodotus, frequently calls the Indians by the name of Ethiopians, and the final discrimination between the two races was not made till the Makedonian invasion gave the Western world more correct views of India. Alexander himself, as we learn from Strabo, on first reaching the Indus mistook it for the Nile. Much lies in a name, and the error made by the Greeks in thus calling India Ethiopia led them into the further error of considering as pertinent to both these countries narrations, whether of fact or fiction, which concerned but one of them exclusively. This explains why we find in Greek literature mention of peculiar or fabulous races, both of men and other animals, which existed apparently in duplicate, being represented sometimes as located in India, and sometimes in Ethiopia or the countries thereto adjacent."[1] Bearing this passage in mind, it is easy to understand that the original author of the Romance of

[1] MCAI, p. 3 and *note*.

Alexander, whose idea was to make his hero traverse the whole world, and the later redactors of the Romance, found it easy to provide a crop of marvels, of which the Persian version in the Sháhnáma furnishes a by no means exhaustive account. The Macedonian invasion may have given the Western world more correct ideas of India, but it did not prevent the Pseudo-Callisthenes from coming into being some five centuries later and flourishing exceedingly. The return of Alexander from India to Persia by sea and land along the desolate shores of Makrán (Gedrosia) naturally gave rise to a crop of marvels not all without foundation.

§ 25. The people encountered by Sikandar after leaving the Brahmans were known to Arrian as the Oritæ. They dwelt in the neighbourhood of the Pur-Ali River. He describes them as wearing a dress and using arms similar to those of the Indians, but as differing in language and customs.[1] The shore-dwelling Oritæ are responsible for one of the etymologies suggested for the name of their country—Makrán—*i.e.* "Máhí-khúrán," "Fish-eaters," "Ichthyophagi," which, even if it be not correct, is at least appropriate. Two extracts from Arrian's *Indica*, based on the account of Nearchus, Alexander's admiral, and others from modern sources, will serve to show that the habits of the shore-dwellers in that region have not altered materially during a period of over two thousand years, if we except the employment of the skeletons of whales for house-building—a custom that would be mentioned by modern travellers in those parts if it still obtained. The dwellings now consist of mats held together by poles or else take the form of mud huts.[2] "The Ichthyophagi live on fish, whence their name. Few of them indeed fish, few indeed have boats for the purpose, or know the art of fishing, but catch most at the ebb of the tide. Some even have made nets to do this, most of such a size that they stretch two stades.[3] These they make of palm-bass, which they twist like flax. When indeed the sea recedes, deserts the land, and leaves it dry, it is generally void of fish, but when the land retains the water in some deeper indentation, then they find a great abundance. Of these most are small, others large. These they encircle with their nets and take. The finer sorts they eat raw as they draw them from the water; the larger and coarser they dry in the sun, and, as soon as they are baked through, reduce them to flour by grinding and convert them into

[1] DAI, c. 25.

[2] *Diary of Proceedings of the Mission into Mekran.* By Major F. J. Goldsmid, in JRGS, Vol. xxxiii. pp. 189, 198, 200, 203.

[3] Rather over 400 yards.

bread. Some make it into a paste. They even give their beasts fish-flour instead of fodder. All the region, in the absence of meadows, produces no herbage. They take withal in these parts a great quantity of crabs, oysters, and shell-fish. The region also naturally produces salt, from which they make (an equivalent or substitute for?) oil. Those of them indeed that inhabit the desert parts, and a region productive of neither trees nor fruit, live on fish only: a few sow a little ground, and eat bread as a relish with their fish, for fish are their corn. They build their houses thus. The wealthiest of them take whatever bones of the whale the sea throws up, and use them in the place of timber, making the largest into doors. The indigent majority make their houses of fish bones." [1] In the following chapter Arrian enters more into detail:—"Some of the whales are driven ashore occasionally in various places, and are stranded when the tide recedes; others are cast on to the land by violent storms, and perish of putrefaction; their flesh dropping off leaves their bones for men to employ in house-building. Their greater ribs are selected for the beams, the smaller for the planks; the jaw-bones are taken for doors." [2]

A modern account says:—"Nearchus . . . names the whole of this coast, from the river Indus to Charbar, the country of the Ichthyophagi or fish-eaters, and the inhabitants still live entirely on fish, the cattle having much the same diet as their masters, for the country is wholly destitute and barren, and yields no sort of grass. Vast stores of oysters, crabs, and all kind of shell-fish are found on the coast, of which Nearchus's description is generally very accurate. In many places, both here and in Arabia, the cattle are fed entirely on dried fish and dates mixed together, on account of the great scarcity of grass in these sun-burnt and sandy regions." [3]

A later account says:—"Fish, to this day, is the staple article of food for those of the inhabitants living on the sea-board, and in this respect they fully bear out the name of *ichthyophagi* given to their ancestors by ancient writers." [4] And again:—"Nearchus . . . coasted along the shores of Balochistan, and his account of the natives he met with, and the difficulty he found in obtaining supplies, is as credible as if the voyage had been carried on under similar circumstances at the present day." [5]

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[1] DAI, c. 29. [2] *Id.* 30.

[3] *Notes made on a Survey along the Eastern Shores of the Persian Gulf in* 1828. Communicated by Lieutenant G. B. Kempthorne. In JRGS, Vol. v. p. 270, original series.

[4] HB, p. 19. [5] *Id.* 178.

There is further mention of the Ichthyophagi in § 34.

The story of Sikandar's adventure with a basking whale which was mistaken for an island, with disastrous consequences to those that visited it, has not been lost sight of by the romancers and poets of later ages. In the first voyage of Sindbad the sailor, in the *Arabian Nights*, he lands upon an island "like a garth of the gardens of Paradise," but which proves to be a great fish, and sinks when fires are lighted on it for cooking purposes.[1] For the poets the reader may be referred to the passage in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. i. line 200 *seq.*, Aldine ed.[2]

The reeds mentioned are of course bamboos, of which one of the many uses is for house-building.

§ 26. Here we are introduced to the true Ethiops, who, according to Greek notions, occupied the extremities of the world both in the East and West.[3]

§ 27. The above remark applies equally to the Narmpái.[4] The story of the dragon is not extant in the Pseudo-Callisthenes or in the Latin version of Julius Valerius. It is found, however, in the Syriac version and in the Ethiopic,[5] which represent the monster as being regarded as a god by the natives. In the Syriac it is described as killing its victims by drawing in its breath, and so sucking them down its throat.[6]

The temple that Sikandar visits is that of Dionysus, and the corresponding passage in the Pseudo-Callisthenes is Bk. III. ch. 28. There is a doublet of the visit in § 31.

§ 28. Modern historical research, which is restoring to us the knowledge of the great Hittite empire once dominant in Asia Minor and northern Syria, appears incidentally to have thrown light on the origin of the legend of the Amazons. The period of the historical importance of the Hittites dates approximately from B.C. 2000 to B.C. 700; and it appears that their great goddess Ma—the prototype of Cybele, the Great Mother—was served by women "who in later centuries, on the decline of the Hittite power, at the coming maybe of the Phrygians, at first for the defence of their religion, and later separating in independent action, developed into armed priestesses."[7] In the Introductory Note to the work here quoted Professor Sayce says:—"The Amazons of Greek legend prove to have been the warrior-priestesses of the

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[1] BAN, vi. 5. [2] See too *id. notes*, and LAN, iii. 83. [3] See p. 68.

[4] They are referred to in Pliny's *Nat. Hist.*, Bk. v., sect. 46, as "Himantopodes loripedes quidam quibus serpendo ingredi natura sit." *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 55, and *note*.

[5] BHA, p. 107; BLEA, p. 166. [6] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 233, *note*.

[7] GH, pp. 170, 357.

great Hittite goddess."[1] The seat of the Amazons, which legend places on the river Thermodon, is quite in concord with the above identification, and their legend itself extends from Homer[2] through Herodotus and many other writers to Sir John Maundeville.[3] As to the origin of the legend that brought Alexander into connexion with the Amazons we are told by Arrian that when that king was in Sughdiana he received a visit from Pharasmanes, king of the Kharazmians, who stated that his dominions marched with those of the Colchians and Amazons, and that if Alexander desired to proceed to those regions and subjugate the races in the neighbourhood of the Euxine he would act himself as guide and furnish necessaries for the troops.[4] The land of Kharazm is now represented by the modern Khiva, and the whole breadth of the Caspian Sea intervened between Pharasmanes and his nearest neighbours to the west; but the mere suggestion seems to have taken root, and soon it was affirmed by some of the more romantic, or less scrupulous, historians of Alexander that the queen of the Amazons had visited him in person—the view adopted by Quintus Curtius, who tells us how their queen Thalestris arrived with her suite of three hundred women from the vicinity of the river Thermodon, and spent about a fortnight with the king.[5] In the Pseudo-Callisthenes it is Alexander who visits the Amazons, and the visit takes place immediately after that to Candace, queen of Ethiopia, in which the ground is laid for it by representing her son and daughter-in-law as being on their way to perform religious rites in the land of the Amazons when the lady was abducted. Firdausí, who omits the passage about the abduction, naturally leaves out the reference to the Amazons and gives his account of them in another connexion.[6] His version corresponds with that of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 25–27, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 15–17. In these versions and in the Sháhnáma the Amazons are represented as living on an island, and the account of their marriage-customs in the Pseudo-Callisthenes and in the poem may owe something to the stories of the Male and Female Islands that no doubt were current in Egypt in connexion with the country —southern Arabia—whence it obtained its supplies of frankincense. It seems to have been the custom of the incense-gatherers, who were always men, to leave their wives and children at home, which in this case would mean, among other localities, the Kuria Muria Islands, while they themselves crossed over to the mainland for the purposes of their trade. Sons, when grown up, would

[1] GH, p. ix. [2] *Iliad*, iii. 187 *seq.*; vi. 186. [3] AM, cap. L.
[4] DAA, iv. 15. [5] HQC, vi. 5. [6] See p. 153.

accompany their fathers, while the daughters would remain with the mothers. The seven Kuria Muria Islands thus became known collectively as "The Female Island," while the mainland represented "The Male Island."[1] There appears to be a reference to the same custom in Hiuen Tsiang:—"To the south-west of Fo-lin, in an island of the sea, is the kingdom of the western women: here there are only women, with no men; they possess a large quantity of gems and precious stones, which they exchange in Fo-lin. Therefore the king of Fo-lin sends certain men to live with them for a time. If they should have male children, they are not allowed to bring them up."[2]

By the black race encountered by Sikandar on his way to the city of the Amazons the negroes seem to be intended, and the description is quite in the style of one in the *Arabian Nights*:—"Then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight."[3] The bringing of frost and snow would be a great marvel in their hot country. Similarly Sarv, king of Yaman, tries to overcome the three sons of Farídún.[4]

It does not seem possible to identify the fair-haired race that Sikandar met after leaving Harúm. The type is too common and his wanderings are too vague. There is the Berber race in North Africa among which the blond type with blue eyes is not uncommon, and in northern Europe the Scandinavian. Herodotus too speaks of the Budini, whom he places north of the Palus Mæotis, as having blue eyes and red hair;[5] and Tacitus describes in similar terms the peoples of Germany.[6] Moreover, tribes with red beards and blue eyes are mentioned in Chinese annals as living in Central Asia.[7]

The notion of "The Gloom," about which Sikandar makes inquiries, seems to have been the outcome of two distinct conceptions. One was that as the sun set in the West, and thereupon night ensued, there was a Land of Darkness in that quarter. This notion is as old as Homer, who opposes the East to the West by describing the former as being πρὸς Ἠῶ τ' Ἠελίόν τε, "towards the dawn and the sun," and the latter as being ποτὶ ζόφον, "towards the gloom."[8] The other was based on the accounts that filtered through to the sunnier South of the dark-

[1] SP, p. 144.

[2] BBR, ii. 279. Fo-lin is supposed to stand for the Byzantine empire. *Id.* p. 278, *note*. *Cf.* too YMP, Bk. iii. c. xxxi., and *note*.

[3] BAN, i. 6. [4] See Vol. i. p. 184. [5] Bk. iv. c. 108.

[6] *Germania*, c. 4. [7] BAG, i. 193, and *note*.

[8] *Iliad*, xii. 239–240; *Odyssey*, xiii. 240, &c.

ness of the North—the long sunless winters of the Arctic Circle. Attached to each conception was the idea of an earthly paradise—in the West the garden of the Hesperides, and in the North the elysium of the Hyperboreans, who had their counterpart, or original, in Indian legend which told that "towards the North, beyond the Himâlaya, dwelt the Uttarakuri, a people who enjoyed a long and happy life, to whom disease and care were unknown, and who revelled in every delight in a land all paradise."[1] Hesiod knew of the Hyperboreans.[2] There is an interesting chapter on "The Land of Darkness" in Marco Polo.[3]

§ 29. At the close of § 28 we have the beginning of the story of Sikandar's famous expedition into the Land of Darkness and to the Fount of Life. This does not appear in branch A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in the early Latin version of Julius Valerius, or in the Syriac version. It is given at large, however, in branch C, which has Christian leanings, and it is found also in the Ethiopic version. It is obvious that Firdausí's account had passed through the Arabic. The Arabic in its turn came from the Syriac, and the existence of the account in the Syriac is due to the fact that Jacob of Sarúg[4] inserted it in his metrical version of the Syriac Christian Legend of Alexander already referred to.[5] The basis of the whole is branch C of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, where the account runs as follows:—"Thence Alexander set forth again with his host, retiring to a level place in the midst whereof was a ravine. Having thrown a bridge across he wrote thereon in Greek, Persian, and Egyptian, and the writings signified: 'Alexander, arriving hither, built this arch, and crossed it with his whole host, being desirous of possessing the ends of the earth, God willing.' And in three days he came to regions where the sun did not shine. The name thereof is 'The Country of the Blest.' And Alexander, having left the baggage and the infantry with the old men and the women, was minded to take chosen youths with him to investigate and see these regions. His friend Callisthenes advised him to make his entry with forty friends, one hundred youths, and twelve hundred soldiers. King Alexander set forth, instructing them to take no old man with them. An inquisitive elder, however, who had two sons—noble and trusty soldiers—said to them: 'Children, hearken to your father and take me with you, and I shall be found not empty on the journey, for I wot that in time of difficulty the old will be sought after, and you therefore, as having me with you, will be honoured much

[1] MCAI, p. 24.
[2] Herodotus, iv. 32.
[3] YMP, Vol. ii. p. 483 *seq*, and *notes*.
[4] See p. 15.
[5] *Id.*

by your king. Lest, being found to transgress his ordinance, ye be deprived of life, now, bestirring yourselves, crop my head and beard ; thus altering hair and appearance I will go with you and prove of great use to you in the time of need.' So doing their father's bidding, they took the old man with them. Thus they fared with Alexander and reached a murky spot. Being unable to advance further, owing to the impassable nature of the place, they removed thence their tents. Next day, Alexander, taking with him a thousand soldiers, went to ascertain if the end of the earth were there. Going leftward he saw a part that was lighter, and fared over places waste and precipitous for half the day. This he knew not from the sun but by taking measurement of the way geometrically. Afterwards he turned back in alarm because the route was impracticable. Emerging, he was minded to go to the right because the plain was level, albeit dark and gloomy. But being in difficulties because none of the youths were willing for him to enter that dark place in that, the horses being wearied out by the glooms of that dark road, they would be unable to return, Alexander said to them :—'O noble soldiers ! ye all know now that in wars nothing is done nobly without counsel and advice, for in good sooth an old man coming with us would direct us how we ought to enter this dark region. If now there be some noble man among you let him go and bring into our camp for me an elder, and he shall have much gold of me.' Howbeit none of them was found to do this thing by reason of the length of the way and of the lightless air. Then, presenting themselves, the sons of the old man said to Alexander :—'If thou wilt hear us with forbearance, O king ! we will tell thee somewhat.' King Alexander said :—'Say what ye will, for I swear by divine Providence not to wrong you.' Forthwith they told him about their sire, and ran and brought the old man to him. Alexander, on seeing, embraced him and asked him to counsel them. The old man said : 'It is fit, O king Alexander ! for you to know this, that if horses enter you will see the light never more. Choose therefore mares with foals, and leave the foals there, going yourselves with the mares ; they will lead us thither.'[1] Alexander therefore made search among all those with him, but only found a hundred mares with foals. Taking these and another hundred selected ones, as well as many others to carry their provand, he entered according to the counsel of the old man, leaving the foals without. The old man instructed his sons that whatever they should find lying on the ground as they went they were to collect and place in their pouches. There entered with Alexander three

[1] *I.e.* back to the foals.

hundred and sixty soldiers, and thus advancing along the dark road for fifteen *schœni*,[1] they saw a certain place wherein was a bright fountain whereof the water flashed like lightning; the air was fragrant and most sweet. Now Alexander, the king, becoming hungry, wished to eat bread, and calling his cook, who was named Andreas, told him to prepare a meal. Taking a dried fish he went to the shining water of the fountain to wash the meat. On being wetted in the water it came to life forthwith and escaped from the hand of the cook, who told nobody of what had happened, but took himself some of the same water in a silver vessel and safe-guarded it; the whole place indeed gushed with waters whereof all drank and partook of food. Alexander, after he had eaten, again journeyed on for thirty *schœni*, and further saw a light without sun, moon, or stars, and he beheld three birds flying, but having the aspect of men, and crying to him from aloft in the Grecian tongue: 'The land whereon thou treadest, Alexander! is that of God alone. Return, thou wretch! thou art not able to tread the Country of the Blest. Go back then, O man! and tread the earth bestowed upon thee, and prepare not troubles for thyself.' Being affrighted, Alexander gave instant heed to the words spoken to him by the birds, one of which cried to him again:—'The East calleth thee, Alexander! and the realm of Porus shall become subject to thee by conquest.' Thus saying the bird flew off. Alexander, having resigned himself to Providence, bade Antiochus to signify to the troops:—'Let each that wisheth take of what is here, be it stone or earth or wood.' To some it seemed good so to do, while to others Alexander's words appeared madness. Now as they went he said to Philon:—'Dismount and take up whatever chanceth.' Philon, dismounting, found a stone that seemed to him one of the worthless sort, and taking this he fared with Alexander. Many of the troops too took what each found from the material lying in that place, and the sons of the old man in particular, according to the bidding of their father, filled their wallets till they could walk no longer. Alexander, having guides, sent on the asses in front, marched by the Wain, and in some days arrived within hearing of the neighing of the mares, and in this manner issued from the land of night. So they came to the light where were the rest of the troops, and, looking on one another, found pearls and stones of price. When they saw this those that had taken none repented, while all those that had taken them blessed the old man and Alexander for their good counsel. Philon brought his stone to Alexander, and it was

[1] A measure of length varying from 60 to 30 stades. A stade = 606¾ English feet.

all gold. Then the cook told how the meat had come to life. Alexander, enraged, ordered him a terrible scourging. He said however to Alexander:—'What boots it, Alexander! to repent a past matter?' He did not say that he had drunk of the water or that he had kept some of it. This the cook refrained from confessing save as to the dried fish coming to life. Then that wicked cook going to Kalé, the daughter of Alexander and of the concubine Uné, seduced her, promising to give her to drink of the Water of the Fount of Immortality, which he did. Alexander, hearing of this, envied their immortality. He called his daughter and said to her:—'Take thy clothes and depart, for behold thou hast become a goddess, being immortal, and thou shalt be called Nereis as having immortality from water, and therein shalt thou dwell.' Weeping and mourning she departed from him, and consorted in waste places with the spirits. As for the cook, Alexander gave orders for a stone to be fastened to his neck, and that he should be flung into the sea. Being cast away thus he became a god and dwelt in a part of the sea that on this account was called Andreanticus. So much for the cook and the daughter of Alexander, who took these things to signify that the end of the earth was in those parts. When they came to the arch that Alexander had built, he engraved thereon again to this effect:—'Let those that wish to enter the Land of the Blest fare to the right.'"[1]

This legend through the Syriac became known to Muhammad, who gives his version of it in the chapter of the Kurán known as "The Cave." Of part of the story he makes Moses the hero and of the rest Zú-'l-karnain, *i.e.* The Two-horned (Alexander the Great). In the Kurán the part of the legend concerned with the salt fish is told in connexion with Moses and, being somewhat obscure and fragmentary, has given a fine opportunity to the commentators. To elucidate the passage in the Kurán it was explained that on one occasion when Moses had made an eloquent address to his followers they were so impressed that they asked him if he knew of any one wiser than himself, and he replied that he did not. The Almighty reproached him for his vanity and told him that if he would go to a certain rock, where two seas met, he would find his master in wisdom. He was to take with him a fish in a basket and, when he missed the fish, would know that he had reached the right place. Accordingly Moses and Joshua set forth, arrived at the rock, forgot all about the fish, and fared onward. At length Moses became hungry, bethought him of the fish, and told Joshua to bring it. Joshua had to admit

[1] MPC, Bk. ii. cc. 39–41.

that he had forgotten all about it. The fish in the meantime had made its way to the sea in some marvellous manner, as Muhammad says. Moses and Joshua therefore returned to the rock, where they met one of God's servants who by his proceedings proved his superiority in understanding. He is identified by Muhammadans with the prophet Al Khidr, known from the hue of his raiment as "The Green Prophet," and the friend of the Faithful in their distress. He is familiar to readers of the *Arabian Nights*, and is a curious development of the reprobate cook, Andreas, of the Pseudo-Callisthenes.[1]

The angel Isráfíl, whose introduction into Firdausí's account is another sign of his indebtedness to Arabic sources, is one of the four archangels and the sounder of the Trump of Doom which will slay all creatures, himself included, after which the general Resurrection will ensue.[2]

§ 30. The legend of the iron gates built by Alexander in the Caucasus to exclude from the civilized world the savage tribes of the North is absent in branch A of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in the Latin version of Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac version. It is found, however, in branches B and C.[3] Thence the account passed into the Christian Legend of Alexander and thence into the poem of Jacob of Sarúg and the Kurán.[4] In the latter the passage is as follows:—"Then followed he (*i.e.* Zú-'l-karnain) a route until he came between the two mountains, beneath which he found a people who scarce understood a language. They said:—'O Dhoulkarnain! verily, Gog and Magog waste this land; shall we then pay thee tribute, so thou build a rampart between us and them?' He said, 'Better *than your tribute* is the might wherewith my Lord hath strengthened me; but help me strenuously, and I will set a barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron'—until when it filled the space between the mountain sides—'Ply,' said he, 'your bellows'—until when he had made it red with heat (fire) he said,—'Bring me molten brass that I may pour upon it.' And Gog and Magog were not able to scale it, neither were they able to dig through it."[5]

Naturally this account appealed to the commentators on the Kurán and to Arabic historians, and as embellished by them provided the material for Firdausí's picturesque version. Tabarí, for instance, compares the promiscuity of the excluded races to that of beasts, speaks of their sleeping on one ear and covering

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[1] See on the story of the fish in the Kurán and Al Khidr, SK, ii. 116 *seq.*, and *notes*; LAN, i. 22, 233, ii. 420.

[2] LAN, i. 30.

[3] MPC, iii. 26 (C), 29 (B).

[4] See p. 15.

[5] RK, p. 222.

themselves with the other, and as having a thousand children each[1]—traits found in the Sháhnáma.[2] The word used in that poem for the monsters whereon Yájúj and Májúj are said to batten is "tinnín"—the same as that variously translated in the Old Testament R.V., as sea-monster,[3] dragon,[4] and serpent.[5]

It is a question as to which of the passes through the Caucasus[6] Sikandar's barrier is to be referred. The most probable, because the most exposed, is the one between the range and the Caspian, but the description in the text, and still more in the older authorities, which describe the wall as being built from mountain to mountain, seems to favour the pass of Dariel, where the road runs through vertical walls of rock nearly 6000 feet high.

The method of vitrifying fortifications by means of heat was known in ancient times, and was used in the new world as well as the old. The operation is said to be not difficult if the proper rocks are used for the purpose, some of the primaries fusing easily when exposed to the heat of wood-fires. There are stated to be some fifty examples of such vitrified forts in Scotland alone.[7]

§ 31. We have had already a version of the account of the corpse in the palace of jewels in § 27.

The speaking trees of the sun and moon are found in all the branches of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, in A as part of the contents of a letter from Alexander to Aristotle, and in B and C as part of the narrative.[8] They occur also in the Syriac version[9] and in Julius Valerius. The trees, which in the above versions are described as resembling cypresses, seem akin to those of the riddle propounded by the archimages to Zál.[10] In fact it is not improbable that the riddle was suggested by this passage in the Romance of Alexander. Other passages in the Sháhnáma may have been suggested similarly, the wonders, for instance, seen by Kai Khusrau during his voyage in pursuit of Afrásiyáb,[11] and the account of how Asfandiyár, whom Persian tradition may have liked to regard as forestalling Sikandar, wandered over the whole world and reached the Gloom.[12] In the same chapter of the Syriac version as that mentioned above we have the account of another solar tree, corresponding to a passage in the Pseudo-Callisthenes:[13]—"From thence we set out again and came to a river (the ocean-

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[1] ZT, i. 521. [2] See p. 163. [3] Gen. i. 21; Job vii. 12.
[4] Ps. lxxiv. 13. [5] *Id.* xci. 13. [6] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 16.
[7] See the article on "Vitrified Forts" in *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed.
[8] MPC, iii. 17, and *note*. [9] BHA, iii. 7.
[10] See Vol. i. p. 308 *seq.* [11] *Id.* iv. 245.
[12] *Id.* v. 76. [13] BHA, p. 100; MPC, p. 88.

stream?). And upon the bank of the river there was a tree, which grew and increased from dawn until the sixth hour, and from the sixth hour until evening it diminished in height until there was nothing to be seen of it. Its smell was very pleasant. . . ." In Zál's riddle the sun only was taken into consideration. In Sikandar's case the tree has a double trunk to provide for the moon as well. The male trunk (the sun) speaks by day, the female (the moon) by night. Much has been written about these trees, but the allegory seems fairly obvious.

§ 32. Sikandar's expedition to Chín and his dealings with the Faghfúr are extant only in the Syriac version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, whence it passed into the Arabic as Dínawarí's account, which follows the Syriac closely, shows.[1] Firdausí's is closer still and agrees with the Syriac in making the Faghfúr, though conscious of his power, fall in with Sikandar's wishes through sheer love of peace—a point omitted by Dínawarí.[2] This is the third occasion on which Alexander is represented as going as his own ambassador[3]—a notion originating no doubt with the Egyptian author of the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

§ 33. According to Firdausí's version, this is the third time that Sikandar goes to Hind. Historically, after the defeat of Porus, Alexander had some trouble with that king's nephew, who, after having sent ambassadors to Alexander out of enmity towards his uncle, became disaffected when he found that Porus was held in such great honour by his conqueror.[4] Part of Alexander's army, under Craterus, returned from India by way of Nímrúz.

§ 34. This has some correspondence with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 28, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 18. In the former the priest of the sun is described as being an Ethiop, and seems to reappear in the Gúsh-bistár of the Sháhnáma. We have had Gúsh-bistárs already, in fact if not in name in Firdausí's description of the races excluded by Sikandar's barrier—

> "They sleep upon one ear,
> And use the other as a coverlet."[5]

In this connexion the following passage is of interest: "The Enôtokoitai are called in Sanscrit *Karnaprávaramás*, and are frequently referred to in the great epic poems—*e.g. Mahábh.* II. 1170, 1875. The opinion was universally prevalent among the

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[1] NAR, p. 40; BHA, p. 109 *seq.* [2] *Id. note.*

[3] Or the fourth if we include his visit to the city of Porus, which is not mentioned in the Sháhnáma. See p. 64.

[4] See p. 64. [5] *Id.* p. 163.

Indians that barbarous tribes had large ears. . . . "It is easy," says Wheeler (*Hist. Ind.*, Vol. iii. p. 179), "for any one conversant with India to point out the origin of many of the so-called fables. . . . Men do not have ears hanging down to their feet, but both men and women will occasionally elongate their ears after a very extraordinary fashion by thrusting articles through the lobe. . . . If there was one story more than another which excited the wrath of Strabo, it was that of a people whose ears hung down to their feet. Yet the story is still current in Hindustán. Bábu Johari Dás says:—'An old woman once told me that her husband, a sepoy in the British army, had seen a people who slept on one ear, and covered themselves with the other.' (*Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindus*, Banáras, 1860.) The story may be referred to the Himálayas. Fitch, who travelled in India about 1585, says that a people in Bhután had ears a span long."[1]

For the Ichthyophagi see p. 69 *seq.*

§ 35. The correspondence with Aristotle with regard to the succession is of course an Oriental addition which came to Firdausí through the Arabic. Dínawarí has it to the same effect, the chief difference being that he makes the matter the subject of an interview between Alexander and Aristotle at Jerusalem where, according to him, the former died.[2] The device was intended to account for the long interval—five centuries and a half—that separated the last of the Kaiánians (Sikandar) from the first of the Sásánians (Ardshír Pápakán). The Persians made it out to be much shorter.[3]

The prodigious birth that occurred on Sikandar's arrival at Babylon is described in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 30, in the Latin Version of Julius Valerius, and in the Syriac, Bk. III. ch. 19.

§ 36. The version of Alexander's will in the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 33, is longest in codex A, which unfortunately is much mutilated. The corresponding passage in the Syriac version is Bk. III. ch. 22, and this agrees with Firdausí's in the following points—the request to his mother not to grieve, the instruction to the chiefs to honour her, the gift of the kingdom of Macedonia (of Rúm in Firdausí) to the son of Rúshanak, if she shall have one, and the direction that his (Sikandar's) body shall be laid in a golden coffin filled with honey, and conveyed for interment to Egypt. Most of the provisions of the will as given in the Greek and Syriac would have little or no interest for later

[1] MCAI, p. 75, *note*; *cf.* AM, p. 275. [2] NAR, 41. [3] See p. 193.

Persian or Arabic writers, or for Firdausí himself, and naturally are lacking in the Sháhnáma.

§ 37. This corresponds with the Pseudo-Callisthenes, Bk. III. ch. 32, 34, and with the Syriac version, Bk. III. ch. 21, but the latter omits the dispute of the Greeks and Persians over the disposal of Alexander's body. According to the Greek version the oracle of the Babylonian Zeus was consulted, by whose direction the corpse was conveyed to Memphis whence, at the instigation of the high priest of that city, it was taken to Alexandria and there buried. According to Firdausí the oracle was consulted at a place called Khurm, a word which means "vapour" or "exhalation." Similar emanations are said to have existed at Delphi

Alexander died at Babylon on June 13th B.C. 323. His death was no doubt a natural one, the result of a fever, but it gave rise to a legend, referred to by Arrian only to be rejected,[1] that poison was employed for the purpose by Antipater who, fearing that his position as regent in Macedonia had been undermined by the intrigues of Olympias, sent his son Cassander to bring about the death of his master. Cassander found a willing instrument in Iollas, Alexander's cup-bearer, who had injuries of his own to avenge, and the fatal draught was administered at a banquet. The Pseudo-Callisthenes repeats the story,[2] and it appears in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions,[3] but not in the Sháhnáma.

§ 38. The sentences of the sages over the corpse of Sikandar are not in the Pseudo-Callisthenes or in the Syriac version of it. They are an Oriental addition, and Mas'údí gives another version of them.[4]

§ 39. Alexander's burial at Alexandria of course is historical. His mother, according to Mas'údí, removed the corpse from its golden coffin, lest the cupidity of future kings should be aroused and the tomb desecrated. Mas'údí, who spent some of his last years in Egypt, and died about A.D. 956, states that a pedestal of white and other coloured marbles, and known as the tomb of Alexander, was to be seen at Alexandria in A.D. 943–944.[5] S. Chrysostom, however, says that the tomb was destroyed in his time (A.D. 345–407), and the annual observance at Alexandria of the day of Alexander's death abolished.[6] Perhaps there may have been some restoration of the tomb by the Arabs, to whom the personality of Alexander was of interest,[7] after their conquest of the city in the middle of the seventh century A.D.

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[1] DAA, vii. 27.
[2] MPC, iii. 31.
[3] BHA, Bk. iii. c. 20; BLEA, p. 339.
[4] MM, ii. 251; NAR, p. 48.
[5] *Id.* 259.
[6] MPC, p. xxvi.
[7] See p. 15.

Firdausí says that Sikandar built ten cities. In the Pseudo-Callisthenes the number is twelve or thirteen,[1] thirteen in the Syriac version,[2] and twelve in the Ethiopic.[3] One at least of them has not become a brake of thorns, and the Romance of Alexander, which there first took literary form, has done more to extend his fame and make his name a household word than all the sober histories of him ever written.

To conclude then, in the three reigns of Dáráb, Dárá, and Sikandar, taken collectively, we have the Persian version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes which, if it does not possess a complete historical skeleton, has at least a historical backbone, some of the vertebræ of which reappear in the Sháhnáma—*e.g.* Sikandar's invasion of Írán, the defeat and death of Darius, Sikandar's accession to the throne of Írán, his marriage with an Oriental princess, his invasion of India, his defeat of Porus and intercourse with Indian sages, his return to Írán, his death at Babylon, and interment at Alexandria. Of the elements introduced into the Pseudo-Callisthenes by its Egyptian author the Persian version reproduces two—the device of Sikandar going as his own ambassador, and the story of Kaidáfa. Of Persian and Arabic substitutions and additions, not appearing in versions of the Pseudo-Callisthenes other than the Persian, the most important are the account of the birth of Sikandar, his address to the chiefs on his accession to the Iránian throne, and his correspondence with Aristotle as to the succession. The purely Arabic are the story of Kaid, the pilgrimage to the Kaaba, the interview with the angel Isráfíl, and the sentences of the sages at Sikandar's interment.

The appended diagram may help to show the provenance of the Persian version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes.

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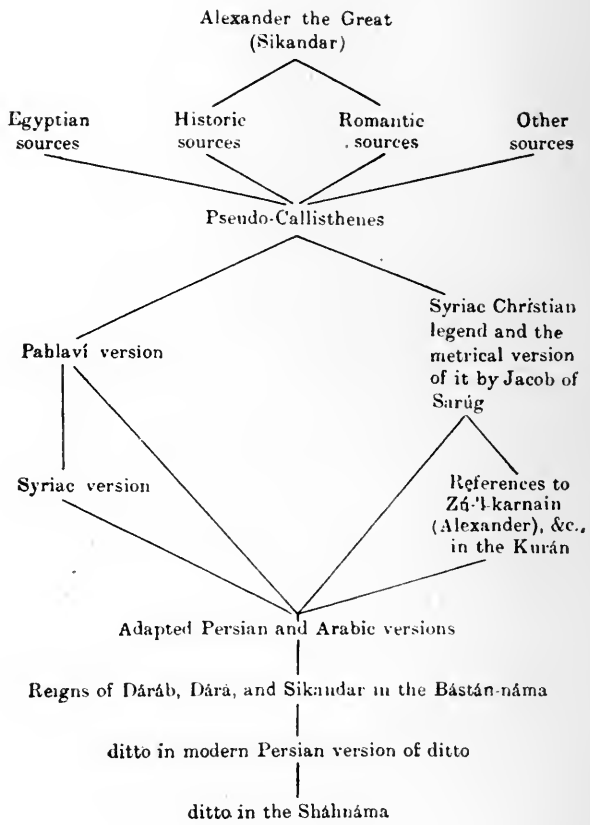
[1] MPC, 151, *note*. [2] BHA, Bk. iii. c. 24. [3] BLEA, p. 351.


Alexander the Great
(Sikandar)
Egyptian sources
Historic sources
Romantic sources
Other sources
Pseudo-Callisthenes
Pahlaví version
Syriac Christian legend and the metrical version of it by Jacob of Sarúg
Syriac version
References to Zú-'l-karnain (Alexander), &c., in the Kurán
Adapted Persian and Arabic versions
Reigns of Dáráb, Dárá, and Sikandar in the Bástán-náma
ditto in modern Persian version of ditto
ditto in the Sháhnáma

§ 1

How Sikandar sat upon the Throne of Írán

When seated on the throne, Sikandar said:— C 1286
"Be wisdom wedded to the minds of kings,
For God is all-prevailing in the world,
And wicked is the world-lord that doth fear
Not Him. Our good and ill beyond all doubt
Will pass and not escape time's clutch. Whoever
Shall come to this our court and shall appeal
For justice to ourselves against ourselves,
At audience-time or midnight, shall receive
An answer to his plaint, for in that God,
Who giveth victory, hath granted us
The Grace and oped the door of conquering fortune,
My subjects all on mountain and on waste,
In city and at sea, shall share therein.
We do not ask for tribute from the world
For five years, saving from the man that saith:—
'Sikandar's peer am I.' We will bestow
Much wealth on mendicants, but ask not aught
From him that hath."
At these his gracious words,
And at this union of his heart with justice,
There went up a thanksgiving from Írán
To that just-dealing monarch of the earth,
And then the assembly scattered, but the king
Sat on with his advisers, counselling.

§ 2

How Sikandar wrote to Dilárái and Rúshanak, the Wife and Daughter of Dárá, touching the Nuptials of Rúshanak

Sikandar ordered that a scribe should come,
And called for reed of Rúm and silk of Chín.

The scribe, when he had made the kex a pen
Indited this epistle to the mother
Of Rúshanak: "The guerdon of the good
God grant to thee and mind-peace after pain.
C. 1287 I wrote to thee erewhile with more advice
Than is contained herein. What time the days
Of him who was thy spouse had reached their close,
And he was murdered by a servant's hand,
I buried him with royal obsequies,
And have accomplished all the days of mourning.
Oft-times before the war I sued for peace,
But he refused because his time had come.
His very foemen sorrowed for his blood.
May God receive him into Paradise,
The Just One give him place among the Saints,
And to his foes the bane of arrow-points.
None maketh shift to scape death's clutch; 'tis like
An autumn-blast, and we are as the leaves.
Now ye have all the world at your disposal.
Not few bear witness to Dárá's last wish,
How he gave Rúshanak to me, and said:—
'Thou hast no equal to her in thy bower.'
So send her to me, and that presently,
Escorted by her guardians and her slaves,
And by the chiefs and nobles of Írán,
To bring the light upon my darkling soul.
Make Ispahán[1] thine own as in the past,
Send out intelligencers everywhere,
And keep in office those just, modest men
Appointed by Dárá, son of Dáráb.
If ye would live not there choose where ye will,
The cities of Írán are all before you;
But be ye reconciled to me in heart,
And give me in the world the name Dárá."
He wrote a letter too to Rúshanak,

[1] The text has the Arabic form Isfahán.

And made the pen's point eloquent. He first
Gave praise to God, the Ruler of the world,
The Wise, the All-sustainer; then he said:—
"The stock of kings begetteth but men pious,
Attractive, well-advised, refined, and modest,
Men eloquent of speech and soft of voice.
Thy father gave thee to me; then he died,
And bare away with him a goodly name.
When thou arrivest hither, and beholdest
My bower and palace, thou shalt be my queen,
Chief consort, the adornment of my throne,
The lustre of my Grace, my name, and fortune.
A letter have we written to thy mother
To bid her send thee hither in a fashion
Befitting issue of the king of kings,
And with an archimage of Ispahán
Preceding thee, with servants of the crown,
With elephants and litters, and with her
Who gave thee milk and honey. Dwell within
Our house with joy—chief lady of the bower.
Now be high heaven circling to thy will,
Thy person far from foe and far from harm."
Came, swift as flying dust-cloud, one well versed
In wisdom, and the world's king's words rehearsed.

§ 3

How Dilárái answered the Letter of Sikandar

When Dilárái heard this she heaved a sigh, C. 1288
And weeping for Dárá in tears of blood,
So that the dust beneath was saturate,
Called for a scribe and wrote a fair response
In well instructed terms and well inspired.
She first gave praises to the Omnipotent,
The Lord of counsel, peace, and excellence,

Then: "From the process of revolving heaven
Whence are strife, peace, and love, we used to ask
All Grace upon Dárá's behalf and made
His name the jewel of our tongues; but since
His day is over, and he is enthroned
Upon a coffin-board, it is for thee,
And thee alone, that I ask blessings, might,
With triumph, kingship, and the world's obedience;
I ask it openly without reserve,
For I have heard (may heaven joy in thy soul!)
What courteously thou hast conveyed to me
About the obsequies of Sháh Dárá,
How Máhiyár was gibbeted and how
Malevolent Jánúsiyár was punished.
Brief is his life that murdereth his master.
Thou hast sought peace, too, and passed many a day
In counsel. Service is not for the Sháhs,
And none expecteth thraldom in the great.
Thou'rt in Dárá's place, who was king of kings,
And as the Sun hath set thou art our Moon.
Since he that was the monarch of the age
Chose thee not one will dare transgress his rede.
Next as to what he said of Rúshanak,
That wish of his which made our heart rejoice:
She is thine handmaid, and we are thy slaves;
We bow our heads to thy command and will.
She sendeth greetings and hath writ to thee
A letter like the garth of Paradise.
We have, moreover, written to the magnates,
The frontier-chieftains and the men of war,
That thy commands are as Dárá's commands,
And none will swerve from fealty to thee."

She gave the envoy purses, slaves, and treasures
Of all kinds. When that Rúman reached Sikandar,
And told what he had seen and heard of court,
Of precedents obtaining, and of throne,

Whereon thou hadst declared: "The Sháh still liveth"
Sikandar was rejoiced at what was said,
And placed the crown in peace upon his head.

§ 4

How Sikandar sent his Mother, Náhíd, to fetch Rúshanak, and how he Married her

He called his mother from 'Ammúriya,[1] C. 1289
Told her upon her coming what Dárá
Had said, and added: "Go to Dilárái,
And enter into gracious intercourse
With her, see Rúshanak within the bower,
And, having seen her, greet her on my part,
Take her a bracelet, earrings, torque, and crown
Of royal gems, a hundred mules with loads
Of tapestries and furthermore ten camels
With gold brocade of Rúm, and place withal
In purses thirty thousand in dínárs
Out of the treasury by way of largess,
And take with thee three hundred Rúman damsels,
Or more if more are needed. Give each one
A goblet worthy of a queen's fair handmaid;
Take servants to escort thee and forgo
No circumstance of royal etiquette."
The mother of the Sháh, as he commanded,
Made ready and set off upon her journey,
With her interpreters escorting her—
Ten of the honey-tongued philosophers.
Now as she drew anigh to Ispahán
A crowd of nobles went to give her welcome,
While Dilárái came forward from the palace,
She and the magnates, as their custom was,
And gave such largess in the court that treasure

[1] *Cf.* p. 23 and *note*.

And money grew misprized. They held a conclave
Of counsellors within the palace; all
The chiefs attended: Dilárái the while
Prepared such wedding-gear that the bázárs
Looked busy everywhere, and league-long files
Of camels carried stuffs for clothes and carpets,
For hangings and for tapestries inwoven
With gold and silver thread, and diverse-hued.
There were such Arab steeds with golden bridles,
Such Indian scimitars with golden scabbards,
Surtouts and morions and bards withal,
With golden sparths and maces ponderous,
With stuffs for raiment cut or in the piece,
That no one in the world e'er looked on more;
Such aloe-wood, gris-amber, and pure musk,
As gave to enemies good cause to writhe.
They requisitioned servants from the palace,
And made them ready forty golden litters.
In one of them with parasol and slaves
Sat Rúshanak rejoicing. From the halls
C. 1290 Of Dilárái, for half the route, the way
Was all gold, jewels, horses, and attendants.
They raised triumphal arches in the cities;
All lips were smiling, all hearts full. They showered
Drachms on the bride's brocaded parasol,
And mingled overhead musk and dínárs.

When that Moon reached the Sháh's own bower Sikandar

Much scanned her stately form and goodly face:
Thou hadst said: "Wisdom nurtured her on love."
Whenas her mother set her on the throne
Of gold he poured out all his soul to her,
And passed a se'nnight in her company,
Conversing much with her, observed her shrewdly,
And saw in her but majesty and meekness,
Discretion, modesty, and fair behaviour,

So that his heart was joined to her in love.
Then all the paladins throughout Írán
Called blessings down on him as Sháh, and brought
Great gifts of gold and royal jewelry,
While justice o'er the world's whole face was spread,
And everywhere the waste inhabited.

§ 5

How Kaid of Hind had a Dream, and how Mihrán interpreted it

A speaker of the tongue of days of old
A tale that thou wilt muse to hear thus told:—
There was in Hind a monarch, Kaid by name,
Whose sole pursuit was knowledge and advice;
He had a sage's heart, a prince's brain,
King's bearing and the Grace of archimages.
He dreamed a dream ten nights successively—
A portent: mark it well. The men of learning
In Hindústán, the mighty both in word
And lore, the sages and the counsellors,
Met at his bidding, and he told his dreams
At large without reserve; but every heart
Was full of deep concern, each visage wan,
For there was none that could interpret them.
Then said a sage to Kaid: "O sovereign,
Memorial of the great and man of wisdom!
There is a famous one by name Mihrán,
Who hath attained his fill of earthly lore.
He will not sleep or rest him in a city,
And liveth but with cattle of the field,
Subsisting on the herbs upon the mountains,
And not accounting us as fellow-men;
His home is with the onager and deer,
Apart from habitation and mankind;

C. 1291 Naught in the world doth injure him; devout
Is he, and of high fortune."
To the sage
Thus said king Kaid: "One must not overlook
This virtuous man."
Moved by Mihrán's renown
He mounted then and there upon his steed,
While, lest he should grow downcast, men of lore
Escorted him. The monarch reached Mihrán,
Saluted courteously the sage, and said:—
"Thou devotee who with the mountain-sheep
Inhabitest the heights! hear thou with care,
And then interpret wisely, these my dreams:
Know that one night, O wise and holy man!
I slept in peace, unfrighted, undismayed,
No care at heart, no impulse in my head,
And in my chamber there was none with me.
Night's noon had passed, but dawn was not. I saw
A habitation like a vasty palace;
Therein a huge, fierce elephant. The dwelling
Showed doorless, but had one strait aperture
Wherethrough that savage elephant would pass
Uninjured by the straitness; its black bulk
Would pass therethrough, but leave its trunk behind.
Next night I saw the throne devoid of lord
Fair-fortuned, but upon the ivory seat
Sat one who donned the heart-delighting crown.
The third night came; I made me haste to sleep,
And dreamed that I beheld a goodly kerchief
Whereat four men tugged till their cheeks turned blue
With pulling, yet the kerchief was not rent,
Nor were the men fordone. Upon the fourth night
I saw, illustrious sage! a man athirst
Beside a stream. O'er him a fish kept pouring
The water, yet his droughty head was dry
Although the water followed as he moved!

How read'st thou this, good friend? Upon the fifth night
My mind dreamed of a city by the water.
The citizens though blind seemed none the worse,
For thou hadst said: 'The whole place is afire
With liberality and trafficking!'
Upon the sixth night, honoured lord! I saw
A city, all whose citizens were sick,
And went to question those in health, who first,
Preventing them, inquired: 'How came ye thus
With body aching and with heart o'ercharged?'
And then the sick, whose soul had reached their lips, C. 1292
Sought of the healthy for a remedy.
When half the seventh night had passed I saw
A horse that grazed at will upon the plain;
It had two fore, two hind, feet, and two heads,
And cropped the grass off quickly with its teeth.
It grazed on both sides with its double mouth,
And yet its body was without a vent!
I saw upon the eighth night, holy man!
Three vases on the ground set all a-row,
Two filled with water but the central empty,
And dry for many a year. Two worthies tried
To fill it from the others whose contents
Were minished not by pouring while the dry
Remained with lip unmoistened. On the ninth night
I dreamed that I beheld a cow reposing
'Mid grass and water in the sun. A calf,
Small, gaunt, and wizened, with lack-lustre face,
Was standing just before her, and she sucked it!
The cow was lusty and the calf was weak.
If thou wilt lend thine ear to my tenth dream
Thou wilt not grow aweary ere I end.
Upon a spacious plain I saw a spring
With streams and dykes about it. All the champaign
Was watered yet the fountain-head was dry.
I prithee answer and reveal the future."

Mihrán, when he had heard this thing from Kaid,
Said: "Be not sick at heart about this dream;
Thy fame shall fail not, ill not reach this realm.
Sikandar will lead forth a mighty host,
The chosen chieftains of Írán and Rúm,
And, if thou wouldst still rule, consort with wisdom,
And fight him not. Four things thou hast whose equals
None, great or small, e'er saw. One is thy daughter,
Like Paradise above, through whom thy crown
Is bright on earth; the next thy privy sage,
Who telleth thee the secrets of the world;
The third thy worthy leech, most famed of doctors;
The fourth a cup wherein, if thou pour water,
That water will not heat for sun or fire,
No drinking minish it. These will defeat
All his endeavours, for when he shall come
Confide in these, and not in war, if thou
Wouldst have him gone betimes. Thou canst not face
His troops, his strategy, his realm, and treasure.
As wisely I advise thee so will I
Interpret these thy dreams. Thou didst behold
C. 1293 A dwelling and strait aperture wherethrough
Passed elephant but left its trunk behind.
Now hear the rede of the interpreter.
Know that this dwelling imageth the world,
The elephant a thankless king, unjust,
False in his words, and royal but in name,
A man of mean heart and of feeble body,
Keen in his greed and gloomy in his soul.
At length, when he shall pass away, his name
Abideth in dishonour in the end.
Thy second dream concerning crown and throne,
Which one man voided and another gained,
Illustrateth that this inconstant world
Removeth one and speedeth up another.

As for thy third dream of that goodly kerchief,
Clutched by four righteous men yet never rent
Though they that tugged thereat were never weary:
Hereafter there will come a man renowned
Forth from the desert of spear-wielding horsemen,
A holy, virtuous man by whom the Faith
Of God will come to be four-square, and, know,
'Tis imaged by that kerchief, while the four
That tug thereat tug in safe-guarding it.
One Faith is the Dihkán's who worshippeth
The Fire, and taketh not the sacred twigs
Save with a muttered prayer.[1] Another one
Is that of Moses, which thou call'st the Jew's,
Who saith: 'None other should be praised'; another
That of Yúnán,[2] a good Faith making just
The great king's[3] heart; and, fourth, the Arabian,
Pure and exalting from the dust the prudent.
Four parties thus assuming to be guardians
Tug at the kerchief in their several ways,
And, as they pull against each other thus,
Antagonize for their religion's sake.
Then, fourthly, for the droughty man who shunned
Sweet water which a fish threw after him:
A time will come when holy men will be,
Just like that fish, despised as having drunk
Of wisdom's stream; but evil-doers' heads
Will be exalted to the Pleiades.
When one shall call the thirsty to the water
None wisely will respond, but all will shun
The wisdom-seeker and combine to curse him.
In thy fifth dream thou sawest a busy city.
The burghers spent their lives in feasting, largess,
And trafficking, but 'Fortune,' thou hadst said,

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 80, 81 *s.v. Dihkán*, *Báj*, and *Barsam*.
[2] *I.e.* Javan, the son of Japheth and the progenitor of the Greeks.
[3] Sikandar.

'Had sewn their eyes up so that none could see
C. 1294 Another.' This referreth to a time
When wise men will be slaves to ignorant,
Who will despise the erudite and these,
Their tree of wisdom fruiting not for them,
Will laud, and openly commend, the witless,
Though conscious of their own hypocrisy,
And that such service is inglorious.
As for the sixth dream, when the ailing sick
All went to question those in health: a time
Will come wherein the wretched mendicant
Will be misprizèd in the rich man's eyes,
And turn in his resourcelessness to any
Possessed of goods, who will not give him aught,
So that he will become a wageless servant,
Or else a slave without the purchasing.
As for the ventless and two-headed steed
Of thy seventh dream: a time will come when men
Will joy in wealth and never have enough.
The beggar, student, and celebrity
Will get no share from them, for they will think
Of no one save themselves and help not any.
As to thine eighth dream of two vases brimming,
And one left wholly void, two vases filled
With lucid water, and the middle one
All dry and moistureless: a time will come
Wherein the poor will grow so weak and wretched
That, though the clouds of springtide, charged with showers,
Shall hide the sunshine from the mendicant,
Those very showers not e'en then will descend
On him, and he will be heart-stricken. The rich
Will lavish gifts among themselves and bandy
Their honied compliments while beggars go
With droughty lips and so pass day to night.
As for the ninth wherein a lusty cow

Sucked its lean calf: when Saturn entereth Libra
The world will be beneath the strong arm, poor
And sick fare ill, and yet the well-to-do
Will still exact from them, will never open
Their own hoards, nor abate the others' travail.
In thy tenth dream thou sawest a fountain dry,
With waters all about it savouring musk,
Yet no clear stream of water bubbled forth,
And sped to mingle with those other waters.[1]
A time is coming when the world will have
A king that is devoid of understanding,
A king whose dark soul will be full of dudgeon,
The whole world gloom beneath his tyranny,
And never good be found among his treasures.
He ever will be gathering fresh hosts C. 1295
To win his crown new fame, but in the end
This monarch and his hosts will pass away,
And there will be a change of dynasty.
But our time is the epoch of Sikandar,
Who is the crown upon the heads of nobles.
Upon his coming give him these four things;[2]
Methinketh not that he will ask for more,
But, when thou dost content him, pass thee by,
For he is diligent to learn and wise."
Kaid, having heard the matter from Mihrán,
Regained the vigour of his former years,
Came, kissed the sage's head and eyes, and went
His ways triumphant, happy, and content.

[1] Perhaps this may mean: "I have patrons among the nobles but Mahmúd is obdurate." *Cf.* what follows and Vol. i. p. 33.

[2] *I.e.* the Four Wonders. *Cf.* p. 94.

§ 6

How Sikandar marched against Kaid of Hind and wrote a Letter to him

Now when Sikandar had surveyed Írán,
And knew that crown and throne were his, he led
His host toward Kaid of Hind and, road or none,
Pursued his march, while as he went along
The people of the cities on his way
Unbarred their gates to him. In all that coast
He found none worthy to be called a man,
And raised his helm o'er Venus. On approaching
The mighty city, named by valiant Kaid
Mílád, they called a scribe and seated him
Before Sikandar who, like lion lusting
For quarry, wrote to Kaid: "This from Sikandar
The mighty and victorious, the lord
Of scimitar, of crown, and belt."
The letter
Began with praises of the man that laveth
His heart with knowledge, "for in his desire
To eat the fruitage of his toils he chooseth
The easiest course, adoreth holy God,
And trusteth, feareth, reverenceth Him,
While knowing that we top the throne and are
The Shadow of the all-conquering Lord. Now I
Have written thee a letter to enlighten
Thy darkling mind; so when thy scribe shall read it
Lay it not out before thee and consider,
But, if it come by night, wait not for day,
And do my will forthwith. If thou shalt slight
My words so will not I, but trample down
Beneath my feet thy throne and head and crown."

§ 7

How Kaid of Hind answered Sikandar's Letter and announced the Sending of the Four Wonders

Now when this letter came to Kaid of Hind C. 1296
He interviewed the great king's envoy, praised
And favoured him exceedingly, assigned him
In courtesy a seat upon the throne,
And said: "I joy to do the Sháh's behest,
And alway will be true to him; but still
That one so great as I am should set forward
So quickly and unreadily would please not
The Maker and the monarch of the earth."
Then calling for a scribe, for pen of Chín,
And silk of Hind, he wrote at once an answer,
And decked it like the garth of Paradise.
He gave, first, praises to the Omnipotent,
The Lord of victory and time, the Lord
Both generous and just, the Lord of manhood,
Of sense and prowess; then: "The good man's head
Will turn not from the great, illustrious king,
Nor are we well advised in keeping aught
From him who hath the army, crown, and sword.
Four things have I that none else in the world
E'er hath possessed in public or in private,
And after me none will possess the like.
These, if the Sháh shall bid me, I will send
To give new vigour to his heart and rule,
And afterward, if he commandeth me,
Will come and slave-like do him fealty."

§ 8

How Sikandar sent back the Messenger to receive the Four Wonders

The envoy came as swiftly as the wind,
Told all that he had heard, and gave the letter.
Sikandar said to him: "Go to, return
To that famed man, and say: 'What things are these
That none e'er had in public or in private,
For we ourselves have seen whatever is,
And heaven will not create afresh?'"
The envoy
Went from the presence, journeyed swift as fire,
C. 1297 And said to Kaid: "The Sháh is fain to know
What things they are that no one else possesseth,
For seeing is believing."
When he heard,
Kaid cleared the court and sat with his advisers
In council, set the envoy in his presence,
And courteously entreated him, then said:—
"I have within my bower a daughter such
That if the sun on high should gaze on her
'Twould gloom contrasted with my darling's face.
Her locks are lassos of one hue with pitch,
Milk savoureth on her lips, a cypress-stem
Is crooked to her, she scattereth pearls in speech,
Her looks and countenance make wisdom fly,
Yet 'tis the food of her discourse. When silent
She is the soul of modesty, and none
Hath seen her peer in this age. Sprung from chiefs,
And pious, she is chaste of heart and modest.
I have a cup which thou mayst fill with wine,
Or pour therein cold water, and although
Thou sat'st with boon-companions for ten years

The wine would fail not; whether wine or water
The cup affordeth thee, the marvel is:
No drinking draineth it. My third possession
Is this: a youthful leech who diagnoseth
Disease by making a uroscopy.
So long as he is at the court the Sháh
Will never ail; and, fourthly, I possess,
Though privily, a sage who will foretell
The Sháh all that will chance from circling sun
And shining moon."
The noble messenger
Withdrew, made wind his mate, came and informed
Sikandar, and the heart of the world-king
Bloomed like a rose. He said: "If what is spoken
Be true could this world purchase all the four?
Kaid will illume my dark soul if he send them.
His country 'neath my feet I will not tread,
But with this good will hie me home instead."

§ 9

How Sikandar sent Ten[1] *Sages with a Letter to inspect the Four Wonders of Kaid of Hind*

The Sháh made choice of Rúmans learnèd, wise,
And well disposed, then wrote a letter all
Excuse and perfume, colour and device:—
"Ten trusty chiefs of mine, world-veteran, C. 1298
And in my confidence, wise men and modest,
Endowed with Grace and counsel, shrewd observers,
Learned and directing, lo! I have dispatched thee:
They will not deviate from thy shrewd counsels.
Exhibit those four wonders unto them,
And suffer them to stay with thee awhile.
When I receive the letter of mine ancients,
Those men expert and erudite, to say:—

[1] Nine in P.

'The four things—those whose like none e'er beheld—
Have passed before our eyes,' I will indite
A patent drawn on silk to this effect:—
'Kaid, while he liveth, is the king of Hind.'"

So those ten Rúman sages left Sikandar,
And sped to Kaid who, when he saw those chiefs,
Had much to ask of them and heard their answers,
Received them graciously and lodged them featly.

Next day, when heaven grew pallid and the sun
Drew forth its sword of battle, they adorned,
Although the moon requireth no adornment,
The monarch's daughter, and within the palace
Set up, and decked with ornaments of Chín,
A golden throne whereon she sat sun-faced,
Outshining Venus in the sky. The sages,
Those ancient men, fair-spoken and observant,
Drew near. The monarch sent them to the bride,
As bade Sikandar, son of Failakús.
The ancients, seeing the king's daughter's face
Illumining the palace, crown, and throne,
Were lost in wonder and astonishment;
Feet failed them at the sight. They stood stock-still,
Their tongues all busied with the praise of God,
Unable to withdraw or look elsewhere,
Till one arrived to call them, since they lingered,
Before the king, who said: "Why such delay?
The owner of that face is but a human,
Endowed with goodliness by every star."

A Rúman answered: "None, O king! beholdeth
A picture like her in his halls; so now
We each of us will send the Sháh a letter
Describing somewhat of the lady's charms."

They all sat down with paper, ink, and pens.
Each wrote what he had noted, covering all
The paper with his words; then from [1] Mílád

[1] Reading with P.

They sent in haste a horseman to Sikandar,
Who marvelled as he read, for every sage C. 1299
Had written some description of the lady.
He wrote to them and said: "Ye have done well,
Ye ancients! ye have looked on Paradise.
Return with those four things and ask naught else.
When ye have given the patent unto Kaid
Make ready for the way and load the beasts.
No man henceforth shall do him injury,
For I have found him just, and that sufficeth."
The envoy quitted that green country-side,
And to those Rúman ancients' presence hied.

§ 10

How the Ten Sages brought the Daughter, the Cup, the Leech, and the Sage, from Kaid of Hind to Sikandar

Now when those sages heard their Sháh's reply,
Brought by the toilful cavalier, they went
Forth from their palace and approached king Kaid,
And his famed court. The king of Hindústán,
When he had read the answer to his letter—
The message of the imperious world-aspirant—
Joyed to be free from trouble with Sikandar,
And chose withal a hundred men of Hind
Of honied tongue and eloquent, unlocked
Hoards not by him amassed, and chose therefrom
Crown, throne, and armlet, and of gems withal,
And raiment in the piece, all that was best.
They brought three hundred camel-loads of raiment,
And royal jewelry; ten of dínárs,
And five score all of drachms; there was withal
A splendid litter of green aloe-wood,
Inlaid with gold and gems. Kaid placed gold thrones
Upon ten elephants and on another,

More splendidly caparisoned, the Beauty,
Who was escorted by the sage and leech,
And showered tears of blood. A magnate bare
The cup, whose wine made all the chiefs bemused.
When that Moon reached the royal women's house
There was a crown of black musk on her head;
She had let fall her tresses o'er her cheeks,
Like mail o'er cercis-blossom, and appeared
A slender cypress 'neath the full orbed moon.
C. 1300 To gaze was perilous. Her eyes were like
To twin narcissi grown in Paradise.
Thou wouldst have said: "She is compact of charms."
Sikandar gazed upon her stately form,
Her hair, her face, and all from head to foot,
And said: "Behold the Lustre of the world!"
While privily invoking benisons
Upon the All-just, the Maker of the sky,
Who had created such a form and face.
He gave command, and all the men of lore,
And understanding, in the host of Rúm
Sat by while he demanded her in marriage,
The which he solemnised with Christian rites,
And showered dínárs upon her from above
Out of his hoards till scarcely she could move.

§ 11

How Sikandar tested the Sage, the Leech, and the Cup sent by Kaid of Hind

The matter of the Cypress-tree [1] achieved,
And an abode fit for her rank prepared,
The Sháh was free to find out how the sage

[1] The daughter of Kaid.

Would come off in a strife of wits, and so
He sent a large bowl all abrim with ghee
To that redoubtable philosopher,
And said: "Anoint thy limbs herewith, loins, waist,
Breast, back, and neck withal, repose thyself
Till thou hast shaken off thy weariness,
Then fill for me my mind and brain with knowledge."
The sage, when he beheld the ghee, observed:—
"This should not prove a mystery to me!"
He placed a thousand needles in the bowl,
And then returned it to the sovereign,
Who, when he saw them, summoned privily
A smith and bade him melt them to an ingot,
And fashion out of it a disk. Sikandar
Dispatched this to the sage who furbished it,
And sent back in the place of that dull iron
A mirror free from rust and luminous.
They took this to Sikandar in the night,
Who, saying naught, exposed it to the wet
Till it grew dark and dull; then he returned it,
And thus prolonged the riddle of the iron.
The sage refurbished it to brilliancy,
And sent it back forthwith, but first applied
That which would prove preservative from damp.
Sikandar, seeing, called to him the sage
And, greetings done, assigned to him a seat
Below the throne, then spake about the bowl
Of ghee to further test that famed man's wit,
Who said: "Ghee will not penetrate the frame. C. 1301
Thou said'st: 'I pass the sages of the state
In knowledge.' I replied: 'O mighty Sháh!
A man that is both wise of heart and pure
Will like a needle pierce both feet and bones,
Or e'en a stone if one is in the way.'
I said in fact to thee: 'My goodly speech,
My heart and soul and prudent purposes

Make use of words still finer than a hair,
And thou hast not a heart more dense than iron.'
Thy answer to me was: 'In bygone years
My heart grew rusty in the midst of bloodshed.
How shall the gloom depart, for why should I
Continue thus distraught?' I answered thee:—
'I will refurbish by celestial wisdom
Thy heart if it becometh malcontent,
And when it shineth with a brilliant lustre
How shall it rust again?'"
His goodly words
Found favour with the Sháh whose heart grew keener
By dint of the procedure of the sage.
He ordered that the treasurer should bring
A robe, gold, silver, and a vase of gems.
These they presented to the sage who said:—
"I have a privy jewel of mine own,
Which is both brighter and immune from foes,
And not, like wealth, the mate of Áhriman.
I need not hire a watchman for the night,
And when I go abroad I fear no thieves,
Since in the night-time knowledge is my warden,
And wisdom my soul's crown when it is waking,[1]
For wisdom, knowledge, right, are necessaries
Since error knocketh at the door of loss.
The Sháh will see that I have food and raiment
Enough for public and for private uses;
Why should I joy in superfluities,
And have to safeguard all this wealth? Command
To carry back these havings, and may wisdom
Direct thy soul."
Sikandar mused at him,
And turned the matter o'er, then said: "The Lord
Of sun and moon will find me not in fault
In future since I have thy counsel, rede,

[1] Order of couplets as in P.

And useful talk."
He bade the leech approach
That judged diseases by uroscopy,
And asked: "Who is the greatest sufferer
Whose pangs compel our tears?"
The leech replied:—
"The glutton, one without restraint at table.
Excessive food conduceth not to health,
And great is he who maketh health his aim.
Now will I gather herbs from every side,
And will exhibit unto thee a medicine,
One that will keep thee sound; no need to purge; C. 1302
Thine appetites will greaten too, and when
Thou eatest much it will not injure thee.
Heed thou my skilled advice, then blood and brain
Will wax in thee, thou wilt grow strong of frame,
Thy heart will be as blithe as jocund spring.
'Twill bring back colour to thy face and make
Thy judgment sound in all, thy flowing locks
Shall turn not grey, not soon shalt thou despond."
Sikandar said: "I have not seen or heard
Of any king thus favoured, but if thou
Produce this noble potion thou wilt be
My guide to good, and I with mine own soul
Will purchase thee. The malice of thy foes
Shall harm thee not."
Sikandar got prepared
A robe of honour and fair gifts for him,
And made him chief among the learned physicians.
That suasive leech departed to the mountains
Without attendants. With his ample knowledge
He could distinguish bane and antidote,
And, having gathered many mountain-herbs,
And put the worthless by, chose such as were
Medicinal, and out of these compounded
The needed potion. With these mountain-simples

He purged the Sháh and kept him sound and whole,
So that for nights he slept not but enjoyed
Society, affected much the Fair,
And sought their soft embraces till he ailed,
Because he tendered not himself, and so
One day the leech came, by uroscopy
Detected signs of decadence, and told him:—
"Youths surely age by intercourse with women:
Methinketh that for three nights thou hast slept not;
Speak unto me and give me a reply."
Howbeit Sikandar answered: "I am well:
None of the ills of life is troubling me."
Yet still the approven leech of Hindústán
Would not admit the matter to be so,
But sought that night among his books, and mixed
A medicine against that decadence.
That night Sikandar had no lovely mate.
The leech, when morning came, found him alone,
And, having ended the uroscopy,
Flung down the potion, sat in high delight,
And, taking in his hand a goblet, bade
The board be spread and wine and minstrels ordered.
C. 1303 The Sháh inquired: "Why hast thou poured away
The draught that thou hadst mixed so carefully?"
He said: "Last night the world-lord sought no mate
But slept alone, and when thou sleepest thus
Thou needest, sire! no draught."
Sikandar smiled,
Delighted with the leech, to whom he said:—
"Ne'er may this world lack Hind, for thou wouldst say
That all the leeches and astrologers
Flock thither."
Calling for a purse of gold,
And for a sable steed whose reins were hung
With golden balls, he gave that skilled leech both,
And said: "Be honest rede thy tongue's companion."

Then bade he, and they brought the golden goblet
Brimmed with cold water. All folk drank thereof
From morn till bed-time as in revelry,
But all the drinking did not minish it.
Then to the sage the Sháh said: "Kaid hath not
His equal in the world, and from this time
No longer shall we speak of Hindústán,
But Jádústán,[1] as being Kaid's abode.
The people are no more than other folk
In looks but wonderful in tricks and magic!"
Then said the Sháh to that philosopher:—
"This knowledge must not be concealed from us:
How is the water in the cup renewed?
Is it the stars or Indian jugglery?"
"Despise not, sire! the cup," the sage replied,
"For they were many years in making it,
And labours underwent in that behoof.
From all the provinces the astrologers,
Where'er there was a master known to fame,
Assisted Kaid, when fashioning the cup,
Both day and night, and passed full many a day
In noting all the aspects of the stars.
Take thou the loadstone, that wherewith a man
Attracteth iron, as an illustration.
This cup by innate force attracteth water,
Receiving fresh additions from the sky.
It catcheth water to replace the waste
Too quickly for man's eyes to follow it."
The Sháh, on hearing that wise man's discourse,
Approved thereof; he thought the words of profit.
Thus said he to the elders of Mílád:—
"I will observe the compact made with Kaid
In honour while I live, for he is one
Before whose presence other folk should stand.
Since I have gotten from him four such things

[1] Sorcerer-land.

We will not ask for more."

Now afterward
Sikandar set the goods that he possessed,
With all the treasures that he had amassed,
C. 1304 And therewithal a hundred jewelled crowns,
Upon two hundred carriers and stored
All, with dínárs and jewels in the rough,
Upon a mountain. When they vanished there
None saw again what was reposited;
From that time forward no one e'er beheld
That treasure and the men that hoarded it.
Sikandar only knew where, hid from sight,
Were laid those treasures on the mountain-height.[1]

§ 12

How Sikandar led a Host against Fúr of Hind and wrote a Letter to him

Sikandar swift as wind marched from Mílád,
Abandoning his treasures, reached Kannúj
And, having led his army near to Fúr,
Bade write to him a harsh and hostile letter
As from Sikandar, king of kings, the son
Of Failakús, the illuminer of knowledge,
Of weal and woe, to Fúr, the king of Hind,
High-starred, and chief of Sind.

First praised he God,
Who hath been and will be for ever. Then:—
"With one whom He hath made victorious
Realm, crown, and throne will last, whom He despiseth
Will be still wretched, and the sun on high
Will shine not on him. Surely thou hast heard
What in this darksome earth all holy God
Hath given to us of victory and fortune,

[1] Sikandar's method of hiding his treasures bears a suspicious resemblance to that of Captains Kidd and Flint.

Grace, diadem, and throne of king of kings,
But not for long: our day will pass; another
Will come and be partaker of these fruits,
And so I strive to leave an honoured name
In this small circle compassed by the Moon.
When they deliver this possess thy soul,
Thine unenlightened soul, with what is right,
Exchange thy throne of greatness for thy steed,
Advise not with the priests, thy counsellors,
But ask immunity from us, and practise
No craft because the crafty labour long.
If, in thy pride and thine audacity,
Thou wilt not do my bidding thou shalt rue
Thy dallying when with my cavaliers
I come to fight with thee."
When thus these words
Had been indited, and the scribe had done,
They sealed the letter with Sikandar's signet,
And for the journey chose a prudent envoy,
Who reached the court of Fúr and held discourse
At whiles of strife, at whiles of feast and revel.
They summoned to the king that man discreet,
And by the throne appointed him a seat.

§ 13

How Fúr answered the Letter of Sikandar

Bold Fúr, when he had read the letter, raged C. 1305
Against that famous magnate and forthwith
Wrote fiercely in reply, and set a tree
Within the garth of vengeance. He began:—
" 'Tis ours to fear and reverence holy God.
We will not speak so many empty words;
The boaster is a man without resource.
Art thou so shameless as to summon me?

Is wisdom to thy mind so light a thing?
If Failakús on this wise wrote to Fúr
Do thou begin too and provoke a quarrel!
But 'tis Dárá who thus hath heartened thee,
Because of him revolving heaven was weary,
And when good fortune goeth from a race
They heed not the advice of counsellors.
Thy strife with Kaid was but a merry-make;
Thou thinkest kings thy prey. No such address
Or words proceeded from the ancient Kaians.
Fúr am I and the son of Fúr. We take
No thought of Cæsars. When Dárá asked help,
And I perceived his heart and fortune failing,
I sent him mighty elephants and gave him
Words of encouragement. When he was slain
By that slave's hand the Íránians' fortunes fell,
And when earth's face was franchised from Dárá
That trenchant bane became thine antidote.
Why lose thy head because bad ministers
Ill-treated him? Talk not of war so proudly,
Because with me it is another story.
Thou shalt behold my mighty elephants
And host, which bar the wind, confronting thee.
Thy whole aim is supremacy, thy nature
One rust with Áhriman. Do not thou sow
The seed of harshness in the world, but be
In fear of misadventure and the ills
Of fortune. In this letter 'twas my part
To seek thy welfare and instruct thy heart."

§ 14

How Sikandar arrayed his Host to fight with Fúr of Hind and made iron Steeds and Riders filled with Naphtha

C. 1306 Forthwith Sikandar, when Fúr's answer reached him,
Chose from the host chiefs fit and enterprising,

Young but mature in wisdom, and led forth
To war against that Indian such an army
That all the earth seemed sea, and thou hadst said:—
"Sikandar is sole monarch in the world."
But all those mountains, seas, and rugged paths
Quenched in the soldiers' hearts the flame of war
The troops were all aweary of a march
By roads so grievous, steep, and profitless.
Once at a stage they gathered round the Sháh
And said: "O Cæsar and the lord of Chín!
Earth is not able to sustain thy host.
Not Fúr of Hind, not the Faghfúr himself,
Or king of Sind, will seek to fight with thee.
Why must thou bring disaster on thy troops
By this vile country and by such a road?
We see no sound steed left whereon to fight
With vigour, and if e'er the troops turn back
From warfare neither horse nor foot will find
The way. When we have triumphed hitherto
It hath been o'er an army of our foes,
But now we are opposed by seas and mountains,
And none of us is weary of his life.
Convert not all our glory into shame;
None hath made war with water and with rocks."
The words displeased Sikandar, and in wrath
He frustrated their scheme. "Such words," thus said he,
"Befit but mutineers. What time I marched
From Rúm Íránward we beheld all garden
And settlement, our Rúman slain reached not
A hundred, and our costs were small. Írán
Is yours. What better could ye ask of God?
Ill came upon Dárá from his own slaves;
No one of you hath seen one weak or wounded!
I will proceed without you and set foot
Upon the Dragon's heart. Come what come may

Of fight and feast henceforth ye shall behold me
Abandon not for good my task with Fúr.
What time I quit him I will march to Rúm,
And by my valour overcome the land.
C. 1307 With God to aid me, and Íránian troops,
I ask not I a Rúman to befriend me."

On seeing that their words enraged the Sháh
The troops sought to excuse themselves, and said:—
"We all are Cæsar's slaves, we only walk
The earth to do his hest, will strive, and when
Our horses fail will foot it to the field
Of strife. Though foes make earth sea with our blood,
And valleys into mountains with our fallen,
None in the day of fight shall see our backs
Though sea and mountain-crag contend with us.
We all are slaves, and it is thine to bid:
In thy calamities our lives are thine."

Sikandar, hearing this, prepared fresh strife,
And chose a hundred thousand of Írán,
Equipped for war. Behind were Rúman captains,
All clad in mail, and stalwart warriors.
Thus forty thousand veteran cavaliers
Marched in support of the Íránians.
Succeeding these came mounted men world-taking,
And falchion-brandishers, from Misr. Then Cæsar
Chose from the men of Rúm, Misr, and Barbar
Twelve thousand cavaliers efficient, martial,
For battle eager all and all renowned,
So that with this array supporting him
The dales and plains seemed heights! He took withal
Of readers of the stars and priests three score—
Wise men well known to fame and veteran—
To choose the days for battle.

When Fúr heard:—
"A host hath come" he picked his battle-field,
And all his troops assembled on the plain;

The earth was mountain-like with elephants.
The army stretched four miles with troops behind
And elephants in front.
Now spies arrived
From Hind before the world-lord and informed him
At large of how the elephant contendeth
In warfare: "It will rout two miles of horse.
No cavalier will dare to face that beast,
Or, if he did so, ever come again,
Because its trunk is higher than the air,
And Saturn is its helper in the sky."
They drew a picture of an elephant,
And showed it to Sikandar who commanded
That the philosophers of Rúm should model
One out of wax for him, and then inquired:—
"Who can propound a scheme to cope with such?"
The sages held a session and devised
A plan in all its details. Then the Sháh
Assembled all the master-smiths of Rúm, C. 1308
Of Misr, and Párs, twelve hundred men in sum,
Who made a horse, with saddle and with rider
Complete, of iron, fastening the joints
With bolts and rivets. Horse and man were furbished.
They charged it with black naphtha, and then ran it
On wheels before the troops. At sight thereof
Sikandar was well pleased for, being wise,
He felt the gain thereof, and bade to make
A thousand such and more: who e'er beheld
On chargers dappled, chestnut, black, and grey
An iron host? The matter took the month,
And then the workmen rested from their labours.
Thus led they forth on wheels an iron host
That of all things resembled horsemen most.

§ 15

How the Host of Sikandar fought with the Host of Fúr, how Fúr was slain by Sikandar, and how Sikandar seated Sawurg upon the Throne of Fúr

Now when Sikandar was approaching Fúr,
And from afar one host beheld the other,
On both sides rose the shout and dust of battle,
And eager for the fray the warriors
Advanced. They lit the naphtha in the steeds:
Fúr's troops were in dismay. The naphtha blazed:
Fúr's troops recoiled because those steeds were iron,
Whereat the elephants, when their own trunks
Were scorched, fled likewise, and their drivers marvelled.
Thus all the Indian host and all those huge,
High-crested elephants were put to flight.
Sikandar like a raging blast pursued
The foe until the air turned indigo,
And opportunity for fight was over.
The monarch with the Rúmans in full force
Dismounted 'twixt two mountains and sent scouts
On all the roads to guard his host from foes.
Now when the ingot of the sun's crown showed,
And all the world became as 'twere white crystal,
There rose a blare of trumpets and the sound
Of fife, of cornpipe, and of kettledrum.
Both hosts made ready for the fray and raised
Their spear-heads to the clouds. Sikandar came
C. 1309 Between the lines, with Rúman sword in hand,
And sent a cavalier to cry from far
To Fúr: "Sikandar hath come forth and seeketh
An interview with thee. He is prepared
To name his own conditions and hear thine,
And if thy terms are just he is amene."
When Fúr, the Indian, heard the herald's words

He rushed forth from the centre of his troops.
Sikandar said to him: "O noble man!
Our two hosts have been shattered by the fight,
The wild beasts batten on the brains of men,
The horses' hoofs are trampling on their bones.
Now both of us are heroes brave and young,
Both paladins of eloquence and brain,
Why then should slaughter be the soldiers' lot,
Or bare survival after combating?
Let us two arm ourselves and fight it out
Since one of us must needs obtain the realm.
When one of us hath proved victorious,
The troops, the crown, and throne all will be his."
Fúr joyfully agreed to fight Sikandar,
For well he knew that he had lion-strength,
And rode a charger dragon-like, whereas
Sikandar was a reed-like cavalier,
Armed lightly and ill-mounted, so he said:—
"Agreed: we will engage in single combat."
Both took their swords and wheeled between the lines,
But when Sikandar realised the bulk
Of that mad Elephant, who rode a Mountain
And grasped a Dragon, he grew dazed in fight,
Despaired of life at heart and kept his distance,
Till, as he wheeled with Fúr upon the field,
A mighty shout arose behind the host,
Which filled Fúr's heart with dudgeon and distracted
His heart and eyes and ears. Then like a blast
Sikandar issued from the dust and smote
The hero with his sword, clove crest, head, neck,
And from the steed the body sank to earth.
The Rúman army raised its head to heaven,
The warriors charged. Now Fúr possessed a drum
Of lion-skin whose sound rose o'er the clouds.
That drum's din and the trumpets' blare arose,
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony,

While by that token those brave troops of Hind
Advanced to face their foes, but from the plain
Was proclamation made: "Ye righteous men,
The chiefest of the realm of Hindústán!
The head of Indian Fúr is in the dust,
His elephantine form is cloven asunder.
C. 1310 What is the purpose of this present struggle,
Such strife of scimitars, and such reluctance?
What Fúr was to you is Sikandar now,
And ye must look to him in fight and feast."
The warriors of Hindústán assented;
They went and saw Fúr's head all dust and blood,
His body hacked up by the scimitar.
A bitter cry ascended from his troops,
Who dropped their weapons and went grieved and wailing
To Cæsar, dust upon their heads. Sikandar
Restored the weapons of the warriors,
Addressed them with all courtesy, and said:—
"Though Fúr of Hind is dead ye need not yield
Your hearts to grief because I will entreat you
More graciously than he did, I will banish
Both fear and anguish from them, and will give
In largess all his treasures. To my troops
These are forbidden. I will make the folk
Of Hind all wealthy and administer
The crown and throne with vigour."
Thence he mounted
With mingled feelings to the throne of Fúr.
So is it with this Hostel by the way!
It never is content to let thee stay.
Enjoy, leave naught for other folks to take;
Why shouldst thou labour for another's sake?
For two months Cæsar filled the throne and lavished
Fúr's whole wealth on his troops. There was a man
Of parts, Sawurg by name, a mighty chief

Of Hindústán; to him Sikandar gave
The throne of kingship. "Never hoard dínárs,"
He said. "Give and enjoy whate'er thou gettest,
Not glorying in the fleeting crown and throne,
For whiles it is Sikandar and whiles Fúr,
Whiles pain and wrath, whiles feast and banqueting."
Bestowing as a present on his host
Drachms and dínárs he ordered all that coast.

§ 16

How Sikandar went on a Pilgrimage to the House of the Kaaba

Now in a little while, when all the troops
Were satiate of wealth, a sudden impulse
Came on Sikandar, and he greatly longed
To journey to the Kaaba. So at dawn
The drum-roll rose,[1] the air grew like the eye
Of chanticleer, while all the mass of spears,
And silken pennons, formed a canopy
Of yellow, red, and violet.[2] Sikandar
Departed with his diadem and treasures C. 1311
To look upon the house of Ibráhím,
Who bare no little toil to build that shrine,
Which God hath named Baitu'l Harám, and there
Thou hast His perfect Way who calleth it,
By reason of its purity, His house,
And thither summoneth His worshippers,
Though needing not the world, or any place,
Or food, enjoyment, rest, or blandishment;
But still, since place had being, that hath been
A place of worship—God's memorial.
Sikandar then drew near to Kádisí,
World-conquering up to Jahram of Párs.

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Couplet omitted.

When news of him reached Nasr, son of Katíb,
Who was the Grace and ornament of Mecca,
He went to meet the Sháh with warlike chiefs,
And valiant, spear-armed cavaliers. Meanwhile
From Mecca sped a horseman to Sikandar,
And said: "The famous chief now on his way,
But not in quest of treasure, crown, and host,
Is sprung from Ismá'íl, the prophet, son
Of Ibráhím, the favoured of the stars."

When Nasr arrived Sikandar welcomed him,
Assigning him an honourable rank.
Nasr, joying, told Sikandar of his race,
And of his secret purposes. He answered:—
"Good-hearted chieftain, speaker of the truth!
Who, next to thee, is greatest, most esteemed,
And honoured in the tribe?"

Nasr said: "O world-lord!
Khuzá' is master here. When Ismá'íl
Had passed away Kahtán, the monarch, came
With mighty hosts of swordsmen from the waste,
And seized the country of Yaman unjustly.
Of our race many guiltless folk were slain,
So that the day was over for our tribe.
Now this displeased the Maker of the world;
High Heaven frowned upon Kahtán; but when
He was reduced to dust Khuzá' appeared,
Unjust, audacious, and tyrannical;
All from Harám[1] up to Yaman is his,
His angle is within the sea of Misr.
He hath transgressed from justice and the way,
And hath no thought of goodness in his heart,
The world is in his clutch, the hearts of all
The race of Ismá'íl are full."

On hearing,
Sikandar slew such scions of Khuzá'

[1] Mecca and the Kaaba.

As he could find and scalped them, sparing none
Of friend or foe, delivering Hajáz,
And therewithal Yaman, from the oppressor
By policy and by his warrior-swordsmen,
And set up of the seed of Ismá'íl C. 1312
All that were worthy of supremacy.
He visited afoot Baitu'l Harám;
The seed of Ismá'íl rejoiced in him.
At every step of Cæsar's pilgrimage
His treasurer showered dínárs. The Sháh, when he
Returned and reached the throne, bestowed on Nasr
Dínárs and treasure while the mendicant,
And they that lived by toil, grew free from want.

§ 17

How Sikandar led his Troops from Judda toward Misr

He led his army thence with all dispatch,
And came to Judda. He abode not long,
But bade the soldiers build abundant ships
And transports, and departed with his host
For Misr. The monarch there was named Kabtún;
His troops exceeded all imagining.
On hearing that a conquering king had come
Forth from Harám vaingloriously, he went
To meet him with a numerous retinue,
Slaves, purses, crown, and throne. At sight of him
Sikandar joyed, and all his foemen's words
Proved wind. The Sháh abode a year in Misr
To rest himself and troops.
There was a lady,
The queen of Andalús, and she was wise,
Ambitious, bounteous, with a countless host,
Famed and victorious through her own deserts,
And named Kaidáfa. From her warriors

She chose a cavalier, a clever draughtsman,
And said; "Go to Sikandar, naming not
This country and ourselves, mark everything
Minutely—his appearance, stature, court;
Then make a full length picture of him, showing
His favour, face, and bearing."
When he heard
He mounted, girt him to perform her bidding,
And went in courier-wise from Andalús
To Misr to eminent Sikandar Cæsar,
Observed him both upon the throne and saddle,
Brought paper out and implements of Chín,
And, having limned him to the life, returned
With all dispatch. Kaidáfa, when she saw
Sikandar's likeness, grieved, concealed her feelings,
Sighed, and thus said: "By war and policy
This man will trample on the world, and brief
C. 1313 Will be their lives that come to fight with him!"
While for his part Sikandar asked Kabtún:—
"Who is Kaidáfa's peer on earth?"
"O king!"
He made reply, "she is unique. None knoweth
The number of her troops without at least
Much searching of the muster-roll. In treasure,
In matters courteous and of obligation,
In counsel and benevolence of speech,
Thou wilt behold not in the world her equal.
She hath a city that is built of stone;
A leopard could not wrest it from her grasp.
The ground it covereth is four leagues long,
And four leagues wide withal. If thou inquirest
About her treasure 'tis past measuring:
Her doings in the world are no new thing."

§ 18

Sikandar's Letter to Kaidáfa, Queen of Andalús, and her Answer

Sikandar, having heard that mindful man,
Bade come a scribe. They wrote on silk a letter:—
"This from Sikandar, who o'erthroweth lions
And taketh cities, unto wise Kaidáfa,
Whose name is eminent in majesty.
First, praise be to the Master of the sun,
Who lighteth up the moon and turning sphere,
The Lord that meteth justice out aright,
And granteth more than any one can ask. . . .
We have not sought thy throne by violence,
But have respected thine exalted state.
When they deliver unto thee this letter,
And light is thrown upon thy darkened counsels,
Thou wilt dispatch what we impose as tribute,
As knowing that thou canst not strive with us.
To act thus will be wise and provident;
It will be strength in thee and true religion;
Oppose and thou wilt see but change of fortune.
Draw thy conclusions from Dárá and Fúr;
Thou needest go no further for instruction."
Whenas the wind had dried the superscription
They sealed the letter with a seal of musk.
A cameleer sped to that famous queen,
Who marvelled at the letter as she read.
In answer, first, she poured her praises forth
"To that just Judge, the Maker of the earth,
Who raised the turning sky and set therein
The seat of good and ill. He made thee victor
O'er Fúr of Hind, Dárá, and chiefs of Sind.' C. 1314
Thy head hath been elated by success

Against those famous swordsmen; but dost thou
Rank me with them or think by conquering me
To wear my crown when I surpass them all
In Grace and greatness, troops and royal treasure?
Shall I obey a Cæsar, fear his threats,
And quail? A thousand thousand warriors
Are at my gate, and kings are in command
Of each contingent. Called I all my lieges
My land would not afford them room to camp,
While treasures wait my chiefs when they go forth
To war across our marches. What vain words
Thou speakest in thus crowing o'er Dárá!"
This 'neath her golden signet-ring she past,
Then sent a cameleer swift as a blast.

§ 19

How Sikandar led his Troops to Andalús and took the Hold of King Faryán

Sikandar, having read the queen's reply,
Let blow the brazen trumpets and set forth.
When he had been one month upon the road
He reached the marches of Kaidáfa's realm,
Where reigned a monarch who was named Faryán,
Possessed of treasure, troops, and puissance.
He had a city well supplied with arms;
No crane had seen the summit of its walls.
He gathered troops and garrisoned that hold,
And cavaliers patrolled the ramparts round.
Sikandar bade the bishops[1] bring their wains
And catapults, and in a sennight took
That lofty hold; his noble army entered,
As did Sikandar who forbade all bloodshed.
One of Kaidáfa's sons, the son-in-law

[1] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 305 and *note*.

Of king Faryán who had much joy in him,
Was there within. To him Faryán had given
A favourite daughter, and his crown had been
Exalted by the queen. The son-in-law
Was named Kaidrúsh and he was all in all
To king Faryán for whom the sky decreed
Death in the fight; his daughter and her spouse
Were taken by the hands of one Shahrgír.
Sikandar, knowing who the spouse was, thought:—
"What cure is there for this contingency?"
Bade his wazír to come and gave to him
Authority and crown and throne. This sage
Was named Naitkún, a counsellor, a man c. 1315
Of influence, to whom Sikandar said:—
"They will produce the wedded pair before thee,
And I will title thee Sikandar, son
Of Failakús. Assume the Kaian throne,
And, when I come before thee girt for service,
Bid some fierce deathsman to behead Kaidrúsh;
Then I will come to thee and intercede,
Exhibiting the lowliest submission;
Make thou the audience private and, when I
Am waxing urgent, grant me my request."
The minister was troubled, knowing not
What was the hidden purpose of the Sháh,
Who added: "We must keep this secret. Call me,
Like other envoys, talk much of Kaidáfa,
Send me right gladly with ten horse, and say:—
'Go to, take this, and bring an answer quickly.'
Dispatch Kaidrúsh with me and hide all from him.
Naitkún said: "I will do so and will practise
Deception at thy bidding."
When the sun
Had drawn its sword at dawn, and gloomy night
Had vanished in dismay, Naitkún assumed
The throne, but ill at ease, ashamed, and sorry;

Sikandar stood before the presence girded.
They shut the door and oped the path of guile.
Now when Shahrgír brought in Kaidáfa's son,
A captive weeping with his wife beside him,
And clinging to his hand in all her charms,
Naitkún spake hastily: "What man is this
Whose pains enforce such tears?"
"Be calm," replied
The youth, "because I am Kaidáfa's son,
Kaidrúsh. Save for this daughter of Faryán's
I have no spouse concealed behind my curtains.
I went to bring her home to cherish her
As mine own life, but now the lion-taker
Hath ta'en me prisoner. The stars have smitten
My soul, and shafts my body."
When Naitkún
Heard what the young man said he was distressed,
His heart grew full; howbeit he showed anger,
And then addressed the deathsman: "Earth must hide them.
Behead them with thine Indian scimitar—
The husband and his consort in their bonds."
Then came Sikandar, kissed the ground, and said:—
"O Sháh of Cæsar's race! if thou wilt spare
The blood of this young couple for my sake
My head will be exalted o'er the people.
Why in thy wrath behead the innocent,
For God will not approve thee?"
C. 1316 Shrewd Naitkún
Replied: "Thou hast preserved the blood of both."
Then added quickly: "Thou hast saved thy head,
Kaidrúsh! when thou hadst lost it! Now will I
Send him with thee to tell thy mother all.
If she shall send me tribute, it is well,
And none shall burst his skin on that account.
Tend well my worthy minister, for he

Will proffer unto her a fight or feast
With me. Repay him for his kindliness,
For good men's hearts are moved by gratitude,
And, when he hath the answer of the queen,
Dismiss him kindly on his homeward way."
Kaidrúsh replied: "My heart and eyes and ears
Are his. Oh! how shall I express myself?
I tender him as dearly as my life
Because I owe him that and world and wife."

§ 20

How Sikandar went as an Ambassador to Kaidáfa and was recognised by her

Sikandar chose ten Rúmans, men of name,
All confidants who would respect his secret,
And said to them: "While we are on our way
Call me Naitkún."
Kaidrúsh led on; Sikandar,
Put trust in him. The chieftains spurred like fire,
And reached a mountain where the rocks were crystal.
Upon it there were fruit-trees of all sorts,
And on the top they noticed grass in plenty.
They left this mountain and kept speeding on
Toward the country where Kaidáfa dwelt,
Who eagerly heard tidings of Kaidrúsh,
And went to meet him with a mighty host,
All men of name and favoured by the stars.
He, when he saw his mother, lighted down,
And did obeisance, but she bade him mount.
They rode, hand clasped in hand. Kaidrúsh described
All that he had gone through and paled in telling
His troubles in the city of Faryán,
Where he had lost crown, army, throne, and treasure.
The man that cometh with me," he proceeded,

"Preserved me and my consort from Sikandar,
Who else had given orders to behead me,
And burn my corpse in fire. Do what he wisheth
With right good will and thwart not his request."
C. 1317 Now when Kaidáfa heard her son's account
Her heart was overset by that affliction.
She summoned from the palace to her presence
The envoy, placed him in the nobles' seat,
Gave him much greeting and a kindly welcome,
Assigned to him a splendid residence,
And sent all kinds of provand, robes, and carpets.
He tarried there that night and at the dawn
Went to the court to offer his respects.
The attendants raised the curtain and allowed him
To enter through the portal on his steed.
When he beheld Kaidáfa on her throne
Of ivory, crowned with a crown of gems
And turquoise, and arrayed in robes of Chín
Inwrought with gold, the attendance of her servants,
Her face bright as the sun, her throne supported
By crystal feet, and o'er her robe a net
Of onyx of Yaman on golden thread,
Impleached with many a gem, and slaves, with torques
And earrings, standing in that rosary[1]
All arabesqued with gold, he stood astound,
Oft times invoking to himself God's name.
To Cæsar, gazing on that court, Írán
And Rúm seemed even as nothing, and he kissed
The ground like other courtiers in her presence.
Kaidáfa gazed on him, received him well,
Much questioned him, and made him sit. Now when
Bright Sol set, and the audience-time for strangers
Had passed, she gave command to deck the palace
And call attendants, and for harp and wine.
They ranged in one hall tables made of teak

[1] *I.e.* court.

With gold stars and designs in ivory,
Meats were provided past all reckoning,
Wine was brought forth and, when the eating ceased,
And gold and silver cups were handed round,
The company drank first Kaidáfa's health.
That noble queen gazed often at Sikandar
Amid the revel till at length she bade
The keeper of her treasures: "Bring to me
The lustrous silk with that delightful portrait,
Just as it is, and handle it with care."
He brought it to the queen, who scanned it much
And, having scrutinised Sikandar's face,
Found the presentment just, so that she knew:—
"'Tis Cæsar, chief of yon famed army! He
Hath made himself his own ambassador,
And boldly reached this court. Imperious sir!"
She said to him, "come give Sikandar's message."
He thus replied: "The monarch of the world C. 1318
Thus charged me in the presence of his nobles
To say to pure Kaidáfa: 'Here below
Ensue naught but the right. See that thou shun not
My bidding but observe shrewd fealty,
For if in aught thou art perverse in heart
I will lead forth a host heart-shattering,
Rob all thine army of the breath of life,
And give up all thy kingdom to the flames.
I had some intimation of thy virtues,
And therefore was not instant to assail thee,
For thou possessest modesty and wisdom;
Thy shrewd rede is the world's security.
Thou knowest that if thou refusest tribute
Thou canst withstand me not; but thou shalt have
Naught that is not both fair and just if thou
Wilt turn from falsehood and from fraud.'"
Kaidáfa
Was wroth thereat but saw no salve but silence,

And said to him: "Return to thine abode,
And for the present rest there with thy friends.
To-morrow when thou comest we will answer,
And take fair order for thy homeward way."
Thereat Sikandar went back to his lodging,
And thought all night how to secure himself.
Now when the bright Lamp rose above the mountains,
And plain and upland glittered like brocade,
He went to court again with smiling lips,
But heart o'ercast with care. The chamberlain
Saw, greeted him, and took him to the queen.
He saw a throng of strangers and a hall
Where was a crystal throne with patterns traced
In emeralds and cornelians, every boss
A royal gem. The dais was compact
Of sandal and lign-aloe, and the pillars
Of onyx and turquoise. The edifice,
The queen's Grace, throne, and puissance much amazed him.
He cried: "This is indeed an audience-chamber!
God's worshippers behold not such another."
He paced toward her, and they set a seat
For him below the throne. Kaidáfa said:—
"Why marvel at our palace thus, Naitkún?
Is Rúm indeed so other that thou needs
Must wonder at our land?"
He said to her:—
"O queen! misprize not thine own dwelling-place.
Thy head is higher than the heads of kings
Because thine ocean is a mine of gems."
Kaidáfa smiled: his speech and conduct charmed her.
She then dismissed her court and, having seated
The envoy graciously before her, said:—
C. 1319 "O son of Failakús! thou art a master
In fight and festival, in good and ill.

Thou hast approached me boldly to ask tribute,
Although I know not what incited thee."
On hearing this Sikandar's favour changed;
His soul was full of pain, his cheeks were livid.
He said: "O most wise queen! such words as these
Become thee not. I thank the All-provider
That none of all our famous chiefs are here
To tell this to the master of the world,
And take my life anon. Naitkún am I,
O mistress of the world! so call me not
The son of Failakús."
Kaidáfa said:—
"Dispute it not because thou art Sikandar,
And, when thou seest the portrait of thyself,
Cease to dissemble and display no wrath."
She brought and showed to him the silk all limned
With that fair portrait and so vividly
That, given motion, it had been himself.
He bit his lips; day grew for him like midnight.
He said: "Let no one be without a dagger
Concealed about him!"
"If thou hadst one here
Suspended from thy shoulder," she replied,
"No strength or trenchant scimitar would serve;
There is no room for fight or road for flight."
Sikandar said: "The great are eager ever
To win the world by valour, and must shun not
The path of danger, for the faint of heart
Excel not. Had I but my weapons now
The whole house would become a sea of blood,
And I, confronted by mine enemy,
Would rend my liver's seat or slaughter thee!"

§ 21

How Kaidáfa counselled Sikandar

Kaidáfa, smiling at Sikandar's bearing,
His gallantry, and angry words, replied:—
"O monarch lion-like! become not headstrong
In valour. It was not through Grace of thine
That Fúr of Hind, Dárá son of Dáráb,
And all those warriors of Sind were slain,
But 'twas because those world-lords' day was over,
And thy star in the ascendant. Thine own valour
Hath made thee so presumptuous as to deem
Thyself the lord of time and earth, but know
That all our blessings are derived from God.
So while thou livest give the thanks to Him.
C. 1320 Thou said'st: 'The wisdom of the world is mine.'
I do not look upon thy words as true.
What profit hath thy wisdom been to thee
Since thou hast come within the Dragon's breath,
And, while still youthful, hemmest thine own shroud
By going as thine own ambassador?
But bloodshed or a reckless strife with kings
Is not my wont. The ruler who is strong,
And justly generous, is wise withal,
For, know, the shedder of king's blood will see
But fire at last. Be easy, go rejoicing,
And in departing make a new departure,
For henceforth thou wilt do no embassies
Since all the earth will recognise Sikandar.
I know not any of the great whose portrait,
Limned thus on silk, is not in my possession,
And in a careful keeper's hands, and I
Have used the judgment of astrologers
Thereon to learn if I should trust or dread,
For when a prudent king hath been vouchsafed,
The age proclaimeth it to man and woman.

Thee will I call Naitkún while thou art here,
And by that token seat thee at a distance
That none may know thy secret, hear thy name,
Or fame. I will dismiss thee with all kindness
But thou must be a master of discretion,
And, further, promise never more to be
A foe or ill-disposed toward my sons,
My kingdom or my kindred or allies,
And treat me as thy peer."
Sikandar heard
And joyed, relieved from fear and slaughter, swore
By that just Judge, who ruleth all, the Faith
Of Christ, and by the sword of war, and said:—
"So long as thy dominions, thine own sons,
And potentates allied to thee, endure
I will do naught but what is good and right;
I will not think of fraud or knavery."
When he had sworn Kaidáfa said to him:—
"I must not fail to warn thee of one thing:
Know this then that Tainúsh my son misprizeth
My knowledge and my counsel. He is wayward,
Fúr's son-in-law, and must not hear from near
Or far that thou art one skin with Sikandar,
Or friend withal, for he would fain avenge
Fúr and in battle dash down heaven to earth.
Return now to thy house in peace and joy,
And utter naught about the world's concerns."
Sikandar went, his heart was big within him,
For wise men think of death with seriousness.
Kaidáfa brought no frown upon his face, C. 1321
And never disregarded he her counsel.
He stayed that night and early in the morn
Went from his lodging and approached the queen,
Who sat within the hall of audience,
Surrounded by a crowd of warriors.[1]

[1] "toute parée et entourée de bouquets de fleurs" (Mohl).

The ceiling was of ivory and gold,
And in the gold were divers jewels set.
In front of all the musky-scented throng
Before the queen there stood two proper sons:
One was Tainúsh, the cavalier, the other
Kaidrúsh who used to hearken to her words.
The younger son spake to his mother thus:—
"O queen well favoured of the stars and just!
Take order that Naitkún glad, well content,
And with a guide, may leave thee, so that none
May harm or treat him as a foe, forwhy
He saved my life, and as bright life I hold him."
She said: "Mine actions shall increase his greatness."
Then to Sikandar spake that noble queen:—
"Now make the secret patent to us. What
Hast thou to say? What is Sikandar's purpose?
What knowest thou about the Sháh, and whom
Hath he for minister?"
Sikandar answered:—
"Great lady! I have tarried long. The Sháh
Said: 'Go, ask tribute from her land. If thou
Delayest I will lead the army thither,
And leave her not the kingdom, crown, and throne,
Grace, queenship, might, or fortune for her own.'"

§ 22

How Tainúsh, the Son of Kaidáfa, was wroth with Sikandar, and how Sikandar took Precaution against him

Tainúsh, when he had heard Sikandar's words,
Raged like a blast, and said: "Thou worthless fool!
No man could reckon thee a man at all!

Know'st not before whose presence thou art seated ?
Assume the bond slave's pose ![1] Thy head is full
Of wrath and arrogance. Inform me who
Thy monarch is. Save for our sovereign's Grace
I would pluck off thy head as I would pluck
An orange from its bough. This very night,
Because I grieve for Fúr, will I display
Thy trunkless head in presence of the host!"
His mother called to him, for his hot head
Was growing more distraught, and said: "The words
Are not his own! Address the envoy's sender,
Whose utterance they are."
She bade: "Conduct C. 1322
Tainúsh outside the court. Thou scowling one!"
She added, "show not thy vile temper here.
He saved Kaidrúsh, thy brother, from the Sháh,
And reached our court, and yet thou railest thus
Against him and art wroth and sore displeasured!"
The son went forth fulfilled with rage and dudgeon,
With bloodshot eyes. In private to Sikandar
She said: "Tainúsh is foolish and the tool
Of dívs. In private he must not devise
Some loss or crime. Thou seekest after knowledge,
And thou art wise. Consider what to do."
Sikandar said: "So be it then. Thy course
Is to recall Tainúsh."
Thereat the queen
Sent for her son and set him 'neath the throne.
Sikandar said: "Imperious prince! if thou
Wouldst have thy wish command thyself, and I
Will not oppose thee. I accept each word
Of thine. Sikandar, who is Sháh and hath
The throne and crown, hath plunged me into gloom.

[1] Literally "Sit not before the queen. Show not thy hands," the proper attitude for slaves being to stand with folded arms, with the hands under the arm-pits. In this position they cannot do mischief.

He sent me to the queen with this command :—
'Ask tribute from that famous sovereign,'
So that whatever ill grow manifest
From foes toward him may come on me. Hear, prince
Rage not nor storm—another's due—at me,
For much have I been wronged by him myself,
And I have schemed to slay him. To thy hands
Will I deliver him, and then the world
Will be well quit, and I fare free, of him.
Thou know'st not yet my plan and what good thoughts
I harbour. I will go to him to-day
With my reply and will advise him finely!
If I shall grasp his hand and from his camp
Conduct him to thee, and in such a fashion
That he shall have no troops with him, and thou
Shalt look not on his scimitar, his throne,
And crown, then what wilt thou bestow upon me
Of all the realm, how recognise my service?"
Tainúsh thereat made answer: "I have heard
Thy words, and we must act thereon forthwith,
For if thou shalt achieve this, and wilt do
Thine utmost honestly, I will bestow
His treasures and his purses, steeds, and men—
Devoted lieges—and my thanks upon thee;
Thou shalt possess the world, know good, become
My loyal minister, and in this land
C. 1323 My treasurer."
Sikandar rose and shook
Hands on the bargain, and Tainúsh inquired:—
"How wilt thou compass this and by what spell
Effect this sorcery?"
Sikandar said:—
"Thou must go with me, when I quit the queen,
And take a thousand horsemen of thy host,
All famed in fight. Upon my journey hither
I marked a wood where I will put in ambush

Thee and thy soldiery, and go myself
To him, will look on that malignant soul,
And say: 'The queen hath sent so much that thou
Ne'er wilt want more. Her elder son, Tainúsh
By name, hath brought the Sháh her salutations
And messages, but saith: "I dare not face him
Amidst his host." Now if my lord would deign
Escorted only by his priests and sages,
To meet Tainúsh then in that interview
He could receive the goods and hoarded treasures
Of all sorts, for Tainúsh would come, on seeing thee
Without thy host, or else be free to go.'
Sikandar, when he heareth my smooth words,
Will never guess my colour and design,
But seek the shade beneath those trees, requiring
From thee those crowns and thrones. Do thou surround him
With thy fierce troops and make the future certain;
This will achieve my vengeance and thy wishes,
And thy fame soar by favour of the stars.
When thou hast taken him I am all thine,
And, when thou biddest, I will be thy watchman.
Then mine affairs will prosper and my market
Grow hot and brisk, for thou shalt carry off
Much wealth and slaves and steeds caparisoned."
Tainúsh rejoiced on hearing him, appeared
A noble cypress-tree, and answered thus:—
"My hope is that his day may turn to night,
And that he may be taken unawares
Within my toils, for all the bloodshed made
By him within the world—that of Dárá,
Son of Dáráb, the warriors of Sind,
And that great man of Hind, the valiant Fúr."
Now when Kaidáfa heard Sikandar's words,
And marked and understood his stratagem,
She smiled at his device behind her lips,

And hid those corals underneath her veil.
Sikandar left her presence in a mood
O'ershadowed by his great solicitude.

§ 23

How Sikandar made a Compact with Kaidáfa and returned to his Troops

C. 1324 That livelong night Sikandar laid his plans
And, when the sun displayed its fringe of Chín,
And set its golden banner o'er the heights,
While sank night's silken robe of violet,
He visited the queen and asked for audience
From her attendants. As their custom was
They caused him to alight, and then that seeker
Of world-dominion paced before the queen.
They cleared the hall and hastened to present
The envoy. When he saw Kaidáfa throned
He said: "May Jupiter espouse thy counsels!
By Christianity, the law of right,
By God who witnesseth to what I say,
By the religion of the mighty Cross,
By a brave monarch's life and head, priest's girdle,
And Holy Ghost,[1] I promise that henceforth
The soil of Andalús shall not behold me,
Nor will I send a host to battle thither.
I will employ no colourable ruse,
I will entreat not ill thy stainless son
By act or hest of mine, but bind true faith
To thee upon my soul and no wise seek
Thine injury. Thy friend shall be my brother,
Thy throne as sacred to me as the Cross."
Kaidáfa marked his oath, his singleness
Of heart, and honest pledge. She had the palace

[1] Or the angel Gabriel may be intended.

Filled with gold seats, and set forth gauds of Chín,
Called for her nobles and the well-starred chiefs,
Set them, each one, upon a seat of gold
And, having sent for both her well-loved sons
And for her kith and kin, harangued them thus:—
'It is not well that we be over-troubled
Within this Wayside Inn, and changeful fortune
Must make not battle and revenge my lot.
Sikandar still will be insatiate
Of treasure though he over-top the sky,
And for that reason seeketh war with us
Though all earth's treasures are not worth the toil.
I purpose that we do not fight with him;
I will not bring distress upon the realm;
But we will make a politic response,
At once exalting and exhorting him.
If after mine advice he seeketh war,
Ignoring both my Glory and my throne,
I with the host will face him so that sun
And moon shall pity him. Still what we try
Will do no harm, and peace may be preserved. C. 1325
What say ye? What respond? Advise me well."
The chiefs all raised their heads and answered her:—
"O queen of counsel and of justice! none
Can call to mind a chief like thee, and thou
Speak'st naught but good. Oh! fair befall the land
That hath a chief like thee! If this great Sháh
Become thy friend, what more can good men wish?
The Sháh will not attack thee for thy wealth;
To vex thee would cost more than all thy treasures.
When a Sikandar cometh out of Rúm,
Converting earth to ocean with his sword,
And then departeth from thy gates with gifts,
The fact outvalueth the whole world's havings.
We cannot favour any course but peace,
For he is foolish that desireth war."

When she had heard the words of those wise men,
Of those approved and holy-hearted priests,
She oped her treasures and took out the crown
Worn by her sire, with bracelet and gold torque
(It was a crown the value of whose gems
None in the city or the country knew),
And to the messenger she said: "This crown
Is priceless; those that others have are naught,
And, seeing that Sikandar hath deserved
This crown of chiefs, I have adopted him
As son adult."
Now she possessed a throne
That was compact of seventy parts and more;
Well gifted he that could dismember it!
The pattern was of intricate design,
And every juncture fitted curiously;
The feet had terminals of dragons' heads.
None knew its jewels' worth, but it comprised
Four hundred royal gems, an equal sum
Of brilliant rubies, two whereof, in hue
Pomegranate-grain, weighed one miskál apiece,
And emeralds four hundred, several stones,
Bright as a rainbow, and uncut. She added
Of raiment more than forty camel-loads;
The lady's heart was bounteous as the sea.
There were five hundred tusks of elephants;
What tusks they were! Their total length reached
miles!
There were four hundred leopard-skins and more,
The sort brought from Barbar; of dappled deer-skins
A thousand plain or dyed, all fair to see,
Besides a hundred hounds keen in the chase,
Which sped like arrows over hill and plain.
Kaidáfa's servants then led forth before her
Two hundred buffaloes; there were withal
Four hundred seats upholstered in brocade

And silken stuffs, the frames of ebony,
And of fresh aloe-wood four hundred more C. 1326
With sunbeams saturate and golden hue.
She ordered too a thousand Indian swords
With daggers and with coats of battle-mail,
While from the plain they brought a hundred steeds,
High-bred and harnessed, with the other wealth,
Besides twelve hundred casques and morions.
She bade her treasurer: "Now, tarry not,
Account for all these to Naitkún, and say:—
'Be ready to depart at dawn to-morrow.'"

Whenas the morning showed its flag on high,
When heaven's violet face grew camphor-like,
When earth was fresh and height like sandarac,
A sound of drums rose from the palace-gate.
Sikandar, having leave to go, bestrode
His steed and, when the brave Tainúsh had bidden
The troops to mount, proceeded from his palace
To court, and to Kaidáfa said: "Farewell,
And, while the world shall last, may it and thou
Be woof and warp."

They journeyed stage by stage
Until they drew anear the scene of action—
The camp of that famed Sháh, the fortune-favoured
Sikandar, who left baggage in the forest,
Where there were streams and many trees, and told
Tainúsh: "Here rest and, rested, take the cup
In hand. I will depart, make good my words,
And do all for the best."

Sikandar reached
The encampment. All the host came forth and showed
Their gladness by their shouts, while making ready
The Kaian crown, because they had despaired
Of their aspiring lord. Who ever thought
To see his face again? With tongues all praise
The soldiers bent their faces to the ground.

Sikandar then selected from the host
A thousand of the Rúman men of name,
Who, warriors as they were intent on strife,
With ox-head maces and in coats of mail,
Set forward and begirt the wood about—
A line of men and weapons. Then he cried:—
"Rash man! art thou resolved on fight or flight?"[1]
Repenting of his plots and cleverness
Tainúsh quaked and exclaimed: "High-minded Sháh!
Thou shouldst choose rather to be praised than blamed.
This was not thine agreement with my mother.
Didst thou not say: 'I will not quit the right'?
Display, as in the instance of Kaidrúsh,
True greatness and endeavour righteousness."
Sikandar said: "O prince! why hast thou grown
So feeble in this weighty enterprise?
C. 1327 But have no fears for thou art safe with me.
I will not harm one of thy kin or shun
Kaidáfa's bidding I! 'Tis ill for kings
To break their faith."
Tainúsh forthwith alighted,
And kissed the ground, displaying deep abasement.
The world-lord grasped his hand and reaffirmed
The former covenant, and said withal:—
"Be of good cheer and harbour no suspicions.
I feel no hate toward thee. When thy mother
Sat on her throne of gold, and when I clasped
Thy hand in mine, I told thee: 'I will lay
The king of earth's hand thus within thine own.'
This very day my promise is performed,
For hasty speeches come not well from Sháhs.
I am the same Sikandar that held forth
So pleasantly to thee. Kaidáfa knew
That very day that thou didst grasp his hand."
Then Cæsar bade the attendants: "Set a throne

[1] Reading with P.

Beneath a blossom-scattering tree."
He bade
To spread the board and call for wine and harpers.
They spent a while in pleasure and delights.
Now when the ruddy wine had made them glad
The Sháh gave orders for a royal gift
Of stuffs of Rúm, of Chín, and Persian make,
And gave it to Tainúsh with gold and silver
For his companions, crowns and belts withal
To those that merited, and thus enjoined him :—
"Stay not, this wood is distant, not thy home.
Say to Kaidáfa: 'O thou prudent lady,
Thou ruler shrewd of heart and well advised!
While life endureth I will constant be,
And have possessed my soul with love for thee.'"

§ 24

How Sikandar went to the Country of the Brahmans, inquired into their Mysteries, and received an Answer

He marched thence to the country of the Brahmans
To make inquiry of their ancient rites
From those abstemious men. The Brahmans heard
News of the Sháh that he was marching thither,
And from the heights came down those devotees,
Assembling at the tidings. Then the sages
Wrote to Sikandar, chief of priests. The letter
Began with heart-felt blessings from the Lord
Of all upon the monarch of the world :—
"May the Sháh ever conquer, wax, and have C. 1328
Both mastery, and knowledge," then proceeded :—
"God hath bestowed on thee the mighty world,
Brave king! What wouldst thou in our meagre land,
The dwelling of God's worshippers? If thou
Dost come for wealth, good sooth! thy wits are failing!

It is our part to suffer and be wise;
Yea, knowledge maketh musical our souls.
Thou canst not rob us of long-suffering,
While knowledge harmeth none. Thou wilt but see
A naked flock dispersed by wind and snow,
And fain eat grass-seed if thou tarriest!"

The envoy, girt with roots of grass, approached
The Sháh who, having seen him and the letter,
Resolved to act aright and do no hurt.
He halted all his host and then proceeded
Himself with the philosophers of Rúm.
Informed thereof the devotees all came
To meet him on his way with paltry gifts,
Because they had no treasure, tilth, or crops,
And blessed that noble monarch of the earth.
Sikandar marked the Brahmans' looks and talk,
How they went bare of body, foot, and head,
Their bodies barren while their souls bare knowledge,
With grass for raiment and its seeds for food,
At ease from feast and battle-day, and how
They ate, reposed, and slept on plain and mountain,
And gathered everywhere in naked troops;
Their provand all of tree-fruits and the seeds
Of grasses on the mountain-tops, their girdles
The pelts of game, their raiment ready-made.[1]
He asked them of their ways of sleep and provand,
Rest and good days and fight: "What share have ye
Of this world's good? Hath Heaven no antidote
For bane save this alone?"

A sage replied:—

"O conqueror of the world! none of us talketh
Of war and strife; we need not clothes, stuffs, foods.
Man being born in mother-nakedness
Should not be dainty in his garniture,
And hence returneth naked to the dust,

[1] In the sense explained below.

Where all is fear, anxiety, and dread.
Earth coucheth and heaven clotheth us; our eyes,
Expectant of the ending, watch the way.
How much the ambitious striveth after things
Which, strife and all, are hardly worth a doit,
For when he goeth from this Wayside Inn C. 1329
Behind are left his gold and crown and treasure!
But, know, his virtues bear him company
While both his head and state descend to dust."

Sikandar asked of them: "Which number most—
The hidden or the manifest, to wit
The living or the dead whose needs are over?"

The sage replied: "Know, king! the hidden far
Exceed the manifest, for thou mayst reckon
Upon a hundred thousand dead and more
For each alive, and blest is one not outcast
In Hell. The living too must die. One goeth,
And leaveth his position to another."

The Sháh inquired: "Is there most land or water
Illumined by the sun?"

The Brahman answered:—
"The water is the keeper of the land."

He asked: "Who are the awakened, who the sinners
On earth? They make a stir, and many live
Not knowing wherefore they are here at all!"

The Brahman answered: "Know thou pure in heart
And justice-seeking chief! the awakened man
Is he whom little of this world sufficeth;
The guiltiest, one whose wisdom hath been docked
By hate and greed. If thou wouldst know such well
Look first upon thyself, for all earth's face
Is thine, and one would say that restless heaven
Is kin to thee, yet still thou schem'st for more,
And to withhold thy wits from grimy dust,
For greed is thy soul's hell, and it may be
That these our words may cause thee to repent."

The Sháh inquired: "What is our ruling passion,
And our companion everywhere for evil?"
The Brahman answered: "Greed—the sum of hate,
And soul of sin."
"What is its nature then,"
The Sháh asked, "seeing there is cause to weep
O'er this its passion for aggrandisement?"
The Brahman made this answer: "Greed and Need
Are two dívs and long-drawn calamities.
One hath its lips dried up with poverty,
The other sleepeth not to compass more,
While both are hunted by the evil day:
How blest is he whose soul is fed on wisdom!"
Now, when Sikandar heard, his face resembled
The bloom of fenugreek, his cheeks were pale,
Tears filled his eyes, his smiling countenance
Was drawn with frowns. The imperious Sháh inquired:—
C. 1330 "What would ye have of us? I will not grudge you
My treasures, nor regret what they have cost me."
One said: "Exalted Sháh! deliver us
From eld and death."
"Death is inexorable,"
The Sháh made answer. "How canst thou escape
That Dragon's piercing clutch? For wert thou iron
Thou wouldst not find release, while youth, if here
It tarrieth, is not exempt from eld."
The Brahman said to him: "O mighty Sháh,
The world-lord, sage, and one whose word is law!
Thou knowest death to be remediless,
And that there is no worse calamity
Than eld. Why seek to win the world by toil,
Why in thy madness sniff the bloom of bale?
Thou wilt but leave the product of thy travail
Behind thee and bestow what thou hast toiled for,
And treasures, on the foe. To undertake

To toil for others is both ignorance
And folly. White hair is Death's messenger;
Why hope so much to live?"

The shrewd Sháh said:—

"If any of God's servants could escape
From His decree, I had escaped withal
By observation of the turning sky;
But neither man of lore nor warrior
Evadeth that decree, strive how he may.
Moreover they that perished in my wars,
Or had their days cut short by destiny,
Deserved their fate by bloodshed and ill deeds,
For no oppressor 'scapeth. They have suffered
God's chastisement for quitting wisdom's way.
'Tis not in man to limit heaven's powers,
Or shun the process of the passing hours."

§ 25

How Sikandar came to the Western Sea and saw Wonders

Sikandar proffered many a gift, but none
Accepted them; the Brahmans had small greed.
He did no hurt, set off upon his march,
By that same token fared toward the West,
And from the Brahmans' country reached a spot
Whence he beheld a deep and boundless sea;
The men there had their faces veiled like women,
And went arrayed, all colour and perfume.
They spake not Persian, whether old or modern,
Or Arabic, or Turkman, or Chinese;
They lived on fish alone; there was no means
Of bringing aught by road. Sikandar stood
Astound at them and in the Rúman tongue C. 1331
Invoked God's name. Then from the water rose
A rock as bright and yellow as the sun.

The Sháh desired a swift ship whence to view
The thing aright. Of his philosophers
One said: "'Tis not for thee to cross the Deep;
Wait till some man of lore survey the rock."
Then thirty men, some Persian and some Rúman,
Embarked. That bit of rock turned out to be
A yellow fish which, as they came anigh,
Drew down the vessel swiftly, dived, and vanished!
Sikandar's soldiers were aghast, and all
Invoked God's name. A priest said to the Sháh:—
"A goodly thing is knowledge, for the man
That hath it is in this world chief of folk.
Now if the Sháh had gone and perished thus
Blood would have filled the souls of this great host."
Departing thence he led the army on
To where a novel water came in view.
Around it there were reeds as large as trees:
Thou wouldst have said: "They are the mighty stems
Of planes." They were above ten cubits thick,
And measured forty cubits in their height.
The houses were of reeds and built thereon.
They might not tarry in that reed-bed; no one
Drank of its water for 'twas salt. Sikandar
Fared thence until a deepsome lake appeared;
The world was jocund, water honey-like;
The soil exhaled the scent of musk. They ate,
And set themselves to sleep, when from the water
Came writhing snakes in swarms while from the wood
Flame-coloured scorpions issued, and the world
Grew black and straitened to those slumberers.
On every side there perished multitudes,
Men great in lore and war. On one side came
Herds of wild boars with long tusks diamond-bright,
And on the other lions that out-bulked
An ox; none could withstand them; so the host,
Withdrawing from the mere and flinging fire

Upon that reed-bed, set themselves to slay
Hogs in such numbers as to block the way.

§ 26

How Sikandar reached the Land of Habash, fought, and was victorious

Departing thence the sun-like Sháh in haste C. 1332
Came to the country of Habash and saw
A land as 'twere a raven's plume with men
Black-faced with eyes like lamps. A lusty crowd
Of able-bodied folk, large-limbed and naked,
Raised, when they saw afar the army's dust,
Their war-cry to the clouds. A thousand thousand
Assembled. All turned black before the Sháh.
They came on him and slaughtered many troops,
Transfixing them with bones instead of spears.
He bade his soldiers arm. Those lion-men
Discomfited the blacks, who charged unclad,
And slew above a thousand while the rest
Turned from the fray. Earth's face seemed like the sea
Of Chín with bloodshed. When the dales and deserts
Were smirched with gore, and slain piled everywhere,
The soldiers scattered fuel on the heaps,
And then Sikandar bade to kindle them.
When it was dark the wolves began to howl:
Sikandar donned his helmet and cuirass.
A pack approached, all big as buffaloes.
Their leader, larger than an elephant,
Had on its head a dusky horn. It slew
Full many a chief and, oft attacked, ne'er showed
Its back. With arrows they made shift to kill
At last that elephant-taking iron Hill.

§ 27

How Sikandar reached the Land of the Narmpái, how he fought and was victorious, how he slew a Dragon, ascended a Mountain, and was forewarned of his own Death

Thence marched he quickly and invoking oft
The just World-lord. On reaching the Narmpái
He saw a countless folk who had no steeds,
C. 1333 Or breastplate, sword, or mace, and every one
Was lion-like in form. Now when the host
Neared the Narmpái the world grew black to them;
They roared like rattling thunder, came like dívs
Upon Sikandar, running on their knees,
With martial bodies and contentious hearts,
And showered stones fiercely as the autumn-blasts
Beat on the trees. The Rúman host advanced
With sword and arrow, and thou wouldst have said:—
"Bright day is dimmed."
When few Narmpái were left
Sikandar rested, then led on the host,
And reached what seemed a boundless city whence
All, as their wont was, went to meet him gladly,
Asked naught but brought all kinds of tapestries,
Of raiment and of provand while Sikandar
Saluted, well received, and honoured them
According to their station. Then he bade
The common folk, the chiefs, and those star-favoured
To carpet all the plain. The sands and soil
Were tricked out with brocade. Upon the waste
They pitched the Sháh's pavilion, and the brave
Took post around. All revelled, Sháh and horsemen.
Thus, as he fleeted time with feast and wine,
Or rest, the host, inured to heat and cold,
Reposed from war. Thereafter ceaselessly
He sought a lucky day whereon to march

Sought for intelligence from all, but none
Gave him auspicious counsel. He observed
A mountain with its summit midst the stars:
Thou wouldst have said: "It will arrest the sky!"
Few were the folk thereon, and none of them
Remained at night. Of these he asked: "What way
Is there, and how must I conduct the host?"
All blessed him, saying: "Famous king of earth!
"The way is o'er the mount if guide could go,
But on its farther side there is a dragon,
Whose grievous venom doth confound the wolf.
Thy troops can pass it not; its venom's fumes
Mount to the moon; flames issue from its maw,
And its two side-locks would avail to snare
An elephant. Our folk can not withstand it.
It needeth for its food five oxen nightly.
We buy, and drive, them on yon rocky mount, C. 1334
Drive them with care and trouble, lest the dragon
Come hither, and our folk in numbers suffer."
Sikandar, at the dragon's feeding-time,
Chose troops and bade to give it naught that day.
The dragon, when its hour for battening
Was o'er, came down the pass like fire. Sikandar
Bade his troops shower thereon their arrows swiftly.
That laidly dragon drew one breath and sucked
Some warriors in. The son of Failakús
Bade beat the tymbals and the kettledrums,
Enkindle mighty fires and make a blaze
In every quarter. When the mountain rang
With tymbal-din the monster feared and fled.
When Sol ascended from the Sign of Taurus,
And soared the lark's note from the garths of roses,
The warrior-chieftain brought with him five oxen,
Procured with money from his treasury.
He slew and skinned them, heads and all; his scheme
Gave courage to his friends. He charged the hides

With bane and naphtha, and made speed toward
The dragon. Blowing up the skins he called
Upon the Giver of all good and bade
Men pass the hides along from hand to hand.
As he drew near the dragon it appeared
Black like a cloud, its tongue was livid, its eyes
Seemed blood, its maw belched flame. They cast the oxen
Down from the mountain-top and closely marked
The dragon, which engorged them, swift as wind,
Or ever they had left those warriors' hands.
Now when its frame was hide-stuffed, and the bane
Had spread throughout its body, it pierced through
The entrails and invaded brains and feet.
The dragon dashed its head on mount and rocks,
And thus a long time lapsed while all the troops
Showered arrows on it till that mountain-form,
That hunter, fell. Thence fared the host with speed,
And left in scorn the dragon's body there.
Sikandar led them to another mountain,
One that amazed the troops. The keen of sight
Could mark its height from far and that its peak
Was like a scimitar-blade and thereupon,
Apart from folk and distant from the throng,
Was set a golden throne. A hoary corpse
C. 1335 Was on it verily still full of grace
In death, palled in brocade, upon its head
A crown of gems of all kinds, and heaped round
With gold and silver. None could pass that way,
For all that scaled the mountain-top to seek
Aught of that corpse began to quake though fearless,
Died, and returned to dust. Sikandar clomb
The mountain-top to view the corpse with all
Its gold and silver, but he heard a voice:—
"O Sháh! thou hast accomplished thy career,
Hast voided many a monarch's throne, exalted

Thy head to heaven, and slaughtered many a foe
And friend. 'Tis time for thee to quit the world."
Burned like a lamp the Sháh's cheeks as he heard;
He left that mount and with a heart all seared.

§ 28

How Sikandar reached the City of Women, named Harúm, and saw Wonders there

On marching with his chiefs of Rúm Sikandar
Fared toward the city that thou call'st Harúm,
Which was inhabited by women only,
Who suffered none to come within their gates.
Their left breasts were like eager warriors',
Who don the breastplate on the day of battle,
While on the right hand they resembled women's,—
Pomegranate-like on silk. The Sháh with all
His mighty men of Rúm approached Harúm,
And wrote a letter fit and fair and worthy
Of his high birth, addressed thus: "From the king
Of Rúm and of Írán to her that is
The ruler in Harúm.
The letter first
Named Him who ruleth o'er the starry heaven,
Of whom are justice, love, and bounteousness,
And then went on: "Whoe'er is wise of soul,
And walketh yet alive upon the world,
Hath heard of what we have achieved on earth,
And how we have exalted sovereignty,
While he that hath refused to do our bidding
Hath no couch save dark dust. Fain would I have
No place concealed from me throughout the world.
I roam not for addition's sake but ache
For knowledge. Be my hand withheld from gain,
And justice ever comrade of my soul.

If I approach 'tis not to fight with you;
My heart is set on peace and jollity.
C. 1336 If ye have any sage wise, shrewd, and clerkly,
When he hath read my letter of advice
Let all of you of worth prepare to meet me,
For none shall lose by coming."

He commanded
That a philosopher of Rúm should bear
The letter to the city of Harúm,
And added many honied words. The envoy
Was wise himself. When he arrived he saw
The city full of women and no men,
And all the people went forth to the plain
To see the Rúman. All the counsellors
In that assembly gathered round the letter
And, when a city-sage had read it over,
And grew possessed of what the Sháh proposed,
They sat, and wrote back: "O exalted Sháh!
Live ever. We have set thy messenger
Before us and have read thy letter through.
First as to what thou sayest touching kings,
Thy victories, and former fights: if thou
Shalt march against the city of Harúm
Thou wilt not see the ground for hoofs and feet
The districts of our city pass compute,
And in each one there are ten thousand women.
We sleep in arms and battle for addition.
We all are spouseless, modest maidens we.
Whichever way thou comest to this land
There is deep water to be ferried over.
When one among us hath a mind to wed
We none of us behold her face again,
And she must cross the water be the day
Fine, blusterous, or snowy. Having married,
If she shall have a daughter—one refined
And fond of hues and scents—that child of hers

Abideth ever in her native air;
But if she proveth masculine and proud
Her mother will dispatch her to Harúm;
While if the mother bringeth forth a son
He tarrieth, coming not to dwell with us.
Each night ten thousand maidens guard the river.
When one of us unhorseth in the fight
Some lion-man we set a golden crown
Upon her head and raise o'er Gemini
Her throne, and surely there are thirty thousand
Among us, wearing crown of gold and earrings,
By whose hands some illustrious warrior
Hath turned to dust upon the day of battle.
Thou art a great man, and thy fame is high; C. 1337
Close not the door thereof upon thyself,
Else folk will say that thou didst fight with women,
And, after fighting, fled'st, and this will shame thee,
And ne'er be obsolete while this world lasteth;
But if thou, with thy famous men of Rúm,
Wilt come and go about Harúm, observing
All faith and courtesy, thou shalt behold
But mirth and kindness. If thy choice, O Sháh!
Be other thou wilt shrink from us in battle.
We will lead forth against thee such a host
That sun and moon shall darken."

When this answer
Was finished an ambassadress departed
With crown and royal raiment, and with ten
Fair cavaliers. When she approached the Sháh
In state he sent some troops to welcome her.
The noble lady gave to him the letter,
And told the message of the valiant women.
Sikandar, having read that answer, chose
A man discreet and wise, sent this reply,
And said: "Be wisdom wedded to men's brains.
No kings or chiefs, exalted though they be

And favoured by the stars, are left on earth
That are not subject unto me. Black dust
And camphor-dust, and feast and battlefield,
Are one to me. I have not come with drums,
With elephants, with players on the tymbals,
And such a host that plain and mountain quake
Beneath the horses' hoofs, to fight with women.
I fain would see your city, and if ye
Will make approaches to me all is well.
When I have seen I will march hence the host,
And not abide here long. We will behold
Your policy and glory, how ye manage
Your steeds, your grace, and potence. Privily
Will I inquire as to your works and ways,
How women can exist, men absent, how
Death's ravage is repaired, and find the outcome."
The envoy went and did his embassage
At large. The magnates met and made reply:—
"We will select two thousand women, fluent,
Learned, and discreet; each hundred have in charge
Ten crowns of gold each set with many gems,
Two hundred crowns in all, and none but kings
C. 1338 Are digne of them. We will collect and heap them,
Each with its jewels weighing thirty ratl.[1]
We will go forth to meet the Sháh when we
Are ware of his approach, for we have heard
About his knowledge and his Grace."
The envoy
Returned and spake those words instinct with wisdom.
Sikandar marched forth from his resting-place,
And marvelled at the conduct of those women.
He went two stages, then a storm arose,
Whose snow-drifts made all level with the hills,
And many followers perished on that day
Through cold and snow. The Sháh pursued his march

[1] A ratl now=1·014 lb. av. P. reads "three" for "thirty."

Two stages farther through that grievous frost,
Then reached a burning land whence vapours rose,
And murky clouds; "The host," thou wouldst have said,
"Was marching over fire." The hauberks burnt
The shoulders of the Persians, and the earth
Glowed with the horse-shoes of the cavaliers,
And thus it was until they reached a land
Where they beheld all folk as black as night,
With pendent, slobbering lips; all lips and slobber
Were they, all slobber and lip! Their eyes seemed
blood;
Flames issued from their mouths! Their warriors
Brought many elephants and offerings
Before the Sháh, and said: "We caused this storm
And snow to harm you, for none e'er hath traversed
This route as we have seen your army do."
The Sháh abode a month: When he and host
Had been refreshed he sped thence merrily,
His heart prepared, toward the women's city,
And o'er the stream two thousand women passed
With crowns and earrings on. There was a forest
Thick and well watered; all the place was glad,
And flourishing. The women brought a store
Of provand and bright, figured tapestries
Out to a mead and, when Sikandar reached
The city of Harúm, they flocked to him
Out of their settlements. Full many a crown
They proffered him, as well as raiment, gems,
And things both fair and sweet. These he accepted,
Received the women with all courtesy,
And gave them quarters in that charming spot.
When night turned day he visited the city,
And occupied himself in seeing it,
Investigating all its usages
Till all had been made clear. He questioned much,
Surveyed the river, and departed westward.

He found a mighty city of brave men
C. 1339 With ruddy faces and with flaxen hair,
All fit for battle and the day of fight.
They came before Sikandar at his bidding
With bodies bent and hands upon their heads.
He asked their chiefs: "What wonders have ye here?"
An elder thus replied: "Star-favoured Sháh,
And lion-capturer! there is a Deep
Beyond the city. Brighter than that water
Naught have we seen, for when the radiant sun
Arriveth there it setteth in those depths.
Beyond it all is dark and lost to sight,
While of that place of darkness I have heard
So many tales that they are numberless.
A man of lore, a worshipper of God,
Declareth that there is a fountain there,
And mine informant, who is wise and great,
Referreth to it as the Fount of Life.
That wise, discerning man said: 'How shall one
Who drinketh of the Fount of Life e'er die?
From Paradise it runneth; wash therein
The body, and thy sins will pass away.'"
Then Cæsar said: "As to this place of gloom,
How can beasts fare therein?"
The devotee
Made answer: "Ye must ride upon young horses."
The Sháh bade herdsmen gather to the camp
The herds at large and chose ten thousand steeds,
All four-year-olds and fit for battle-needs.

§ 29

How Sikandar went into the Gloom to seek the Water of Life and spake with Birds and Isráfíl

Sikandar, summoning his prudent chiefs,
Marched cheerly thence his host and reached a city
Whereto he saw no middle and no end,
And having all things needful in abundance.
'Twas full of garths, parks, halls, and palaces.
There he dismounted and at dawn next day
Went forward unattended toward the Source
Which in his story of the hero's fortunes
The rustic minstrel calleth that of Life.
He tarried there until the sun, grown pale,
Sank in that fount of lapis-lazuli.
He saw the wonder wrought by holy God—
The Bright One's disappearance from the world—
Returned to camp, and pondered much. That night
He prayed to God, mused on the Fount of Life, C. 1340
First chose the most enduring of his troops,
Took with him food for forty days and more,
And went forth eagerly to look on wonders.
He camped his other troops within the city,
And sought and found a guide. Khisr, who was chief
Among the nobles of that folk, advised him.
Sikandar did as Khisr enjoined, surrendered
Both heart and soul to his allegiance,
And said: "Shrewd-hearted man! be diligent
Herein, and if we shall obtain the Water
Of Life then we will pass much time in prayer.
He will not die who nurtureth thus his soul,
And in his wisdom refugeth with God.
I have two signets that in sight of water
Shine out at night like suns. Take one, lead on,
And tender well thy person and thy life;

The other one shall light me on my way.
I go amid the Darkness with mine escort,
And we will see what God omnipotent
Preserveth hidden where so much is seen.
Thou art my leader, and He is my refuge,
And showeth me the Water and the Way."
Now when the troops marched toward the Fount of Life
A shout rose from the desert: "God is great!" [1]
Khisr left that station and all food behind him,
And fared thus for two days and nights while none
Bestirred his lips to eat. Upon the third
Two ways showed mid the Darkness, and the Sháh
Lost trace of Khisr. What while the prophet went
Toward the Fount of Life, exalting thus
His living head to Saturn, bathed his body
And head in that bright Water, sought no guard
Save God, drank, rested, and returned apace,
More instant ever both in prayer and praise,
Sikandar reached the light and saw a mountain
Both high and bright, and on its top four columns
Of aloe-wood uplifted to the clouds.
On every column was a mighty nest,
And in each nest there sat a huge, green bird,
Which, speaking loudly in the Rúman tongue,
Hailed the victorious master of the world,
Who hurried to them when he heard. One said:—
"O votary of toil! what seekest thou
Within this Wayside Inn, for though thou raisest
Thy head to heaven above it will dismiss thee
C. 1341 In grief at last? But now that thou hast come,
Hast seen aught built of reeds or reed-baked bricks?"
He answered: "Both: our dwellings are directly
Or indirectly made with reeds."
The bird,

[1] Alláh akbar. Properly "God is greatest." This part is very Arabic.

On hearing this reply, perched lower down,
Astonying that worshipper of God,
And asked him: "Hast thou heard within the world
The sounds of harp, of reveller, and song?"
He made this answer: "One, whose lot it is
To have no share in joy, the glad account not
Although for them he pour out heart and soul."
From that tall column of lign-aloe-wood
The bird flew to the ground; its musky perch
Was void. The bird inquired: "Do understanding
And right prevail or do defect and guile?"
The Sháh made answer: "He that seeketh knowledge
Is eminent in every company."
Back from dark ground to column went the bird
And, having cleaned its talons with its beak,
Inquired of Cæsar: "Why do devotees
Dwell on the mountains?"
"The devout," he said,
"Find not another place so good for worship."
The bird ran up the column to its nest.
The monarch was delighted with that fowl,
Which with its talons sharpened up its bill
In full security. Then it instructed
Sikandar to ascend the topmost peak,
Afoot and unescorted, there to see
That which would cause the merriest to weep.
On hearing this he went toward the mountain
Alone to view the sight upon its summit,
And there saw Isráfíl, with trump in hand
And head uplifted, standing at his post,
Wind on his lips and moisture in his eye,
Till God shall bid him blow. On seeing Sikandar
He roared like thunder: "O thou slave of greed!
Toil not so much, because some day a Call
Will reach thine ears. Be less concerned for crown

And throne. Make ready to depart and bind
The baggage on."
"It is my lot from fortune,"
The Sháh replied, "for save by stir and roaming
I may not look on sight and mystery."
He then descended, wailing and imploring
The Giver of all good, and, with a guide
Preceding him, advanced along that route,
Involved in gloom, which when the army entered
A cry ascended from the darksome heights:—
"He that shall take a stone up from the road
Will grieve for what he beareth in his hand,
C. 1342 And if he taketh none he will repent,
And heartily in each case seek a cure."
The soldiers all gave ear, and every one
Grew thoughtful at that cry since, whether they
Took stones or no, must they not count on ills?
One said: "It is the punishment of guilt
To bear repentance and the stones as well."
Another said: "We should take some; perchance
We may not have to savour pain and toil."
One man took of the stones; another left them;
A third through indolence took little ones.
When from the region of the Fount of Life
They reached the plain, emerging from the Gloom,
Each sought the truth and then perceived the trick.
One had his bosom full of jewels cut,
Another his with jewels in the rough,
And both regretted that they had so few;
Why had they passed by emeralds as vile?
But sorrier still was he that picked up none
At leaving precious gems as he had done.

§ 30

How Sikandar went to the East, saw Wonders, and built a Barrier against Yájúj and Májúj

Two weeks he tarried and, when rested, marched.
He set forth eastward, having seen the west;
His purpose in the world was wayfaring.
Now as he went he saw a noble city;
"No wind or dust passed o'er it," thou wouldst say.
Whenas the drums beat on the elephants
The chiefs came out two miles to welcome him.
The Sháh, on seeing them, received them well,
Exalting them o'er circling Sol, and asked:—
"What matchless marvels have ye in these parts?"
They loosed their tongues and thus bewailed their fortune:—
"A very grievous case confronteth us,
And we will tell it to the conquering Sháh.
By reason of this cloud-capt mountain-range
Our hearts are full of anguish, toil, and grief.
Since for resistance we are powerless
Yájúj there and Májúj give us no sleep,
For when a portion of them reach our city
Our portion is all misery and travail.
Their faces all resemble those of beasts,
Their tongues are black, their eyes like blood, their faces
Are black, their teeth are like wild boars'! Who dareth
Draw nigh to them? Their bodies all are clad C. 1343
With hair, the hue of indigo, their breasts,
Their bosoms, and their ears resemble those
Of elephants. They sleep upon one ear,
And use the other as a coverlet.[1]
The mothers have a thousand children each,

[1] See p. 80.

And who can reckon them? They herd like beasts,
They go apace and run like onagers.
In spring, when clouds roar and the green sea heaveth,
The clouds draw up great monsters from the waves,
While air is roaring like a mighty lion,
And pour them down in masses: then these folk
Come troop on troop and batten year by year
Upon these monsters and thereby grow lusty
In limbs and body. Afterward they feed
On herbage, scattering to gather it.
In winter they are pale and thin, their voices
Like doves'; but through those monsters in the spring
They are as wolves and roar right lustily.
Now if the great Sháh could devise a means
To liberate our hearts from this distress,
He will receive the praise of every one,
And will prolong his sojourn in the world.
Exert thy power and do this work for us,
For thou too needest help from holy God."

Sikandar mused at them, grew grave, and pondered,
Then answered thus: "I will defray the cost;
Your city must provide both aid and labour.
By help of God, our Guide and Succourer,
I will reduce this way of theirs to reason."

All cried: "May fortune's ills be far from thee,
O Sháh! We are the slaves of thy good pleasure,
Thy lifelong servitors. We will supply
All that thou need'st, for we have no concern
More urgent."

So Sikandar came and viewed
The heights, and took with him a troop of sages.
He ordered to bring blacksmiths, copper, brass,
And heavy hammers, mortar, stone, and fire-wood
Past reckoning, bring all things requisite.
They brought him everything that he demanded
In measureless supplies. When all was ready,

And planned, the masons and the smiths, all those
Of mastery in their trade throughout the world,
Assembled to Sikandar to assist him
In that most needful work. From every province
The experts mustered, and he built two walls
Across the mountain-pass from base to crest,
One hundred royal cubits broad, one cubit
Of charcoal, one of iron, in between C. 1344
Strewed copper, and showered sulphur in the midst,
Such is the craft and subtlety of kings!
He laid thus his materials course on course,
And when from top to bottom all was set,
They mixed much ghee and naphtha, poured it over
Those substances, and on the top shot charcoal
In ass-loads. Then the Sháh bade fire the whole,
And five score thousand smiths blew up the flames,
As bidden by that king victorious.
A sound of blowing went up from the mountain,
The stars were frighted at the glowing fire.
Thus passed a season with the fire in blast,
And smiths a-toil. They ran the substances
Together, fusing them in that fierce blaze.
Thus was the world delivered from Yájúj
And from Májúj, and earth grew habitable,
For by Sikandar's famous barrier
The world escaped the misery of strife.
It was five hundred cubits high, about
One hundred broad. The nobles blessed the Sháh,
And said: "May neither time nor earth lack thee."
They brought before him in abundant store
Whatever was the produce of those parts.
He would accept of naught and went his ways;
His doings filled the whole world with amaze.

§ 31

How Sikandar saw a Corpse in a Palace of Jewels on the Top of a Mountain, and the Speaking Tree, and how he was warned of his Death

He marched one month till Sháh and troops were weary.
At length he reached a mount where he beheld not
A man or beast. Its peak he saw to be
Of lapis-lazuli and thereupon
A palace built of topazes, with lustres
Of crystal everywhere, and in the middle
A fount of brackish water. A ruby served
For lamp and lighted palace, mount, and heights;
The light fell on the water, and the jewel
Illumed the palace like the sun. Beside
The fount was set a double golden throne
Where lay a hapless one with human body
And with a wild boar's head—a helpless corpse
On that fine throne. His couch beneath was camphor,
And o'er him spread a mantle of brocade.
C. 1345 Whoever went to carry aught away,
Or even trod the dust upon the floor,
Died in convulsions on the spot. A cry
Came from that briny fount: "O slave of greed!
Be not so mad. Much hast thou seen that none
Besides hath seen. 'Tis time to draw thy rein
Because thy life is ending, and thy throne
Of sovereignty is going all astray."
Sikandar feared, turned him about apace,
And came back to his camp as swift as smoke.
He marched thence quickly, wailing and invoking
The name of God, then from that mountain took
The desert-route in dudgeon and concerned
About his life. All sorrow and in tears

He went with troops behind and guides before
Till, by that desert-route, he reached a city,
And joyed to hear the voice of men. The land
Was all a garden, gladding to delight
The heart of man. The magnates of the city—
The men of valour—went to welcome him;
All praised him, showering on him gold and gems,
And said: "O Sháh! how blesséd 'tis that thou
Shouldst traverse thus our coasts! No host before
E'er visited this city, none of us
E'er heard the name of Sháh, but now that thou
Hast come our souls are thine, and mayst thou be
In spirit lucid and in body hale."
Sikandar gladdened in his heart at them.
He rested from the desert-march, and asked:—
"Of marvel what is there for me to note?"
The guides thus answered: "O victorious Sháh,
And pure of rede! there is a wonder here,
Whose match none in the world of small and great
E'er hath beheld—a tree with double trunk—
A marvel manifest. One trunk is female,
The other male; they speak, have boughs, and flourish.
At night the female yieldeth speech and perfume,
The male doth speak by day."
Sikandar went
With cavaliers of Rúm and native chiefs
Of whom he asked: "This tree—when speaketh it
Aloud?" The interpreter replied: "One trunk
Will talk or ever day's ninth hour hath passed,
So that the auspicious Sháh will hear its voice.
When it is night the female trunk will speak;
Its foliage will savour as 'twere musk."
The Sháh asked: "When we pass the tree, good friend! C. 1346
What marvel meet we then?"
"Of going further,"
The interpreter replied, "there is no question.

There is no place beyond it, and guides call it
'The World's End.'"
Then the blest Sháh with his Rúmans
Set forward. When he reached the speaking tree
The ground was seething hot, and all its surface
Was hid by beasts' skins.
"What are these, and who
Hath torn beasts thus?" he asked of his informant,
Who said: "The tree hath many devotees,
Who, if they hunger while engaged in worship,
Feed on the flesh of beasts."
When Sol attained
The apex of heaven's vault Sikandar heard
Aloft a cry proceeding from the leaves
Of that tall tree—an awful, boding cry.
He feared and asked of the interpreter:—
"Shrewd, trusty friend! what say the talking leaves,
Because they bathe my heart in lymph of blood?"
The guide replied: "O favourite of fortune!
The leaves upon the boughs of this tree say:—
'Why doth Sikandar roam so o'er the world,
For he hath had his portion of good things,
And, when he shall have reigned for twice seven years,
Must quit the throne of sovereignty?"
Sikandar
Wept tears of blood; the guide's words wrung his heart.
Thenceforth he spake to no one, but remained
All sorrowful till midnight. Then the leaves
Upon the other trunk gave utterance.
Again the Sháh asked of his friendly guide:—
"What is it that the other branches say?"
Thus his informant solved the mystery:—
"The female branches say: 'Thou travailest
In this wide world for greed and for addition.
Why torture thus thy soul? It is thy passion
To go about the world, afflicting folk

And slaying kings. Thou hast not long to live;
Do not thyself cloud and contract thy days.'"
The great king asked of the interpreter:—
"O good, discerning man! inquire if I
Shall be in Rúm when my dark day shall come,
And if my mother see me not alive
Will she at last enshroud this face of mine?"
The speaking tree said to the Sháh: "Be speedy,
And bind the baggage on. Thy mother, kindred
In Rúm, and face-veiled ladies there will look
On thee no more. Death in an alien land C. 1347
Will come ere long, crown, diadem, and throne
Grow tired of thee."
He heard and left the tree,
Heart-stricken by the scimitar of fortune.
When he reached camp the noble native chiefs
Went home and, when they had made ready gifts,
Came hurrying to the Sháh. There were a breastplate,
Resplendent as the Nile and wide and broad
As is an elephant's hide, two elephant-tusks
Five cubits long—a toil to lift—mail-coats
And rich brocade, and, made of solid gold,
A hundred eggs, each weighing sixty mans[1]
If weighed as drachms, and a rhinoceros
In gold and gems. Accepting these he led
His host away and tears—his heart's blood—shed.

§ 32

How Sikandar marched his Army to Chín, carried his own Letter to Faghfúr, and returned to his Army with the Answer

He led his army thence toward Chín and raised
The chiefs' heads to the Pleiads. Stage by stage
He crossed the desert till in forty days

[1] The weight of the "man" varies with the locality. The "man of Tabríz"—the smallest— = from 7 to 7½ lbs. av.

He reached the sea,[1] dismounted there his troops
And pitched the camp-enclosure of brocade.
He ordered then a scribe to write a letter
As from Sikandar, conqueror of cities,
Bade that the letter should comprise all kinds
Of fair and foul, and, when the scribe had finished,
Went as ambassador. He chose a Persian,
A shrewd man, one with him in heart and word,
To bid him "Do" or "Do not." Then he gave
The captain of the host charge of the troops,
And of the Rúmans took with him five sages.

When tidings reached Faghfúr: "There is an envoy
Approaching Chín" he sent a force of troops
To meet him, and Sikandar fared in state.
He reached that spacious court. Faghfúr beheld
That chosen troop of valiant men and came,
With mind averse and anxious, from the entry
To meet Sikandar who ran up to him,
Did him obeisance, and sat long within
The hall of audience. Faghfúr gave greeting,
Received him well, and lodged him splendidly.

Now when the bright Lamp rose above the mountains
They brought a horse caparisoned with gold,
C. 1348 And summoned the Sháh's envoy to the presence.
Sikandar spake at large, said what was fit,
Then gave the letter, and recalled what Cæsar
Had said. The letter's superscription ran:—
"From Rúm's Sháh, who is world-lord and the prince
Of every march and land, whom other monarchs
Praise, to Faghfúr, the glory of the realm."

The letter thus began: "Praise to the Maker
From us His slaves," and then went on to say:—
"Our will for Chín is this, that it should prosper.
Ye should not fight us; that cut short Fúr's life.
So was it with Dárá, who ruled the world,

[1] *Cf.* p. 174.

Faryán the Arab, and with other chiefs.
From west to east none hath escaped our sway.
Heaven knoweth not the number of my troops
Though Venus, Mercury, and Sol shall count them.
If thou infringest my command in aught
Thou wilt but vex the country and thyself.
Prepare thy tribute when thou readest this,
Be not aggrieved, and meddle not with evil.
If thou wilt come and see me and my host
I will regard thee as ally and friend,
Assure to thee thy throne and crown, and fortune
Shall harm thee not; but if thou wouldst not come
Before thy lord, send to my treasury
The rarities of Chín, as golden ware,
Swords, steeds and signets, raiment, slaves, and thrones
Of ivory, rich brocade and torques and crowns—
Whate'er thou hast—as thou wouldst be unscathed
By us. Repulse mine army by these means,
And keep in safety crown and throne and treasure.
Thou know'st both courses now: my host expecteth
Thy fall or rise. The Maker bless thee. Mayst
Thou ne'er have reason to recall my words!"

The lord of Chín, on seeing such a letter,
Was wroth but showed it not and with a smile
Said to the envoy: "Heaven is thy Sháh's consort!
Tell what thou canst about his looks, his stature,
His prowess, and his speech."

The envoy said:—

"O chief of Chín! know, none is like Sikandar
On earth. In prowess, bounty, rede, and wisdom,
He passeth man's conception. Cypress-tall
Is he, an elephant in strength, a Nile
In bounty, and in tongue a trenchant sword.
His blandness draweth eagles from the clouds."

Faghfúr, on hearing this, took other order. C. 1349
He bade serve meat and wine, and deck a hall

Within the garth. They quaffed till it was dark,
And they were all bemused. The lord of Chín
Said to the ambassador: "Be Jupiter
Thy Sháh's ally. Tomorrow I will answer,
And make the day right glorious in thy sight."

Now when Sol rose in Leo, and the sky
Had night alow, Sikandar drew anear,
But not with ill prepense. Faghfúr inquired:—
"How went the night, for thou wast flushed wine-red
Yestre'en when going hence?" then bade a scribe
To come with paper, musk, and spicery,
And wrote a warm rejoinder, and adorned,
Like Paradise, that paper wrought in Chín;
And first he praised the Judge, the Lord of manhood,
Of justice, and accomplishment, the Lord
Of learning, self-control, and Faith, "and may
He bless the king of Rúm. Thy courteous envoy
Hath reached us with the letter of the Sháh,
That seeker after knowledge. We have read
Thy royal words and with the great discussed them.
For what in fight and feast befell Dárá,
Son of Dáráb, Faryán, and Fúr whom thou
Didst triumph over and become the shepherd,
With monarchs as the flock: the Lord of sun
And moon so ordered it; impute it not
To prowess and the number of thy troops,
For when a chief's life endeth 'tis all one
To die in feast or fight. Thou foughtest them
Upon their fated day which altereth not.
Boast not and vaunt not over them, for thou
Past doubt wilt pass thyself, though thou be iron.
Where are Jamshíd, Zahhák, and Farídún?
They came from wind and went to wind again.
I neither fear thee nor will fight with thee.
Not, as with thee, doth bluster fill my head,
Who am not used to bloodshed, while ill-doing

Is not accordant to my Faith. Thou call'st me
Before thee but in vain, for I serve God,
Not king. I send thee more than thou dost ask;
Regarding largess I am not contentious."
Upon his cheek Sikandar felt the blush
Of shame, his liver arrow-pierced with what
Faghfúr had said, and thought: "None shall behold me
Fare in disguise henceforth."
He left the palace, C. 1350
Went to his lodging, and prepared to leave.
The great Faghfúr unlocked his treasury;
He grudged not bounty. First he bade make ready
An ivory throne and fifty crowns inlaid
With gems, and load with gold and silver ware
A thousand camels and a thousand more
With silk and satins, with brocade of Chín,
With camphor, aloe, musk, and spicery.
He liveth at his ease who scorneth gold.
Of squirrel, ermine, and of sable pelts,
Of rugs, of horse-hides, and of weazel-skins,
The prudent treasurer brought forth and packed
Of every sort two thousand, brought withal
High-mettled steeds caparisoned with gold,
And slave-boys too, three hundred, with gold girdles.
They brought three hundred red-haired camels laden
With many a rarity of Chín. Faghfúr
Chose from among the elders one of weight,
And sugared speech, and bade him go with greeting
And message to the Sháh, and bear to him
The glad news that the chiefs would do him homage
So long as he was in the coasts of Chín.
The envoy set forth with Sikandar. Who
Would think that he was Sháh? But when the sailors
Saw him, sprang up, and lightly spread the sails,
And when the viceroy met him with the troops,

Reporting what had chanced,[1] while all the soldiers
Praised him and bent their faces to the ground,
The man of Chín perceived: "It is the Sháh!"
And went to him afoot protesting loudly.
Sikandar said to him: "Make no excuses,
And mention not the matter to Faghfúr."
That night he rested and next day at dawn,
When he was set in peace upon his throne,
He gave the envoy gifts, and said: "May wisdom
Be ever thine. Go to Faghfúr and say:—
"With us thou hast great honour. Chín is thine,
If I may say so, and what more thou wilt.
I shall abide at present where I am;
One cannot hurry with so large a host."
Back with the speed of wind the envoy hied,
And told Faghfúr what Cæsar had replied.

§ 33

How Sikandar returned from Chín, made War against the Sindians, and went to Yaman

c. 1351 The Sháh abode a month and when the troops
Were rested led them back. From that green sea[2]
They fared by wilderness and longsome ways,
Stage after stage, until they reached Chaghwán,
And saw a fortified and prosperous city.
The magnates of the land, those famed and wise,
Came to Sikandar's presence while the chiefs
Set forward from Chaghwán with offerings,
And presents to his gate. At once Sikandar
Began to question them: "What sights have ye
Of marvel here?"
One said: "We know of none,
O king! worth seeing. Beggary and toil

[1] Or "when Sikandar had announced the result of his undertaking."
[2] *Or* the Green Sea. *Cf.* NAR, p. 40.

Are here, and thou wilt take naught hence but wind."
The Sháh, on hearing what the speaker said,
Marched from Chaghwán toward Sind whose cavaliers
Went out to meet him while from Hind came help.
All those heart-stricken on account of Fúr,
Their hands all bathed in blood, brought elephants,
And Indian bells. Arose the battlecry,
And clarion's blare. The Sindians' chief was named
Bandáwa, an illustrious cavalier,
And puissant. The armies shocked together,
And earth became all mountain-like with slain.
Night came; no Sindian stayed upon that field.
Sikandar led his army in pursuit,
And captured elephants fourscore and five,
As well as golden crowns and scimitars
And treasures. Women, children, and old men
Went weeping to the Sháh while on his way,
And said: "O prudent Sháh! restrain thyself,
Burn not our land, slay not our little ones,
For thy day too will pass, and blest is he
That walketh innocently."
He had no ruth,
Not sparing e'en the wounded. They enslaved
A host of women, children, young, and old.
He went toward Nímrúz by way of Bust,
And purged the world of foes. Thence he proceeded,
World-conquering with his famed host, Yaman-ward,
Whose monarch, hearing, went with chiefs to meet him,
Selecting native gifts of price and fair, C. 1352
As was most fit—of striped stuff of Yaman
Ten camel-loads and five of gold, ten more
Of drachms (when drachms are had hearts are not sad),
A thousand frails of saffron, with brocade
And raiment past compute. Among his treasures
He had a cup of emerald and pearls

Unpierced, in number seventy-five, besides
A cup of lapis-lazuli containing
Three score of topazes and on the top
Ten ruby signet-rings. These he delivered
To those in waiting with his benisons.
They reached the camp-enclosure of the Sháh
With all these gifts and offerings. Sikandar
Saluted and received the monarch well,
And seated him beside the throne, and he—
The monarch of Yaman—blessed him and said:—
"Be victor with thy troops. 'Twill give me joy
If thou wilt sojourn with me for two months
That Sháh and host may rest them from the road."
Sikandar blessed him, saying: "May thy mate
Be wisdom ever."
When the morning came
Yaman's king went his way, and all that coast
Resounded with the romage of the host.

§ 34

How Sikandar marched toward Bábil and found the Treasure of Kai Khusrau in a City

Sikandar led his troops toward Bábil;
The air was hidden by their dust. He marched,
He and his host, a month; they saw no rest-place.
At length they reached a mount whose top was hidden.
A black cloud rested on it; thou hadst said:—
"'Twas near to Saturn." They could find no road,
And Sháh and army halted in dismay.
They scaled laboriously the craggy height,
And even light-armed troops were overworn.
When they were all exhausted by the march
A deep sea showed upon the farther side.

The host rejoiced to view sea, plain, and road.
They marched toward that deep sea, and praised the Maker.
The place was full of beasts; the army lived
On game. Far off a savage showed all hairy,
With mighty ears. His body 'neath its fell C. 1353
Seemed indigo, his ears like elephant's
In breadth. On seeing such the soldiers seized
And bore him to Sikandar who beheld
Amazed, invoked o'er him the name of God,
And said: "What man art thou? What is thy name?
What get'st thou from the sea? What seekest thou?"
"My father and my mother," he replied,
"Gave me, O Sháh! this name of Gúsh-bistar."[1]
The Sháh asked: "What is that amid the water
Out yonder toward the rising of the sun?"
"O Sháh!" he said, "for ever live renowned.
There is a city there like Paradise,
And not, thou wouldest say, compact of earth.
Thou wilt not look on palace there or house
Whose outside is not made throughout of bones,
And, brighter than the sun, within the halls
Are limned the visage of Afrásiyáb,
And that of Kai Khusrau, the combative,
His greatness, manliness, and enterprises.
All these are painted on the bones of fish;
Thou wilt see nowhere any dust or earth;
The people live on fish and naught besides.[2]
Myself I will escort the army thither
If the famed Sháh shall bid."
Sikandar said
To him with ears: "Go to, fetch me a native
That I may look upon a novelty."
So Gúsh-bistar set forth at once and made
All speed to go to city and to folk,

[1] *I.e.* Ear-bed. *Cf.* p. 163.
[2] See p. 69.

And gave them Cæsar's message, saying: "The Sháh,
That famed one, calleth for you."
Of that city,
When young and old and high and low heard this,
There went across the water seventy men,
Possessed of wisdom or advanced in years,
And clad in silks, and some were young, some old.
The old and famed bare each a golden cup
A-brim with pearls, the young bare each a crown.
They came to Cæsar, bowed, and reverenced him;
They held long talk with him and said: "The treasures
Of Kai Khusrau are in our custody,
And would befit a new Sháh like thyself."
Thereat Sikandar hurried o'er the water
Toward their city, viewed it all—its marts,
And streets—and visited the treasure-house.
The hoard was all of crowns and thrones of gold,
With coronets and necklaces and girdles.
None knew its worth for none could reckon it.
C. 1354 The Sháh took all and sped to camp, rejoicing.
He stayed that night, but when cock-crow had come
Rose at his gate the sound of kettledrum.

§ 35

How Sikandar went to the City of Bábil, wrote a Letter to Arastálís, and received his Answer

Sikandar marched thence to Bábil; the earth
Was hidden by his host. He knew that death
Was near and that his day was overcast,
And thought to leave none of the royal race
To lead an army to make war on Rúm,
And set his foot upon that prosperous land.
When this thought gat possession of his brain

He wrote a letter to Arastálís,
And said: "It is my purpose not to leave
One of the royal seed. I have been round
The seven climes and taken many princes.
In sooth my death is nigh, so day hath darkened."
He bade that every one of Kaian seed
Should make him ready to appear at court,
Not dreaming of foul play. Now when they bare
The letter to the sage his heart was riven.
He answered instantly and, thou hadst said,
Made of the lashes of his eye his pen-point:—[1]
"The letter of the world's king hath arrived.
Thou must withhold thy hand from evil-doing,
Abandon this ill purpose, expiate
The thought by giving alms, restrain thyself,
Commit thyself to God and in the world
Sow only seed of good. We live for death,
For die we must past help. None hath borne off
The kingship with him, but hath gone and left
His greatness to another. So be ware,
Shed not the blood of princes else a curse
Will be upon thee till the Resurrection.
Again, when for the Íránian troops no Sháh
Shall sit upon the throne hosts will arrive
From Turkistán and Hind, Sakláb and Chín,
Arrive from all sides, and 'twill be no marvel
If they that take Írán shall war with Rúm.
Not e'en a breath must harm the Kaian-born.
Convoke the Rúman and Íránian chiefs
To merrymake, feast, conference, and banquet.
Appoint to every chief a fitting province, C. 1355
And start a new roll with the names of Rúman
And of Íránian chiefs at whose expense
Thou hast obtained the world, but give to none

[1] *I.e.* either "with the tears running down his pen" or "with great subtlety."

The lordship o'er another and withal
Call none of them the Sháh, and let these Kaians
Serve as the shields of thine own land if thou
Wouldst have not Rúm invaded."
When Sikandar
Received this answer he made haste to change
His purpose and bade summon to his court
The Rúman and Íránian notables
That were possessed of valour, ranked them duly,
And drew the patents so that none should seek
The least addition to the share assigned him.
To these renowned and independent princes
They gave the name of "Tribal Kings."
The night
Whereon Sikandar reached Bábil, and saw
The chiefs right glad to look on him again,
A woman bare a child that filled beholders
With wonderment. It had a lion's head
With hoofs for feet, an ox's tail, the breast
And shoulders of a man. The monster died
At birth but, though such things are best forgotten,
They bare it to the Sháh forthwith who gazed
Thereon with horror, held it ominous,
And said: "Let this be hidden by the dust."
He summoned many readers of the stars,
And held discourse at large of that dead child.
In great dismay they veiled their views thereon
From that fair-fortuned Sháh who raged, and said:—
"If aught be hid forthwith I will behead you,
And naught but lions' maws shall be your shroud!"
The Sháh being wroth, they told him: "Famous king!
That thou wast born beneath the Sign of Leo
Was patent both to archmage and to chief.
Thou seest the lion-like head on this dead child;
So will the head of thine own empire droop.
All thine astrologers have said as much

Already and adduced the signs."
Sikandar,
On hearing this, was grieved; his wits and counsel
Failed, and he said: "Death is past cure. My heart
Is not concerned thereat. No longer life
Is mine. Our period waxeth not nor waneth."
He sickened at Bábil that very day,
Knew that calamity was near and called
A veteran scribe before him to impart
The dispositions that he had at heart.

§ 36

Sikandar's Letter to his Mother

He bade to write a letter to his mother, C. 1356
And said to her: "One cannot blink Death's presage!
In this world I have had the appointed share,
And waned life waxeth not. Grieve not at all
About my death, for death is no new thing:
Royal or base whoe'er is born must die.
I will instruct the Rúman chiefs that when
They quit this land they must consult thy pleasure
In all things and obey thee loyally.
On every prince among the Íránians,
That might have caused calamity to Rúmans
I have bestowed a province. Now when each
Of these hath entered on his government,
Good sooth, he will have no desire for Rúm;
Our marches and our land will rest from foes.
Embalm me dead upon the soil of Misr,
And spill no word of mine. Of my dínárs
Bestow one hundred thousand every year
Upon the husbandmen; and should a son
Be born to Rúshanak his father's name
In truth will live, and Rúm must have no king

Save him, for he will renovate that land;
But in her travail if she bear a daughter
Espouse her to the son of Failakús;
Call him my son, not son-in-law, and keep
Within the world through him my memory green.
Send back too scathless to her sire in state
Kaid's daughter with her own devoted slaves,
And purses. Furnish litters for the journey;
Send too the crowns and gems, the gold and silver,
Brought by her from her sire, to Hindústán
Whene'er she would depart. I have achieved
All that I purposed here and now perforce
Must think of death. List to my last requests,
And add not thereunto. First fashion me
A golden coffin. Let my shroud be made
In worthy fashion of gold cloth of Chín,
And saturate with ambergris, and let
No pains be spared for me, but seal my coffin
With pitch and camphor, musk and spicery.
First pour in honey, let it be above,
And let there be brocade of Chín below;
C. 1357 Then let my corpse be laid inside the coffin,
And, when ye veil my visage, there an end.
O my wise mother! keep in mind my counsel
While life endureth. All that I have gathered
From Hind, Túrán, Makrán, Írán, and Chín,
Keep thou, but give thy superfluities,
What thou canst not enjoy thyself, away.
'Tis my desire for thee, my loving mother!
That thou be watchful and serene of soul,
And not too toilful, for none tarrieth here
For ever. Surely when thy day is done
Our souls will meet again. 'Tis nobler far
To suffer than to love, and 'tis the mean
That yield to passion. Since my body once
Was all thy care for months and years, now pray

To God for my pure soul and help me thus,
For prayer is all in all. Behold and see
If there be any in earth's round whose soul
Is stricken not at death."
He sealed and closed
The letter, and bade men on speedy steeds
Convey these tidings from Bábil to Rúm :—
"The Grace of king of kingship is bedimmed!"
Now when the army was aware thereof
The world was darkened to the chiefs, who set
Their faces toward the throne of majesty,
And all the world was full of hue and cry.

§ 37

How Sikandar's Life ended and how they carried his Coffin to Iskandaríya

On hearing how the army was bestead,
And knowing that his time was near, Sikandar
Bade carry from the palace to the field
His throne. The troops bewailed his malady
When they beheld the Sháh's pale face. The plain
Was one great cry; they seethed as on quick fire.
All said: "What misadventure for the Rúmans
To lose their king! Ill fortune is upon us,
And field and fell henceforth are desolate;
Our foes have won their wish and gained their goal;
The world becometh bitter to us now;
In public and in private we shall wail!"
With failing voice said Cæsar: "Be devout,
Wise, modest, and heed all my last requests,
If ye would prosper both in soul and body.
When I have gone the work is left for you, C. 1358
And fortune is not dealing ill with me."
He spake, his life departed, and that Sháh

So famous, that host-shatterer, passed away.
A cry went up from all the host and split
The ears of heaven. The soldiers all strewed dust
Upon their heads and strained their hearts' blood through
The lashes of their eyes. They fired his palace,
And docked a thousand steeds, reversing all
Their saddles. Thou hadst said: "The earth lamenteth!"
They bore the golden bier out to the plain,
And wailing pierced the sky. A prelate laved
The corpse with clear rose-water, and besprinkled
Thereon pure camphor. Of gold-woven brocade
They made his winding-sheet, while all bewailed him,
And, having shrouded thus that noble form
Beneath brocade of Chín, they covered it
With honey to the feet and then sealed down
The lid of that strait coffin: passed away
That Tree so fruitful and so shadowing!
Thou bidest not within this Hostel. Why
Toy then with crown or cling to treasury?

Now when they raised the coffin from the plain,
And passed it on from hand to hand, two voices—
A Rúman and a Persian—rose, and all
The talk was of the coffin. All the Persians
Said thus: "He should be buried in Írán
Where are the ashes of the kings of kings:
Why should ye speed the coffin round the world?"

One of the Rúman counsellors replied:—
"It is not fitting here to bury him.
If ye will hear my rede aright Sikandar
Should pass back to the soil wherefrom he sprang."

A Persian said withal: "Howe'er ye talk
This will reach no fair ending. I will show you
A field commemorating Sháhs of old.
Wise ancients call it Khurm. It hath a lake
And forest, and in answer to thy questions

A voice, which every one may hear, will speak
Out of the mountain. Thither bear some ancient
In his decrepitude, and there too stay
The coffin. Let him ask. Then if the mountain
Reply 'twill rede you well."
Like mountain-sheep
They hurried to the wood that he called Khurm,
They asked their question and this answer came:—
"Why long delay the coffin of the Sháh?
Iskandaríya, which he built in life,
Is destined to contain Sikandar's dust."
The soldiers heard the voice and bare away
The coffin from the wood without delay.

§ 38

How the Sages and other Folk lamented Sikandar

Now when they brought him to Iskandaríya C. 1359
Another dispensation ruled the world.
They set his coffin on the plain; all earth
Was full of hue and cry. Men, women, children,
Above a hundred thousand had one reckoned,
Flocked to Iskandaríya to the coffin.
The wise Arastálís stood forth; a world,
With eyes all tears of blood, was watching him.
He laid his hand on that strait coffin, saying:—
"God-fearing Sháh! where are thy prudence, knowledge,
And rede that this strait coffin should become
Thy home? In youth's day, after these few years,
Why hast thou chosen the dust for pillowing?"
The Rúman sages all assembled there:
One said: "O brazen-bodied Elephant!
Who overthrew thee? Who desired thy place?
Where now are all thy shrewdness and wise counsel?"

Another said: "Thou laidest up much gold:
Why now is gold embracing thus thy body?"
Another said: "No man escaped thy hand,
But why, O Sháh! didst thou rub hands with Death?"
Another: "Thou hast rest from pain and toil
As well as from the quest of rule and treasure."
Another: "When thou goest before thy Judge
That which thou sowed'st thou shalt reap withal."
Another: "Impotent is he that used
To shed the blood of kings."
Another said:—
"Soon shall we be as thou art, thou that wast
An uncut gem."
Another said: "The Master,
On seeing thee, will teach thee things forgotten."
Another said: "Since he hath been death-smitten
We should not clutch at self-aggrandisement."
Another said: "O higher than moon and sun!
Why hidest thou from all thy goodly face?"
Another said: "A man of many parts
Is fain to cover him face-deep in gold,
But now, O man of such accomplishment,
And brave! the yellow gold hath whelméd thee!"
Another said: "Thou hast put on brocade,
And veiled to us therewith thy lovely looks.
Now lift thy head therefrom, for crown and armlet,
And ivory throne, of thee are all in quest."
"Thou hast been severed from thy moon-faced youths,"
Another said, "and thralls of Chín and Rúm,
And huggest gold to thee. Oh! deal not thus,
'Tis not kings' usage, with brocade and gold."
C. 1360 Another said: "What well advised reply
Will come to thee now that the Questioner
Will question thee, and say: 'Why didst thou shed
The blood of great men, and with so much stress

Didst struggle after treasure? Didst not see
How many of the great have died and borne
Naught from the world with them except the fame
Of their good deeds?'"

Another said: "Thy day
Is over-passed, thy tongue hath ceased to parle.
Now wilt thou see a mighty Court—a world
Wherein the sheep is parted from the wolf.[1]
The observer of thy throne and crown should turn
His reins from greatness for, as 'tis with thee,
It will abide with none. The tree of greatness
Should not be planted!"

Said another: "Thy deeds
Are turned to wind, the chiefs' heads quit of thee."

Another said: "Why in this Wayside Inn
Laboriously didst thou employ thyself,
Since this is all that thou hast gained by toil?
A narrow coffin is thine only wealth.
Thou seekest not the trumpet-call but choosest
The bondage of a bier?"

Another said:—
"What time thy troops depart thou wilt remain
All by thyself on this wide waste, good sooth!
With longing eyes pursue them as they go,
And mourn thine own lost life with boundless woe."

§ 39

How the Mother and Wife of Sikandar lamented him

Then came Sikandar's mother hurrying,
And long while pressed her visage over him.
She said: "O thou illustrious king of kings,
Lord of the world, star-favoured, and devout!

[1] Reading with P.

Near as thou art, thou art yet far from me,
Far from thy host, thy kingdom, and thy people.
May my soul wait on thine, and be their hearts
Plucked out that joy hereat."
Then Rúshanak
Came full of anguish, saying: "Noble Sháh!
Where are Dárá, son of Dáráb, the master
And up-stay of the world,[1] and all the kings
Whose head the blast sent dustward on the day
Of battle? Like a fierce cloud charged with hail
Wast thou and safe, I would have said, from death.
With so much warfare, combating, and bloodshed
In single action and in stricken field,
I would have said that fate had given thee
Safe conduct, and thou keepest from thy men
The secret, yet hast thou, when thou hadst voided
The world of chiefs, cast off the imperial crown,
C. 1361 And when the tree which thou hadst planted bore
I see thee with the dust to comrade thee!"
Now when the Crown of heaven had set, and when
The mighty men had had their fill of talk,
They hid Sikandar's coffin in the dust.
To do such things the world is not afraid;
It merely giveth back what it conveyed
From wind at first, and this I hold to be
Not clearly justice yet not tyranny.
To thee the how and why are hidden things,
And past the reach of subjects and of kings.
Yet beauty, kindness, generosity,
With good and joyance, still are left to thee;
And, be thou chief or subject, with such store
I see not aught that thou canst wish for more;
But if thou leavest here a name for vice
Thou'lt lose God's grace and jocund Paradise.[2]
The ancient Hostel's wont is still the same;

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] Reading with P.

Sikandar went, but left behind him fame.
Though able six and thirty kings to slay
Where is his portion in the world to-day?
Ten cities were erected 'neath his sway,
All splendid, but ten thorn-brakes now are they.
He sought what no man ever sought before,
And wide-spread fame is left him but no more,
Yet fame is good for fame will not decay
Like some old dwelling weather-worn away.
The barrier of Sikandar we have past,
May all be well and of auspicious cast,
And may the monarch of the world[1] be still
Of joyous heart and free from every ill.

§ 40

Firdausí's Complaint of the Sky and Appeal to God

High-springing arch of heaven! Oh! why dost thou,
When eld is on me, keep me thus forlorn?
Thou madest much of me in youth but now
Thou passest my decrepitude with scorn.
The pampered blossoms take a sallow hue,
The pictured silk is cheapened by much stress.
The dainty cypress-tree is bent in two
Within the garth, the bright lamp lustreless,
The mountain-top once black is capped with snow,
The soldiers mark the Sháh's deficiencies:
Thou wast a mother to me long ago,
Who needs shed blood-drops at thy tyrannies.
I find no wisdom or good faith in thee;
Thy dark proceedings aggravate my lot:
Oh! would that thou hadst never nurtured me,
Or, having nurtured, persecuted not!

[1] Mahmúd.

Whene'er I quit this gloom I will arraign
This tyranny of thine before the Just,
Of thee before the All Holy One complain
With clamourings and head bestrewn with dust.
C. 1362 Time saw how eld increased my misery,
But laid the more part of the blame on me,
And thus to me high heaven made reply:—
"O thou that art not wronged and yet dost cry!
Why lookest thou to me for good and ill?
Do such complaints as thine become the sage?
In everything thou betterest me still,
And canst the famine of thy soul assuage
With knowledge. Food, sleep, choice of home are thine;
To good and ill 'tis thine to seek the path;
All that thou chargest is no fault of mine,
For neither sun nor moon such knowledge hath.
Ask Him that made them to be Guide to thee,
Made day and night, religion, law, who saith:—
'Be,' and all is as He would have it be.
A fool is he that knoweth other Faith.
In His creation I am but a thrall,
A servant unto Him who fashioned me;
To do His bidding is mine all in all;
I never swerve from His authority.
Turn then to God, to Him for succour fly,
Imploring no unconscionable boon,
And own that none is master of the sky
Save He that kindled Venus, Sun, and Moon.
His blessing on Muhammad's spirit be,
And on his comrades all increasingly."[1]

[1] See p. 196.

III
THE ASHKANIAN DYNASTY

XXI

THE ASHKÁNIANS

THEY REIGNED TWO HUNDRED YEARS

ARGUMENT

THE poet praises Sultán Mahmúd and then, having no subject-matter in connexion with this dynasty, proceeds to narrate the story of the rise of the race of Sásán in the person of Ardshír Pápakán and of his triumph over Ardawán, the last of the Ashkánians. He then goes on to tell of Ardshír's campaign against the Kurds, and of the strange case of Haftwád and the Worm.

NOTE

The abridgment of the epoch of the Ashkánians to 200 years is more drastic even than that of other Oriental writers. Mas'údí's curious explanation of this matter will be found later on.[1]

In one respect at least the Sháhnáma presents a remarkable analogy to the land of its origin: the central portion of both is a barren waste. Of the five centuries and more that intervened between the day of the death of Sikandar (Alexander the Great) and that on which Ardshír Pápakán (Artaxerxes I.) was acclaimed King of kings by his victorious troops on the battle-field of Hurmuzdagán,[2] that is to say between June 13th B.C. 323 and September 26th A.D. 226, Firdausí knew absolutely nothing save a few names and the semi-mythical circumstances attendant on the coming into being of the second Persian or Sásánian Empire. Consequently, for convenience sake, the period covered by the Ashkánian dynasty has come to be regarded merely as a single reign—the twenty-first in the long series of the fifty Sháhs. After all, however, this dearth of subject-matter in the core of the poem is not so complete as it seems. Firdausí took his

[1] See p. 251.
[2] *Id.* p. 199.

authorities as he found them, and long before his days Íránian tradition already had assigned all of heroic or noteworthy that had remained in memory of Ashkánian times to the mythical epochs of the Pishdádian and Kaiánian dynasties. He spoke of the ancient tongue (Pahlaví) and of the paladins (Pahlaváns), he told at large the gests of Káran, Gúdarz, Gív, Bízhan, and others, but had no notion that he was dealing with words, names, personalities, and subject-matter, that had originated in a period dismissed by him in a few couplets as a legendary blank.[1] Again, apart from those heroes of secondary importance, there can be little doubt but that to the invasion of the Sacæ, which took place in Parthian times,[2] we owe the Personification of that warrior-race, Rustam himself, the great paladin of paladins. The importance of the Ashkánian dynasty in the provenance of the subject-matter of the Sháhnáma therefore is much greater than superficially is apparent, and if all the legendary material of the poem could be replaced in its proper setting there would be no longer such discrepancies in length and interest between this and the two preceding dynasties. Historically of course it synchronises with one of the most important periods in the world's history, that of the successors of Alexander the Great, of the Parthian dynasty, and of the dominance of Rome. No one, least of all a translator, would wish that the Sháhnáma were longer, but one may regret that the misplaced material, which so inordinately prolongs the Kaiánian dynasty, was not kept in its proper connexion in the Ashkánian. As things stand the latter is a mere prelude to the Sásánian dynasty, and is concerned with the rise to power of Ardshír Pápakán, its founder, between which and that of Cyrus the Great there is a remarkable resemblance. In both cases there had been a previous incursion of nomads which had resulted in the establishment of their supremacy in western Írán. In the first case it was the Manda who, being confounded with the Madá or true Medes,[3] brought about the establishment of the so-called Median Empire under which the dynasty of the Achæmenids occupied a subordinate position in Elam and Párs till the successful rebellion of Cyrus, king of Elam, against his over-lord Astyages, and his other conquests, reduced all western Asia underneath his rule. In the second case it was the Parthians, also nomads, who established a like empire over the same regions, and under whom the rulers of the house of Pápak or Sásán similarly occupied a subordinate position in Párs. As in the case of Cyrus, so Ardshír, the son of Pápak, successfully rebelled against his over-lord, and founded a great

[1] *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 8 *seq.* [2] See Vol. i. p. 19. [3] *Id.* 17.

Persian empire. Again, the rise to power of Cyrus and Ardshír was embellished in each case by legend. In that of Cyrus two distinct accounts have come down to us, from Herodotus and Ctesias respectively. The former is that given, *mutatis mutandis*, by Firdausí in his story of the early years of Kai Khusrau,[1] the latter was transferred in Iránian legend from Cyrus to Ardshír as Gutschmid pointed out, who says, speaking of the fable that forms the kernel of the story :—"The hero is a Persian shepherd's son; from dreams shared by his parents the dream-interpreters predicted his future greatness; in his youth he came to the Median Court and there, through a strange fatality, has to do hard service; the crisis comes at last, and with it the flight of the hero to his home in Persis. Directly he has fled the astrologers declare that unless he be brought back in a given time he certainly will gain the kingdom, which comes to pass. This in a short sketch is the story of Ardshír; it is, however, exactly that of Cyrus, translated by Median hands but founded on Persian national sagas as given by Ctesias. The resemblance extends even to trifles; from the stable, where he has to do the most menial work, Ardshír starts on the flight which is to end in his gaining the sovereignty; at the moment when Cyrus resolves to break with Astyages he is met by a Persian slave, Hoibaras, carrying horse's dung in a basket, and that is interpreted as a good omen, horse's dung signifying riches and might (Nicolaus of Damascus, fr. 66, by Müller, iii. p. 400). So great a similarity certainly is not accidental, rather we recognise in it an old national saga transferred from the founder of the old Persian kingdom to the founder of the new."[2]

The Iránian version of this legend, as applied to Ardshír, is extant in the Sháhnáma and in a Pahlaví text very similar in provenance and character to the Yátkár-i-Zarírán with which we were concerned in the previous volume of this translation.[3] The work in question begins, after an invocation to Urmuzd, thus :—"In the history of Ardshír, son of Pápak, the following is written." The word for "history" in the original is "kárnámak," which is used now as the title of the extant work, and not of the one, now lost, from which it was taken. Our extant Kárnámak appears to date from the seventh century A.D., and is separable

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 190. [2] GKS, iii. 133.

[3] See Vol. v. p. 24. The reader may be referred to the remarks there made as to the position of such works as the above as contributories to the main stream of Iránian legend.

into portions each of which once, in all probability, formed an independent legend. Thus we have

1. The adapted Cyrus legend.
2. Ardshír's war with the Kurds.
3. The story of the Worm.
4. The two stories of Shápúr.

These are strung loosely together as illustrations, each in its degree, of the process that led to the restoration of Íránian unity at the hands of Ardshír Pápakán and his immediate successors. The subject-matter of the Kárnámak corresponds with §§ 3–16 of the Ashkánians, and with §§ 1–6 of Ardshír Pápakán, but, like the Yátkár-i-Zarírán in Dakíkí's case, it is not the actual authority followed by the poet but a collateral one. This is clear from the fact that it omits a very important passage given by Firdausí,[1] while it contains a somewhat touching episode which is not in the Sháhnáma, though it seems incredible that the poet should have made no use of it had he known it.[2] The episodes of the self-mutilation of Ardshír's minister,[3] and of the game of polo, whereby the Sháh recognised his son, also are lacking in the Kárnámak, though the polo-episode is found there in another connexion.[4] Other differences are due to Firdausí's more poetical and artistic way of looking at things, and to the toning down of the somewhat pronounced Zoroastrianism that appears in the Pahlaví original, but he may have found this already done in the version that he followed, which was, in all probability, that contained in the modern Persian tenth century prose Sháhnáma.[5] The compilers of that work seem, however, on the whole to have preferred, or at all events for the most part to have followed, the Arabic versions, and this preference is reflected in the poem.

Wherever in the following notes a comparison is instituted between the Kárnámak and Firdausí the former will be referred to as K and the latter as F.

§ 1. In the text of C this forms the concluding portion of § 40 of the previous reign. We follow the arrangement in P.

For Nasr, who is referred to again under the title of Abú'l Muzaffar just below, see Vol. i. p. 100.

At first sight there seems to be a chance here of our being able to determine at what date this passage was written, owing to Firdausí's reference to some occasion on which Mahmúd remitted a year's land-tax, but the fatality which attends all matters of date in the poem is operative even here, and there appears to be no account of this remission elsewhere.[6]

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[1] See p. 205. [2] *Id.* p. 255. [3] *Id.* p. 261 *seq.* [4] *Id.* pp. 257, 271 *seq.*
[5] See Vol. i. p. 67 *seq.* [6] *Id.* 24, and NIN, p. 50, *note.*

§ 2. As to who the thane (dihkán) of Chách was nothing more seems to be known.

It is the fashion of Íránian legend to connect the dynasties by means of fictitious genealogies. Accordingly the Ashkánians are represented as being descended from Kai Árash, the second son of Kai Kubád, the words Ashk and Árash being sufficiently alike to have suggested the connexion. Ashk is a word expressive of kingly virtues such as "wise," "pure," "holy." In the West it took the form of Arsaces. In the Oriental lists of the kings of the Ashkánian dynasty the other names here mentioned by Firdausí occur, sometimes more than once. There are two Ashks, one Shápúr, several of the name of Gúdarz, one or two Bízhans, two or three Narsís, one or two of the name of Urmuzd or Hurmuz, no Árash, who perhaps is inserted in the Sháhnáma to keep up the nominal connexion with the second son of Kai Kubád, and three or four Ardawáns.[1] The one here mentioned by Firdausí is the last of that name, and the poet, it appears, considered that his real name was Bahrám, but in the lists there is only one so called, and he is placed much earlier. Some account of Bahrám, Gúdarz, and Bízhan, in this connexion, has been given already.[2]

In the last reign we had Firdausí's story of the establishment by Sikandar of the system of Part or Tribal Kings and his motives in so doing.[3] Though Sikandar's share in the matter is of course wholly unhistorical, the view taken in Íránian legend of the political system that obtained after his death is, broadly speaking, fairly correct. Írán never again was organised under one supreme head, as it had been in the days of the first Persian empire, till the establishment of the second empire five and a half centuries later. The death of Alexander was followed by long wars due to the rival ambitions of his generals and their descendants. Later on came wars with Rome and the rise of the Parthian power, which remained for centuries the great bulwark of the East against Roman aggression. The system of Parthian rule, however, was a nomad one. It originated in the victories of a nomad tribe, and it was to the nomads that the Parthian kings turned for succour in their hours of need. They called themselves indeed by the title of King of kings, as the Achæmenids did before them, and some of them at all events professed the same religion, but national Íránian tradition never recognised their right to use the ancient Persian title of supreme ruler though, in a sense, it was more applicable to them than to their pre-

[1] See the lists in GKS, iii. 24.

[2] See Vol. iii. p. 9 *seq.*

[3] See p. 178 *seq.*

decessors. With the Achæmenids it was a claim to universal sovereignty, with the Arsacids a claim to the suzerainty of Írán. The geographical extent of the lands ruled by themselves, or by their governors on their behalf, was not very great, and the remainder of their empire consisted of kingdoms that retained at least a semi-independence under native rulers. Such, for instance, were the kingdoms of Osroene, Gordyene, and Atropatane (Azarbáiján) in the north, Elymais (Elam) and Párs in the south, and Sístán and Bactria in the east. Further, in the case of Párs, as we learn from Tabarí, and, we may presume, elsewhere also, these Part or Tribal Kings had under them small local kings or princes. In the days of Firdausí's Ardawán, the last Parthian Great King, there seem to have been four such rulers in Párs, one of whom was Pápak, under his immediate over-lord, the Part or Tribal King who ruled at Istakhr. Thus in Parthian times Írán was split into two great divisions, one under the Parthian Great King and organised into eighteen provinces administered by satraps directly responsible to him; the other under semi-independent potentates who held the same position with reference to their regal underlings as he held towards them. According to the Kárnámak there were in all 240 kings, according to Arab authorities there were 90,[1] so the Parthian over-lord was entitled to describe himself as King of kings.

§§ 3–9. Tabarí's account of the rise of the Sásánian dynasty is briefly as follows:—Ardshír was the son of Pápak, king of Khír, and was born at a village named Tírúdih in the same neighbourhood. His grandfather, Sásán, was the superintendent of a Fire-temple in Istakhr. His grandmother, Sásán's wife, was of the royal house of the Bázrangí, and was named Rámbihisht. Pápak succeeded his father, and to him was born Ardshír. The king of Istakhr at that time was of the race of the Bázrangí, and his name was Gúzihr. He had a eunuch called Tírí whom he made commandant of Dárábgird. When Ardshír was seven years old his father Pápak took him to see Gúzihr, who lived at Baidá,[2] and asked him to allow Tírí to bring up Ardshír, who ultimately was to succeed Tírí at Dárábgird. Gúzihr assented, and Ardshír in course of time succeeded Tírí as had been arranged. For a while he remained free from ambition till it was roused in him by the predictions of astrologers and the

[1] NK, p. 36, and *note*.

[2] *I.e.* "The White"—an Arabic translation of the Persian name of the hill-fort (now Bardi ?) of which a description will be found in Vol. i. p. 236, *note*, but Professor Nöldeke places it only six German miles north of Shíráz. NT, p. 5, *note*.

announcement to him by an angel[1] in a dream, that he was destined to rule Írán. Thereupon he began to assert himself by attacking and slaying three local kings in Párs, and setting up adherents of his own in their stead. He then wrote to his father Pápak, urging him to rise against Gúzihr at Baidá. Pápak did so, slew Gúzihr, and took his crown. Then Pápak wrote to Ardawán for permission to crown his (Pápak's) son, Shápúr, with the crown of Gúzihr. Ardawán replied that Pápak and Ardshír had acted as rebels. Pápak died, his son Shápúr became king and summoned his brother Ardshír to court. Ardshír refused to come, Shápúr marched against him, but on the way to Dárábgird was killed by the fall of part of one of the buildings of Humái.[2] On this Ardshír went to Istakhr and, with the assent of his other brothers, became king. However, on the pretext, or in consequence, of a conspiracy on their part against him, he put many of them to death later on. He then reduced Dárábgird, where the people had taken the opportunity of his absence to rebel against him. Next he conquered the king of Kirmán, and annexed that district, of which he made one of his own sons governor. After this he slew Astawadh, a king on the coast of the Persian sea. Next he conquered Mihrak, a king in the district of Ardshír-Khurra, where he founded the town of Gúr, and, while thus engaged, received a hostile letter from Ardawán, which he answered in a similar tone, and returned to Istakhr. After this he made three distinct expeditions from Párs. In the first he subdued Ispahán, Ahwáz, a district on the small Tigris,[3] and other places. In the second he went to Ahwáz by way of Girih and Kázirún and on to Maishán where he built the town of Karakh-Maishán. In the third he encountered Ardawán at Hurmuzdagán, slew him, and the same day was hailed King of kings. The date of this battle seems to have been September 26th, A.D. 226, but the actual site, according to Professor Nöldeke, is unknown, and he is of the opinion that the three expeditions of Ardshír from Párs, mentioned above, correspond with the three battles that, according to Western writers, took place before Ardawán was disposed of for good and all.[4] The plain of Rám Hurmuz, south of Shúshtar, has been suggested as the probable scene of the decisive battle.[5]

§ 3. In the Sháhnáma the Sásánian dynasty is connected with the Kaiánian by a double genealogy, one already given under

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[1] No doubt, as Professor Nöldeke suggests, Surúsh in the original Pahlaví. NT, 6, and *note*.

[2] See Vol. v. p. 293.

[3] The Kárún.

[4] NT, pp. 1–15, and *notes*. *Cf.* RSM, 35 *seq.*

[5] *Id.*

the reign of Bahman,[1] the other here. Both are fictitious, Tabarí's account making it clear with regard to the latter that Ardshír was the son, not the grandson on the female side only, of Pápak.[2] In Tabarí also two genealogies are given, both of which serve to connect the line of Pápak with the Kaiánians. They run as follow :—[3]

I	II
Kai Manush (Minúchihr ?)	Luhrásp
Kai Ugí (?)	Gushtásp
Luhrásp	Asfandiyár
Gushtásp	Bahman
Asfandiyár	Sásán
Bahman	Bihafrídh
Sásán	Zarár
Mihrmas	Pápak
Pápak	Sásán
Sásán	Pápak
Pápak	Ardshír
Sásán	
Pápak	
Ardshír	

Two similar genealogies, tracing back the line of Ardshír to Luhrásp, are given by Mas'údí.[4] Neither he nor Tabarí credits the legends, found in the Kárnámak and in the Sháhnáma, that Sásán was a shepherd in the employment of Pápak, who adopted him and gave him a daughter in marriage. In Firdausí Pápak is called the son of Rúdyáb, but as the poet makes that name a rhyme-word it is open to suspicion apart from the fact that it does not appear in any of the above-mentioned genealogies. The same reason, probably, led Firdausí (F) to put the visit of the master of the herds (ramah) to Pápak in the winter-season (damah)—a touch not found in the Kárnámak (K). In K Pápak has three dreams. The first of them, in which he sees the sun

[1] See Vol. v. p. 290.
[2] See p. 198.
[3] NT, p. 1.
[4] MM, ii. 151.

illuminating the whole world from the head of Sásán, is not in F. In K too the three Fires are Frúbá, representing the priestly class, Gushasp, the warrior-class, and Mihr Barzin, the agricultural.[1] The sending of Sásán to the bath, doubtlessly a very necessary preliminary, is not in the more primitive K.

§ 4. Ardawán, the Artabanus III. or IV. of Western writers, the last ruler of the Parthian dynasty, was regarded in Persian historical tradition as being himself the chief Tribal or Part King, the *primus inter pares*, not as the general suzerain, and as having Media Magna as his territory. Hence F assigns him Rai as his capital.[2]

K adds chess to the accomplishments learnt by Ardshír at Court, but F tells us further on, under the reign of Núshírwán, the story of its introduction into Persia.

The present of money that accompanied Pápak's reply to Ardshír is not mentioned in K.

§ 5. The details of the slave-girl's descent by means of a lasso in order to visit Ardshír, and her name, are not in K, which omits too the mention of Pápak's death and Ardawán's appointment of a successor, and makes Ardawán the Part King over Ispahán, Párs, and the neighbouring lands, and Pápak himself the prince of Párs.[3]

The account of the astrologers working out their calculations in the house of the slave-girl, and her over-hearing them, is lacking in K, which gives no reason for her knowledge in the matter. On the other hand the pronouncements of the astrologers are more elaborate and technical in K, where also they state that the servant who escapes from his master in the course of the next three days will supplant him.[4]

§ 6. In K the fugitives arrive at a village, where they are afraid to stop, and are met by two women who tell Ardshír to fear not, and to hasten to the sea where he will be safe. In F the fugitives reach a pool where they want to drink and rest, but are warned by two young men to hasten on. In K Ardawán thrice in the course of his pursuit inquires of those whom he meets as to how far the fugitives are ahead. On the third occasion it is a caravan that he comes upon. F omits the caravan passage.

For the mountain-sheep see Vol. i. p. 374.

§ 7. F is more detailed here. In K the corresponding passage runs thus:—"Then he (Ardawán) sent an equipped army to Párs,

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[1] See Vol. i. pp. 7, 130, 132.
[2] NT, p. 7, *note*.
[3] NK, p. 36.
[4] NK, i. 42. *Cf.* p. 195.

under his own son, to take Ardshír prisoner.[1] In the meanwhile Ardshír went his way to the coast. As he proceeded, some of the men of Párs, who were hostile to Ardawán, handed over to him goods and chattels and their own persons, and promised him fealty and obedience."[2]

The city founded by Ardshír was called Rív-Ardshír.[3]

§ 8. In K we have Banák of Ispahán with six sons for the Tabák of Jahram with seven sons of F. The Persian for "seven" comes in handily as a rhyme-word; hence the change. In K it is stated that Ardshír called the district where he first met Banák "Rámishn-i-Ardshír," *i.e.* "Joy of Ardshír," and founded a city there of the same name and also known as "Rám Ardshír," *i.e.* "Happy Ardshír."[4] It was natural that he should, or be thought to, have founded a Fire-temple there, and this may be the origin of F's Rám in that connexion.

The account of Ardshír's battle with Bahman, son of Ardawán, is not in K.

§ 9. Firdausí's description of this battle is in his usual style. The corresponding passage in K may be read to indicate three battles or campaigns.[5] It runs as follows:—"Then he (Ardshír) began war with Ardawán, slaughtered his whole army, and took from him his goods and chattels, houses, and property. Then he settled in Istakhr, and assembled from Kirmán, Makrán, Ispahán, and the different regions of Párs, a very great host. Then he began another war with Ardawán. For four months there were daily much fighting and slaughter. Ardawán collected from various regions—Rai, Damáwand, Dílamán,[6] and Patash-wárgar[7]—armies and horses; but as the Majesty of the Kaiánians had descended on Ardshír he was successful, killed Ardawán, and all his possessions came into Ardshír's hands. He took Ardawán's daughter to wife and went back to Pars."[8]

§§ 10, 11. Here we have the account of an "unfortunate incident," and shall meet, later on, with others that befell Ardshír after his triumph over Ardawán. He still had to fight hard to make good the title of "King of kings" conferred on him by his troops on the field of Hurmuzdagán.[9] Naturally this would be so. A dynasty that had endured for centuries could not fail to have many adherents and dependants; Ardawán had left sons; Chosroes, the king of Armenia, was either his brother or at

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[1] According to F Ardawán's eldest son, Bahman, was established already as ruler in Párs. See p. 218.

[2] NK, p. 46. [3] NT, p. 19, and *note*. [4] NK, p. 46.

[5] *Cf.* p. 199. [6] Gílán. [7] Tabaristán or Mázandarán.

[8] NK, p. 47, and *notes*. [9] See p. 199.

all events had been set on the throne by him; the Part Kings too had everything to lose by Ardshír's success, for it was manifest that he had no intention of leaving them in the semi-independent position that they had enjoyed under Parthian suzerainty; his view with regard to them was, as we have seen already, that "stone dead hath no fellow."[1] Ardshír followed up his success over Ardawán by striking at the heart of that king's power which, according to Íránian tradition, lay in Media, and here is recorded for us in the account of his expedition against the Kurds, by whom the people of Media are meant, for in K the name of the Kurd king is Mádík, which simply means "the Mede."[2] These, so far as Media Magna was concerned, Ardshír seems to have conquered, but Tabarí's statement that he subdued Ázarbáiján and Armenia appears to be an exaggeration. The case of Âzarbáijan is doubtful, but Armenia, whither some of the Arsacid princes had fled for refuge, succeeded with the help of Rome in maintaining its independence.[3]

§§ 12–16. To the exegesis of this strange story, as Firdausí calls it, three great authorities—Mohl, Darmesteter, and Nöldeke—have contributed. The two latter see reason to connect it with other more ancient Indo-European myths of dragons, such as Indra with Vritra, Apollo with the Python, &c., and Darmesteter quotes an interesting Scandinavian parallel which he considers more primitive and unaffected by industrialism:—"Le comte Herraudr a donné à sa fille, la belle Thora, un serpent qu'il a trouvé dans un œuf de vautour. Le serpent plaît à Thora qui lui fait un lit d'or dans un coffret. Le serpent grandit, *l'or grandit avec lui*, le coffre devient trop étroit pour lui, et même la maison de la jeune fille qu'il enveloppe de son corps. Il était méchant et malicieux: nul n'osait l'approcher que l'homme qui lui apportait chaque jour sa nourriture, consistant en un bœuf entier. Le comte promet sa fille et l'or à qui tuera le dragon. Ragnar, âgé de quinze ans, se fait un vêtement garni de poix (pour se garder du poison du serpent), surprend le monstre et le tue de la pointe de son épieu qu'il lui laisse dans la gueule. Il se retire sans dire son nom et plus tard se fait reconnaître publiquement au manche de son épieu: il reçoit Thora en mariage."[4]

Still more to the point are Mohl's explanation and illustration, which are as follow:—"Je suis disposé à croire que ce conte est un vague souvenir de l'introduction du ver à soie en Perse et de la prospérité que cette nouvelle industrie devait avoir répandue. On me permettra peut-être de citer à l'appui de cette supposition

[1] See p. 199.
[2] NK, p. 48, and *note*.
[3] NT, p. 15, and *note*. *Cf.* RSM, p. 37 *seq.*
[4] DEI, ii. 83.

un conte analogue et presque aussi étrange, qui date de nos jours. Je me rappelle avoir vu, il y a une trentaine d'années, au ministère du commerce, un rapport du préfet d'un des départements de la Bretagne au sujet de la détresse que répandait dans la campagne l'introduction du fil de lin produit par les machines, et de la difficulté que les fileuses à la main trouvaient à lutter contre cette concurrence. Le préfet raconte, à cette occasion, que ces pauvres femmes avaient fini par composer une légende, selon laquelle il y avait une fée, appelée *Machine*, qui avait sept doigts d'acier et pouvait ainsi filer plus et plus vite qu'elles ne pouvaient le faire avec leurs cinq doigts humains." [1]

The full process of silk manufacture from the worm (*Bombyx mori*) to the finished fabric was known in China from time immemorial, and the secret was guarded very carefully. Long before the Christian era the raw silk had begun to be imported into Europe, and a famous manufactory for weaving it was established in the island of Cos in the Ægean Sea. The secret of the method of the production of the raw material itself was kept till much later times, sufficiently, at all events, for the maintenance of the Chinese monopoly, though Aristotle in his *History of Animals*, Bk. V., ch. xvii., sec. 6, ed. Schneider, speaks of a certain great worm with horns, as it were, which produces bombycina or cocoons which the women use in weaving. Aristotle's knowledge probably came to him as one of the results of Alexander's expedition to the East. The silk-worm itself, of which the secret had spread during the fourth century A.D. through India to Írán and the West, was brought for the first time into Europe by two Persian monks, at the special request of the Emperor Justinian, in A.D. 550. They smuggled the eggs from China in the hollow of a bamboo, and thus founded the Western silk industry. Justinian's object was to break the monopoly of the silk-trade then, by land and sea alike, in Persian hands.[2]

Two reasons may be suggested why the scene of our story was laid on the shores of the Persian sea. One is that a Part King of that region, *e.g.* of Hurmuz (Ormus), may have grown rapidly rich in the latter days of the Parthian dynasty by means of the silk or cotton trade of the Persian Gulf, and suffered for his prosperity at the hands of Ardshír Pápakán. The other is to be found in the popular etymology of the word Kirmán—a region

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[1] P, Vol. v., Préface.

[2] See GDF, v. 56 *seq.*; *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed. *s.v.* "Silk"; and SP, pp. 179, 263.

more famous for its date (khurmá) than for its silk. In Persian, however, it so happens that "kirm" means "worm," and in fact is the same word. Kirmán was supposed to mean "The Land of the Worm," and thus to be a suitable scene for some ancient Dragon-myth,[1] or a story may have been invented to account for the name. Both in K and F, it should be noted, Ardshír, after killing the Worm, proceeds to conquer Kirmán, so that we have the romantic and historic accounts of the same event put side by side, the former given at large and the latter very shortly. In Tabarí too we have the historic version and two brief rationalised versions of the romantic side of the story. He informs us that Ardshír subdued Kirmán, slew its king Balásh (Vologeses, an Arsacid), and made his own son ruler. This is represented as taking place before the war with Ardawán. Then (here begins one of the romantic versions) he went against a king named Astawadh, who lived on the coast of the Persian sea, and to whom divine honours were paid, killed him, cut him in two with his sword, slew also his retinue, and brought out from his treasure-house, and carried off, much treasure that was stored there.[2] Astawadh, Professor Nöldeke notes, is a corruption by misreading of the Pahlaví name,[3] which becomes Haftwád in the Sháhnáma. According to the other account there was in Alár, a village in the province of Kujárán, which belonged to the coast-land of Ardshír-Khurra (Gúr), a queen who enjoyed divine honours and possessed great wealth and many soldiers. Ardshír, toward the end of his reign, killed the queen and captured much gold and treasure which she had.[4]

In these accounts divine honours are transferred, in the first, from the dragon to Haftwád and, in the second, to his daughter.

§ 12. This passage is not found elsewhere, but there is no reason to assume that the poet invented, though very likely he embellished, it. From what we can gather of Firdausí's literary methods, he would not have introduced such a string of incidents without authority for so doing. When "gravelled for lack of matter," he does not "take occasion to" invent, but passes on as we see in the case of the present dynasty, where he had an unequalled opportunity for the exercise of his imagination had he been disposed to avail himself of it. The absence of the passage in the Kárnámak and in the Arabic may be accounted for easily. In the former, Haftwád (Haftánbúkht) is introduced quite abruptly,[5] and the story of his rise to power was omitted not

[1] DEI, ii. 81. [2] NT, p. 10. [3] See p. 206. [4] NT, p. 19.
[5] "But the army of Haftánbúkht, the lord of the Worm, attacked him (Ardshír)," &c.; NK, p. 49.

because it was well known or unknown, but because it was foreign to the purpose in hand, which was to show by what steps Ardshír rose to supreme power, effected the unification of Írán, and founded a new dynasty. From this point of view the destruction of Haftwád and the Worm was of importance, but not their genesis. In the latter we have a much more drastic system of lopping in the interests, apparently, of rationalism. In the second of Tabarí's versions we get a hint that it was the one which, in its unrationalised state, Firdausí followed. The queen there is the daughter here.

The name of Ardshír's opponent in K—Haftánbúkht, which does not scan—becomes Haftwád in F, as it may be so read in the Pahlaví if the central letters are omitted. Haftánbúkht, according to Professor Nöldeke, means "The Seven have redeemed" with reference to the seven planets which, as creations of Áhriman[1] might be expected, from the orthodox Zoroastrian point of view, to watch over the fortunes of Haftánbúkht and the Worm. In Professor Darmesteter's opinion, however, Firdausí's etymology is correct, though based on a misapprehension. The word "wád" was due to a misreading of the Pahlaví, but the word "búkht" does mean "son," and the seven sons are the sevenfold coils, or the seven heads, of the dragon. Both agree that in the original form of the story Haftánbúkht was the dragon.[2]

According to K, Haftánbúkht's seat was at Gulár in Kujárán. In Tabarí, Haftánbúkht becomes Astawadh, and Gulár, in the version which substitutes a queen for a king, becomes Alár.[3] The situation of Kujárán is unknown.

In K the food of the dragon is the blood of sheep and bullocks,[4] not rice, milk, and honey, as in F.

§ 13. In K the army of Haftánbúkht is represented as the aggressor. The forces of Ardshír, who is not present, are attacked after his return from his victory over the Kurds. This preliminary engagement is omitted by F. Haftwád's son crossed over from Arabia to help his father.[5] The water behind Ardshír was probably the sea, but the Persian word is a vague one.

§ 14. In K the older form Mithrak is preserved. According to Tabarí, who places Ardshír's war with him before the defeat of Ardawán, he lived in a district of Ardshír-Khurra."[6]

§ 15. In K Ardshír, after his defeat by Haftánbúkht, reaches the shore of the sea quite alone and almost abandoned by the

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[1] See Vol. i. p. 52. [2] *Cf.* NK, pp. 29, 49, and *note*; DEI, ii. 82.
[3] NK, p. 50; NT, pp. 10, 19. [4] NK, p. 56. [5] *Id.* 49–52, and *notes.*
[6] NT, p. 11.

divine Grace, but then it stood in front of him and led him out of danger to the village where the two brothers, named Burjak and Burjátur, dwelt.[1]

In K Ardshír gets admitted into the castle with the two young men of the village only. In F he takes seven men with him. Seven is a favourite number in Persian story, and if, as we have seen above, one of the legends told of Cyrus the Great could be transferred to Ardshír, there seems no reason why a fragment of the legend of the Seven, who made the famous expedition against the stronghold of the mage Gaumata—the false Smerdis—in the days of Darius Hystaspis, should not be transferred here in like manner.[2] In K Ardshír appoints, for some reason not clear to us, the 27th day of the month as the one for decisive action, and Haftánbúkht appears to have perished in the fight, not afterwards by formal execution as in F.[3]

§ 1

The Praise of Mahmúd

Now be the monarch of the world our theme
As one in feast and fight and lore supreme—
The great Mahmúd; much prosperous rede hath he
And doth uphold the fame of majesty,
A king, Abú'l Kásim! most sage and wise
Beyond e'en wisdom in his policies.
Glad be his heart for evermore and free
From toil and trouble. King of kings is he
Both of Írán and of Zábulistán,
And from Kannúj[4] up to Kábulistán.
On him, upon the troops of his command,
On his allies, his kindred, and his land,
On that world-lord and chief, Nasr the amír,
A source of joyance to time's circling sphere,
Be praise, while o'er the moon the army's head
Ascendeth by Abú'l Muzaffar led;

[1] NK, p. 53.
[2] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 58; DHA, vi. 201 *seq.*
[3] NK, p. 56, and *note*.
[4] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 99.

By fortune and by name victorious he,
Whose arrows in their flight out-top the tree.
Oh! may the Sháh live scathless evermore,
And be his seat upon his treasury's store,
And may his general be happy too,
In heart illumed, in treasure well to do.
Thus while revolving heaven maintain its place
Ne'er may its love be severed from this race,
But be it ever a victorious one,
And crowned from sire to sire and son to son.
Upon this day, the fourteenth of Shawwál,
May benediction on our sovereign fall
C. 1363 For this good news about the tax—that he,
The Sháh with Grace and crown, hath made decree
To claim no contribution for a year
From men of ardent Faith and godly fear.
The age of Núshírwán hath come anew,
And all hath been transfigured to our view.
When on this wise no little time hath sped,
And when the robe of right shall be outspread,
Thou'lt see him (such his justice and his love!)
Receive the robe of honour from above—
One that upon him ne'er will wear away,
While on his head the imperial crown will stay.
May his head flourish, harm approach not near,
His magnanimity transcend heaven's sphere.
One telling o'er the years and months that I
Have lived will not despise my prophecy.
Look well, because this book a flag will be
O'er sages' heads to all eternity,
And, in original, will seem to spring
From Gaiúmart whose praise all people sing.
Thus Núshírwán, son of Kubád, once said:—
"When any monarch turn from right his head
Heaven will black out the patent of his reign,
The stars acclaim him not as king again.

Injustice is the notice to depart
To kings that vex the blameless to the heart."[1]
For ever may this family, endued
With worth, with wisdom, and with rectitude,
Continue. Lasting foothold here hath none,
But his good name will last when he is gone.
Where now are Farídún, Zahhák, Jamshíd,
The chiefs of Arab and of Persian breed?
Where are the great of the Sásánians,
Those of Bahrám's race, and the Ashkánians?
Zahhák the Sháh was most reviled, for he
Was all injustice and impurity,
While glorious Farídún approval won;
He died, and his renown still liveth on.
In this world fame is our memorial—
A better thing than gems imperial!
The man unjust, whose joyance was in throne
And treasure, never hath made praise his own;
His reputation in the world is naught,
And none is fain to pleasure him in aught.
Because of our foe-quelling king's decree
May he still throne it in felicity.
Forth from their homes the people plain-ward hied,
With praise transcending heaven, and thus they cried:—
"Aye may he live, the crowned head of our state,
And may time's course to him prove fortunate;
Here may he look on naught save what doth please,
His name be graven on the palaces,
And may our benisons withal embrace
His kin, host, land, his royal form, and face."

[1] Similar sentiments were attributed to Ardshír Pápakán. See p. 283.

§ 2

The Tribal Kings

c. 1364 O thou that singest in extreme old age!
Now let the Ashkánians' times thy thoughts engage.
What hath the author of the history
Still left to tell us from the legendry?
What mighty chieftains hath he to enthrone
Upon the world, Sikandar being gone?
The thane of Chách, mine author, saith that none
Thenceforward had the throne and crown, but princes,
Brave, headstrong, proud, and scions of Árash,
Each in his corner made himself a realm
Out of some portion of the provinces,
And when they sat rejoicing on their thrones
Folk called them "Tribal Kings." Two centuries passed,
And thou hadst said: "There is no Sháh." These princes
Regarded not each other, and earth rested,
Sikandar having ordered matters thus,
To guard the land of Rúm. The first was Ashk,
Sprung from Kubád, while others were Shápúr,
A royal warrior, Gúdarz the Ashkánian,
Bízhan of Kaian lineage, Narsí,
The great Urmuzd, Árash a warrior famed,
And after him the noble Ardawán,
Wise, prudent, and of ardent soul, for when
Bahrám, the Ashkánian, sat upon the throne
He lavished treasure on the poor, but folk
Were wont to call him Ardawán[1] the Great
Because he kept the wolf's claws from the sheep.
He governed in Shíráz and Ispahán,

[1] *I.e.* arta = great, and wán or bán = a guardian.

Which scholars call the "Marches of the princes."
He set up in Istakhr Pápak[1] as ruler,
Whose thumb-stall used to make the monsters[2] yell.
How all these princes perished, root and branch,
Their time-worn chronicle narrateth not.
Naught have I heard of them except the name,
And in the Book of Kings seen but the same.

§ 3

How Pápak saw Sásán in a Dream and gave him a Daughter in Marriage

Now when Dárá had perished in the war, C. 1365
And all his family had had their day,
He left one son behind—a potent prince,
A wise and valiant man by name Sásán,
Who, when he saw his father slain, and fortune
Averse from the Íránians, fled before
The host of Rúm and 'scaped the net of bale.
He died in wretched plight in Hindústán,
And left a little boy. Thus every sire
Throughout four generations gave his son
The name Sásán. They all were camel-drivers,
Or shepherds, and hard workers all their years.
The youngest of the race came to Pápak,
Beheld his master-shepherd on the plain,
And said: "Hast thou employment for a hireling,
Whose life is being spent in sore distress?"
The master-shepherd took that luckless one,
And worked him day and night. His industry

[1] In the text the Arabic form of the word "Bábak" is used, but the proper Persian form is Pápak, which we have adopted throughout.

[2] The word is the same as that used in the previous reign to describe the monsters on which Yájúj and Májúj fattened in the spring. See p. 164.

Found favour, and he rose to be chief shepherd.
Pápak, son of Rúdyáb, one night thus dreamed :—
He saw upon a mighty elephant
Sásán and in his hand a Indian sword,
While all that came to him saluted him,
And did him homage; he addressed them kindly,
And purged their gloomy hearts of grief. Next night,
When sleeping much perturbed, he dreamed about
Fire-worshippers who bore three blazing Fires,
Such as Ázargashasp, Kharrád, and Mihr,[1]
Bright as Sol, Mars, and Venus; all blazed up
Before Sásán, their fuel aloe-wood.
Pápak awoke, his soul and heart possessed
By care. Those skilled in dreams and in that lore
Puissant, magnates, sages, counsellors,
Assembled in the palace of Pápak,
And as he set forth what had chanced, and told
His dreams to them at large, the adviser mused,
The interpreter gave ear, and in the end
Said: "O exalted king! this must be scanned,
C. 1366 For one whom thou beheldest thus in sleep
Will raise his head above the sun as Sháh,
Or, if the dream be not of him, his son
Will have the world."
Pápak rejoiced on hearing,
Rewarded each according to his rank,
Then bade his master-shepherd to forsake
The flock and come. It was a winter's day.
Wrapped in his cloak, its wool was thick with snow,
His heart with fears, he came in haste. Pápak
Dismissed all strangers, slave and counsellor
Went, and he graciously received Sásán,
Assigning him a seat beside his lord,
And asked him of his quality and birth.
The herd, through terror of him, answered not,

[1] The names of Fire-temples.

But said at last: "O prince! if thou wilt give
A promise to respect thy shepherd's life
I will inform thee of my quality
When thou shalt grasp my hand and pledge thyself
To harm me not in public or in private."
Pápak, on hearing this, loosed his own tongue,
Invoked the Giver of all good, and said:—
"I will not harm but make thee glad and honoured,"
Then spake the youth: "I am, O paladin!
Son of Sásán and sprung from Sháh Ardshír,
Whom chroniclers call by the name Bahman,
The great son of the brave Asfandiyár,
Who was Gushtásp's memorial."
Pápak
Wept from those shrewd eyes that had seen the dream,
Then brought the raiment of a paladin,
And steed with royal trappings, saying thus:—
"Go to the bath what while they fetch fresh raiment."
He raised Sásán o'er that chief shepherdship,
Prepared for him a noble residence,
And, having lodged him there, provided slaves,
Both boys and girls, to wait on him, bestowed
Addition by all means, set him past need
Of wealth, then gave the Crown on his own brows—
A daughter well beloved—to him as spouse.

§ 4

How Ardshír Pápakán was born, and of his Case with Ardawán

When nine months had elapsed the beauteous dame
Brought forth an infant like the radiant sun,
The image of illustrious Ardshír,
A growing, glorious, heart-delighting child.
His sire withal, who joyed to gaze upon him, C. 1367

Named him Ardshír and fostered him through all
His years of need. A long while thus elapsed.
(The learned now call him Pápakán Ardshír.[1])
They taught him all accomplishment, wherein
He bettered e'en the promise of his birth.
He was so wise and goodly that the sky,
Thou wouldst have said, was luminous through him.
News of the youth's intelligence and knowledge
Reached Ardawán: "He is a savage Lion
In fight," it ran, "and like Náhíd in feast."

The king wrote to that famous paladin,
Pápak, and said: "O counsellor of mine,
Wise, trusty, eloquent, and good! thy son,
Ardshír, is, I have heard, a cavalier
Of eloquence and heed. On reading this
Be pleased to send him unto us forthwith.
I will supply his every want, advance him
Among the chiefs and, when he is associate
With mine own sons, deny him not my kinship."

Pápak, on reading this, wept tears of blood;
He bade a writer, and that rising youth,
Ardshír, attend, and said: "Peruse this letter
Of Ardawán's and let thy clear mind scan it;
Behold, I write an answer to the king,
And send it by some friend to this effect:—
'Lo! I have sent to thee a gallant youth,
One much approved, who is my heart and eyes,
And whom I have advised. When he shall come
To thy high court treat him right royally,
And suffer not the blast to blow upon him.'"

Then swift as wind he oped the treasury-doors,
And gratified the youth with various gifts
Of golden harness, swords, and iron maces;
There was not aught that he refused the boy.

[1] He is generally known as Ardshír Pápakán, *i.e.* Ardshír of the family of Pápak.

The treasurer brought forth brocade, dínárs,
Steeds, slaves, with stuffs of Chín and cloth of gold,
Such as kings wear, and gave them to the youth
What time he went to wait on Ardawán.
The favoured youth, departing from his grandsire,
Went to the court of Ardawán at Rai,
Who, hearing of his coming, graciously
Received him, spake at large about Pápak,
Assigned Ardshír a place beside the throne, C. 1368
Lodged him near by, fed, clothed, and furnished him.
Now when the sun sat on its throne, and when
The world became fair as a Rúman's face,
Ardshír called for a servant and therewith
The gifts of obligation, and dispatched
The envoy of Pápak, the paladin,
To Ardawán, the king, who viewed the gifts;
They pleased him, and the young man profited
Thereby: the monarch held him as a son.
A while passed well with him. The twain consorted
In revel, feast, and at the chase.
One day
It happened that the escort of the king,
And his own sons, were scattered in the chase.
Ardshír himself attended Ardawán,
Who found that gallant youth acceptable.
Now Ardawán had four sons of his own,
Each king-like. Onager had come in sight,
And that great company was all astir.
They urged their wind-foot steeds and mixed the dust
With sweat. Ardshír pressed on in front and, nearing
The quarry, placed an arrow on his bow,
And struck an onager upon the haunch.
The arrow-point and feather went right through.
Anon came Ardawán who, when he saw
The strength of that young archer, cried: "May he
That shot possess a soul to match his hand."

Ardshír replied: "I shot the onager."
A son said: "It was I that brought it down,
And I am looking out for one to match it."
Ardshír retorted: "Well the plain is broad,
And there are onagers and arrows too.
By that same token slay another such:
It is a sin for noble men to lie."
Now Ardawán was angry with Ardshír
Thereat and roared at him: "Mine is the blame,
Because this bringing up is all mine own.
Why should I have thee in my company,
Both in the banquet and the hunting-field,
In order that thou mayst surpass my sons,
And show off thine address and excellence?
Begone. See to mine Arab steeds and choose
C. 1369 A handy residence. Be stable-master,
And keep all companies."
Ardshír in tears
Went to be keeper of the Arab steeds,
And in his wretchedness and discontent
Wrote to his grandsire thus: "In what a way
Hath Ardawán dealt with us! Anguish take
His body, care his soul."
He told the matter,
And why king Ardawán was wroth with him.
Pápak was troubled when the letter came,
But held his peace, and from his treasury
Dispatched ten thousand to his son in gold
By camel and by cavalier, commanded
A scribe to come, and wrote: "O foolish boy!
When thou wast hunting game with Ardawán
Why didst thou pass his sons although thou art
His servant, not his kin? He wronged thee not
In malice; 'twas thine own insensate deed.
Now strive to make him pleased and satisfied,
And do his will in all. I have dispatched thee

Gold and this letter of advice withal.
When thou hast spent the money ask for more
Until the times shall change."
The dromedary
Sped with the ancient veteran to Ardshír,
Who when he read the letter was content,
And plotted and dissembled, chose a lodging
Near to his steeds, though one not worthy of him,
Provided it with carpets, food, and raiment,
And spent his days and nights in revelry,
Companioning with wine and minstrelsy.[1]

§ 5

How Ardawán's Slave-girl fell in Love with Ardshír and how he fled with her to Párs

Now Ardawán possessed a lofty palace,
Wherein there dwelt a favourite slave of his.
She was a Moon-face hight Gulnár[2]—a picture
All jewelry and colour and perfume.
She ministered to Ardawán and kept
His treasury. He loved her more than life,
And joyed and smiled to look on her.[3] One day,
When she had mounted to the palace-roof, C. 1370
And gladdened at that mirth,[4] she saw Ardshír;
His lips were smiling, and he won her heart.
She waited till the eve or rather night,
Then tied a lasso to the battlements
With many a knot. She proved it with her hand,[5]
And then, invoking Him who giveth good,
Descended boldly. When in all her gems,

[1] Following the division of the text in P.
[2] *I.e.* Pomegranate-bloom.
[3] In C the section ends here.
[4] See above.
[5] "la lança avec sa main" (Mohl).

And savouring musk and other spicery,
She reached Ardshír she raised his head, which lay
Upon the pillow of brocade, and clasped him,
When he was wakened, tightly to her breast.
The young man marked that lovely one, her face,
Her hair, and scented bravery, and said :—
"Whence hast thou sprung to grace my troubled heart?"
"A slave am I and love thee, heart and soul,"
She answered. "I am Ardawán's beloved,
His treasurer, his darling, and delight,
But, if thou wilt accept me, thy slave now
To live but in thy sight and visit thee,
Whene'er thou wilt, and brighten thy dark days."
A while passed thus and then mishap befell
Ardshír's inspirer. Veteran, shrewd Pápak
Died and resigned this ancient home to others.
When news reached Ardawán he sorrowed much;
His soul grew dark. The chiefs all asked for Párs,
But he bestowed it on his eldest son,[1]
Bade bring the drums and march forth to the waste.
As for Ardshír the world gloomed to his heart
For his protector's sake, old, shrewd Pápak.
He loathed his service under Ardawán,
And, when those tidings came, formed new designs,
For he was rash through grief and fain to flee.
Anon king Ardawán brought to his court
Some shrewd men of the readers of the stars
To learn his future, to direct his course,
And find whom fortune would inspire thereafter.
C. 1371 He sent them to the mansion of Gulnár
To make their observations of the stars.
They worked for three days at his horoscope,
The treasuress could hear the talk thereon
And other secrets, and spent all the days
And three-fourths of the night in listening

[1] Bahman, as we learn later on, pp. 225 *seq.*, 259.

With longing heart and sighs upon her lips,
But very mindful of each word that passed.
Upon the fourth day these shrewd men set out
To tell the secrets to king Ardawán,
And with their magic tablets at their breasts
Went to him from the damsel's dwelling-place.
They told the secrets of the lofty sky,
To whom it turned, the time, and the degree:—
"A thing will happen at no distant date—
A matter that will wring the monarch's heart.
The least among his magnates will take flight,
A chieftain of high birth, a warrior,
And afterward become a mighty king,
A world-lord fortunate and fortune-giving."
The heart of that renowned and prosperous prince
Was in great dudgeon at their words.
The damsel,
When all was black as pitch, went to Ardshír.
That youth was troubled like the sea and could not
Rest for one day because of Ardawán.
She told him what those shrewd men had apprised
The famous king, whereat Ardshír grew calm
And silent yet his heart was moved thereat.
He thought of flight and asked: "If I quit Rai
And seek Írán, the country of the brave,
Consider whether thou wilt go with me,
Or tarry with the king. If thou wilt go
Thou shalt be great, the Crown of all the realm."
She said with many a sigh and bitter tears:—
"Thy slave am I, and death alone shall part us."
Ardshír replied: "We must escape to-morrow,"
And she went back resolved to risk her all.
As soon as earth was gilded by the sun,
And dark night had been taken in the noose,
She oped the treasury and made her choice
Among the royal gems, took what dínárs

She needed, went back to her home, and there
C. 1372 Secured the jewels, waited till the night
Rose o'er the hills, till Ardawán was sleeping,
The coast all clear, then quitting arrow-like
The palace, took the jewels to Ardshír.
She found the atheling with cup in hand,
And all the equerries in drunken sleep.
He had picked out two noble steeds, and these
Were feeding ready saddled in their stalls.
When he beheld Gulnár, the gold, and rubies,
He laid the cup aside and forthwith bridled
The Arab steeds, put on his armour, mounted,
And grasped a watered sword. The lady rode
The other steed, and so they fled together
Toward Párs with gladsome hearts.

Now Ardawán
Was never happy either day or night
Without the fair Gulnár and would not quit
His couch unless in her auspicious presence.
When it was time to rise and have the throne
Draped with brocade, and still the damsel came not,
He was both angry and aggrieved at her.
The guards were posted at the gate without,
Throne, crown, and palace were in readiness
While from the court-gate rose the chamberlain,
Approached the famous king, and said: "There wait
The chief men of the kingdom at the gate."

§ 6

How Ardawán heard of the Flight of Ardshír with the Damsel and pursued them

The monarch asked the slaves: "Why doth Gulnár
Neglect the rule and come not to my pillow?
Is she offended with me?"

Thereupon

The chief scribe entered, saying: "Yesternight
Ardshír went off incontinent and took
A grey steed and a black steed from the stables—
The riding horses of the illustrious king—
Companioned by thy well-loved treasuress."
The warrior-king much moved bestrode his bay,
Escorted by a host of gallant horsemen:
Thou wouldst have said: "He goeth over fire."
Upon the road he saw a place of note
With many men and cattle, and inquired:—
"Did any hear the sound of hoofs ere day? C. 1373
Did two pass on a grey steed and a black?"
One said: "Two passed on two steeds desertward,
And at their heels a goodly mountain-sheep,
Which kicked the dust up horse-like."
Ardawán
Said to his minister: "Why ever went
The mountain-sheep with them?"
He made reply:—
"It is his Grace—the wings that will exalt him
To kingship through the favour of the stars.
If this sheep followeth him our task is lengthened."
There Ardawán dismounted, ate, and rested,
Then hurried on. They followed up Ardshír,
And Ardawán in person led the way
With his wazír. Swift as a blast the youth
Rode with the damsel with no moment's pause,
But he who hath high heaven for his ally
Will take no harm from any enemy.
Ardshír at length, exhausted by the ride,
Beheld a pool of water from the height,
And as he rode said to Gulnár: "Since we
Have wedded toil, dismount we by this pool,
For steed and rider are alike fordone.
Repose we here and drink and start refreshed."
Now when the twain had drawn anigh the water

Their visages as yellow as the sun,
And when Ardshír was fain to light him down,
He saw beside the watering-place two youths,
Who called out quickly: "There is need to ply
The reins and stirrup still for thou hast 'scaped
Thus far the breath and gullet of the Dragon,
And to drink water now will cost thee dear,
Yea even thy life."
Ardshír, on hearing this,
Said to Gulnár: "Attend to what they say."
He pressed his stirrups, gave his steed the reins,
And laid his glittering spear upon his shoulder.
Behind them Ardawán like rushing wind
Continued the pursuit with soul all gloom.
When half the day had passed, and while the orb—
The lustre of the world—still paced the sky,
He saw a city—one in goodly case—
Whence many flocked to meet him, and he asked
The archimages: "When passed two on horseback?"
Their leader said: "O prosperous, prudent king!
Just as the sun was growing pale, and night
Spread out the cloak of lapis-lazuli,
C. 1374 Two hurried through the city, soiled with dust
And parched with thirst, while after one of them
There came a mountain-sheep, and I have seen
None like it pictured in the palaces!"
Said the wazír to Ardawán; "Stop here,
Unless thou wilt return and get thee ready
Both soldiers and the implements of war,
Because the fashion of this strife hath changed
In that his fortune backeth him; to follow
Is but to grasp the wind. Write to thy son,
And tell him all. Perchance he may discover
Trace of Ardshír whom we must suffer not

To milk this mountain-sheep."[1]

Now Ardawán,
On hearing this, knew that it was too late,
And so alighting at that city prayed
To God—the Giver of all good—for aid.

§ 7

How Ardawán wrote to Bahman, his Son, to take Ardshír

At dawn the monarch bade the host return,
And pale as reeds re-entered Rai by night.
He wrote a letter to his son and said:—
Deceit hath taken action, and Ardshír
Hath left me quicker than the shaft the bow,
And gone to Párs. Seek for him privily,
But say no word to any."

For his part
Ardshír approached the water and thus prayed:—
"O Thou who art our Helper! Thou hast saved
Me from my foeman: never may he prosper."
Now when he had reposed he called a boatman,
And spake much of the past. The shrewd, old sailor
Observed Ardshír's high stature, mien, and breast,
Knew: "He can be but of the Kaian stock,"
Rejoicing in his Grace and Majesty,
Then hasting to the water sent his boats
To every part. At news of famed Ardshír
A host assembled by the water-side,
While in Istakhr the kindred of Pápak
All gloried at those tidings of the Sháh,
While those too of Dárá, who dwelt resigned
About the realm, exulted and grew young
Of heart though old, while troop on troop the folk

[1] Or, reading with P, "We must not let this mountain-sheep turn lion."

Flocked to the youth from mountain and from sea,
C. 1375 And from each city counsellors and sages
Assembled round that claimant of the world.
The young Ardshír loosed tongue and said: "Ye chiefs
Of ardent soul! of all this noble throng
There is no sage or counsellor but knoweth
What shame the infamous Sikandar[1] wrought
Upon the world, slew all mine ancestors,
And laid his hand on it unrighteously.
Now I am one sprung from Asfandiyár,
Yet Ardawán is king! We may not speak
Or think of this as just. If ye will help me
I will not yield the crown and lofty throne
To any. What have ye to say hereto?
Give me a fair reply."
Then all the assembly,
Both warriors and counsellors, stood up,
And, speaking from their hearts, made answer thus:—
"All we that are the kindred of Pápak
Rejoice to see thy face, and we that are
Descendants of Sásán will gird ourselves
For vengeance. We are thine both soul and body,
Our joys and griefs, our less and more, are thine.
Thy quality from father and from mother
Surpasseth ours, the sovereignty and sway
Are thine of right, and we at thy command
Will turn the hills to plains, and with our swords
Make streams run blood."
Ardshír's head, when he heard
That answer, rose o'er Mercury and Venus;
He blessed the chiefs and mused upon revenge.
He founded by the water-side a city
To be his seat of power. An archimage
Said: "Well-starred Sháh who winneth over hearts!
Thou fram'st anew the head of sovereignty,

[1] Observe the Sásánian view of Sikandar. *Cf.* p. 15.

But must clear Párs of Weeds and afterward
Make war on Ardawán, whilst thou and fortune
Are young, because in treasure he surpasseth
The other Tribal Kings; 'twill tax thy strength
To fight with him, but when thou hast cast down
His throne none else will hold his own with thee."
Whenas the illustrious Ardshír heard this
The words approved themselves and pleased his heart,
And when the sun rose from the mountain-tops
He set forth from the water toward Istakhr.
News reached Bahman, the son of Ardawán,
And filled him, heart and soul, with grief and gloom.
He tarried not upon the throne of might,
But gathered troops and weapons for the fight.

§ 8

How Tabák helped Ardshír, fought with Bahman, and conquered him

There was a noble hight Tabák, possessed C. 1376
Of arms, of soldiery, and prudent counsels,
The ruler of the city of Jahram,
A veteran sage and one whose word was law.
He had seven noble sons, and at the news
About Ardshír went from Jahrám to him,
With tymbals and a host, prepared for battle,
Abandoning Bahman. When he beheld
Ardshír he lighted as the custom was,
Ran to him, kissed his feet, and spake at large
Of the Sásánians. The atheling
Showed him much favour, setting store upon
That speedy coming, yet suspected somewhat,
And dreaded that old man and watched him well
Upon the march because his force was great.
The veteran was shrewd, knew what Ardshír

Thought, and came with the Zandavasta, saying:—
"May God cut off Tabák's all worthless life
If in my heart be aught but honesty.
As soon as I heard news of Sháh Ardshír,
How he had reached the water with his host,
I loathed king Ardawán as young men loathe
An agéd spouse. Know that I am thy slave
To love and prosper thee, to serve thee well,
And keep thy secrets."
Thereupon Ardshír
Began to estimate him differently,
And treat him like a sire, appointing him
Chief of the men of name, ceased to suspect,
Went to the temples of Kharrád and Rám,
And prayed to God to guide him to all good,
To give him all success and make his tree
Of majesty bear fruit, then sought his tent
Where both the counsellors and muster-master
Appeared before him, and he numbered all
The host, both horse and foot, and ascertained
Who were the leaders and the warriors,
Became acquaint with each, inquired his name,
And was rejoiced at such a mighty host.
C. 1377 He gave his soldiers pay, accoutred them,
Called on the just Bestower of all good
And, when the host was like a fierce pard, went
To fight Bahman, the son of Ardawán.
The armies met, the heroes sought the fray,
The troops drew up, lance, sword, and dart in hand.
Whenas the Azure was unveiled the host
Led by Tabák advanced, like warrior-lions
Closed with the foe, and poured blood streamlike. Thus
Dust filled the air, and men the earth, till sunset.
Arose a blast with pitchy clouds of dust,
And from the army's centre came Ardshír.
Whereat Bahman, the son of Ardawán,

Fled pierced with arrows and his soul all gloom,
While Sháh Ardshír was instant in pursuit,
With blaring trumpets and with arrow-rain,
Until they reached the city of Istakhr,
Seat of the fame and glory of Bahman.
The Sháh's fame filled the world, and countless troops
Flocked to him. He was shown the many hoards
Of treasure that Pápak had toiled to gather.
Ardshír gave them in largess. When at length
He marched from Párs it was with growing strength.

§ 9

How Ardawán led forth his Host for Battle with Ardshír and was slain.

When news reached Ardawán fear filled his heart,
And gloom his mind. He said: "A lord of counsel
Told me this secret of the lofty sky,[1]
But can one 'scape by pains unthought of ills?
I did not fancy that Ardshír would prove
To be ambitious and a lion-taker."
He oped his treasury, gave rations out,
Bound on the baggage, and led forth the host;
Contingents came from Gíl and from Dílam:
The army's dust rose moon-ward while the Sháh[2]
Led forth a host that barred the wind. Two bow-shots
Divided power from power; snakes found no rest,
Such was the din of drum and clarion,
The clangour of the gongs and Indian bells.
The armies shouted and the banners waved,
While blue steel falchions scattered heads around.
The battle lasted thus for forty days,
The world was straitened to the common folk,

[1] See p. 219.

[2] *I.e.* Ardshír.

C. 1378 The plain grew mountain-like with all the slain,
The wounded were aweary of their life.
At last there rose a mighty, sable cloud,
And men could strive no more. A frightful storm
Succeeded, and the warriors lost all heart.
The mountains echoed and the plain was rent
While air reverberated. Then the troops
Of Ardawán were frayed and all exclaimed
With one consent: "This storm hath come from God
On Ardawán; this host will need our tears."
So all the wise one day, when fight was fiercest,
Asked quarter, and Ardshír charged from the centre;
Arose a clashing while the arrows showered.
Amidmost of the mellay Ardawán
Was ta'en, and for his crown gave up sweet life.
The hand of one Kharrád seized on his bridle,
And bare him captive to the atheling.
Ardshír saw him from far. King Ardawán
Lit from his steed, his body arrow-pierced,
His soul all gloom, and Sháh Ardshír commanded
The deathsman: "Go, seize on the great king's foe,
Cleave him asunder with thy sword, and make
Our evil-wishers quail."
So did the deathsman:
That famous monarch vanished from the world.
Such is the usage of the ancient sky!
The lot of Ardawán Ardshír too found;
Him whom it raiseth to the stars on high
It giveth likewise to the sorry ground!
Two sons of him by whom Árash's seed
Thus had been brought to shame were taken too.
The noble Sháh Ardshír imprisoned them
With fetters on their feet. Two elder sons
Succeeded in escaping from the fight,
And were not taken in the net of bale.
They went in tears to Hindústán, and thou

Mayst well narrate a tale concerning them.[1]
The battle-field was full of reins and girdles,
The weapons of the host, and gold and silver,
Which were collected by the Sháh's command,
And given to the troops. Among the chiefs
Tabák was most concerned to cleanse the corpse
Of Ardawán from blood, lamenting while
He washed away the dust of fight, and built
A charnel as the royal custom was.
He robed the wounded bosom in brocade,
He placed a crown of camphor on the head,
And none of all the troops that went to Rai
Might tread the palace-dust of Ardawán.[2]
Tabák thereafter came before Ardshír,
And said: "O Sháh who seekest after wisdom!
Demand the child of Ardawán to wife, C. 1379
For she hath Grace and beauty, crown and throne.
Then will this diadem and all the treasures
That he collected with such toil be thine."
He listened to the words of wise advice,
And asked the daughter for his spouse forthwith,
Then stayed a month or twain within the palace,
A mighty leader with a mighty host.
From Rai the aspirant went toward Párs and rested
From travail and dispute. He built a city,
All palaces and gardens, and therein
Were fountain, plain, and dale, and to this day
The noble, ancient thane[3] doth speak thereof
As Khurra-i-Ardshír.[4] Within, a spring

[1] Firdausí does so later on. See p. 259.

[2] As a rule the belongings of a fallen king or minister were given up to spoil, and this is implied in C, but the context seems to show that the reading of P, followed in the translation, is correct. *Cf.* Vol. iv. p. 212 *seq.* Tabarí's account, however, favours C. See p. 255.

[3] The thane of Chách mentioned above, p. 210.

[4] Khurra-i-Ardshír, "The Grace of Ardshír," was the name given by him to the district and city of Gūr, not Zūr as in the text, now Fírúzábád. See NT, p. 11 and *note*.

That never failed gave water for canals.
Beside it he set up a Fane of Fire,
Revived the feasts of Sada[1] and Mihrgán,[2]
And round it splendid edifices raised,
With pleasances and parks and palaces.
(When that wise Sháh of Grace and might was dead
The border-chieftain named the city Zúr).
He founded villages all round about,
And there he settled folk when all was ready.
He saw within one quarter a deep lake,
But needs must pierce a height that intervened.
They brought picks and artificers, and clove
The mountain with a hundred water-ways.
He led them thence to Zúr. It was a seat
Abounding both in dwellings and in neat.

§ 10

How Ardshír fought with the Kurds and was defeated

Then Sháh Ardshír led from Istakhr a host
Innumerable to war against the Kurds,
Who, when he came anear, encountered him
In numbers numberless. What seemed a trifle
Became of moment, for the country round
All sided with the Kurds who both outnumbered
And hemmed the Sháh's host in. All day till night
The fight raged, then the world-lord's forces fled,
The field was straitened by the killed and wounded.
No man of name survived except the Sháh,
And some few troops whose tongues were cracked with thirst
Through blazing sunshine and the clouds of dust.
When night had reared its flag, and ended strife
And stir, the Sháh marked on a mountain-side

[1] See Vol. i. p. 123. [2] *Id.* 175 and *note*.

A fire, and went toward it with his men.
He found there hinds in charge of sheep and goats. C. 1380
He and his men alighted with their mouths
Filled with the dust of fight. He asked in haste
For water which they brought and curdled milk.
He rested, ate of what he found, took off
His breastplate, used it as his fittest couch,
And made his royal helmet serve as pillow.
When dawn rose from the deep, and he awoke,
The chief hind visited his couch and said:—
"Be evil far from thee both day and night.
What ill hath caused thy journey hitherward,
And made thee make a couch of thy cuirass?"
The Sháh then questioned him about the way:—
"Where can I shelter next?"
The chief herd said:—
"Thou wilt not find a habitable place,
Without a guide, but wilt, with one to lead thee,
Discover such, four leagues away, and thence
The villages, each with a well-known chief,
Are frequent."
So he took old herds as guides.
When he arrived the head man of the village
Came out at once to meet him. He sent horsemen,
Both young and old, to Khurra-i-Ardshír;
The host at news of him set forth rejoicing.
He sent men also to spy out the Kurds.
These men went forth, returned, and said: "They all
Are boasting of their deeds and making merry;
None recketh of the Sháh, regarding him
As out-worn in Istakhr with ageing fortune."
The Sháh rejoiced and deemed the past mere wind.
Chose from his famous host three thousand horsemen
With scimitars, and took in company
A thousand archers with artillery.

§ 11

How Ardshír attacked the Kurds by Night and overthrew them

c. 1381 He led the host forth as the sun grew pale,
Left all the unfit behind, and in the dark
And dead of night came on the Kurds, and saw
Earth strewn with sleepers while his own troops raged.
The chieftain reached the pillow of the Kurds,
He gave his fleet steed rein, unsheathed, and charged.
He crowned the grass with blood. The plain was all
The heads and hands of Kurds who strewed earth's face
By scores, and countless of them were made captive:
Their truculence and folly were brought low.
He gave their lands to spoil, to all his troops
Both crowns and purses, and from that time forth
If some old man had borne upon his head
A tray of gold across those deserts, none
Would e'en have glanced thereon, such was the fortune
And justice of the Sháh! He tarried not
To celebrate his victory but marched
Back to Istakhr and issued these commands:—
"Repose your steeds, repair your arms, and cheer
Yourselves with feasts, for ye may have to think
Of war ere long."
The warriors fell to eating,
But when their waists had rested from their girdles
Ardshír devised new warfare. Mind it well,
This tale, when thou shalt hear, of what befell.

§ 12

The Story of Haftwád and the Case of the Worm

Now mark this strange, eventful history
Of Kujárán, a city on the sea

Of Párs, told by a rustic bard for he
Hath dealt at large with Persian legendry.
There was a city strait but full of men,
Who all must work to eat, and many girls
Therein were poor and earned their bread withal.
On one side was a mountain near at hand
Whereto the damsels all were wont to fare,
Each with her distaff-case of poplar-wood,
And with her weighed-out stint of unspun cotton.
They used to gather at the city-gate
Before they started and to club whatever C. 1382
They brought of provand, but their talk ne'er ran
On resting or on eating; their concern
Was cotton which at night they brought back spun.
There dwelt within that city, one Haftwád,
Who was so named because he had seven sons,[1]
A man of cheerful turn but indigent.
He had too one dear daughter and no more,
But daughters he esteemed of no account.
One day it happened that the troop of girls
Sat at their spinning on the mountain-side.
They clubbed together all the food they had,
And during meal-time laid their distaffs by.
'Twas then it happened that this lucky girl
Beheld a windfall lying on the path,
An apple which she picked up hastily.
Now list to this strange tale. When that fair maid
Had bitten the fruit she saw a worm inside.
She picked it from the apple and then gently
Transferred it to her distaff-case, and said,
As she resumed her spinning: "In the name
Of God who hath no partner and no peer,
I'll show you wondrous spinning done to-day
All through the good luck of an apple-worm!"
The girls grew merry and began to laugh,

[1] See p. 206.

Grew blithe of blee and showed their silver teeth.
That day she spun a double quantity,
And marked the sum thereof upon the ground,
Then hurried home like smoke and showed her mother
The yarn. Her mother praised her fondly, saying:—
"Thou hast done well, thou Moon with sunlike face!"
Next morning, having measured off the twist,
She took a double stint, and all agog,
Heart, soul, and body, on her spinning, joined
That busy band and told those fair-famed girls:—
"Ye moon-faced and well favoured by the stars!
By this worm's fortune I have spun so much
That never I shall want!"
She spun that stint,
And might have dealt with more. She carried home
What she had spun, whereat her mother's heart
Became like jocund Paradise. Each morning
The pretty damsel gave the worm some apple,
And spun off all the cotton howsoever
The tale might be increased, the little witch!
One day the parents asked their worthy daughter:—
"Hast thou obtained a fairy for thy sister
That thou dost spin so much, thou goodly one?"
c. 1383 Forthwith the fair maid told her mother all
About the apple with the little worm
Concealed therein, and showed the glorious creature
To both her parents who rejoiced the more.
Haftwád, who took it for an augury,
Gave up his work; he talked of nothing save
The luck of the Worm. His fortune which had aged
Grew young. Thus time passed and his prospects brightened.
They did not slight the Worm but fed it well.
It grew in size and strength, its head and back
Were beautifully hued, and it outgrew
The distaff-case. Its coat, which turned as dark

As musk, had saffron spots throughout. Haftwád
Prepared a goodly, sable cabinet,
And lodged the creature there. It came to pass
That in that city everybody looked
For counsel and for justice to Haftwád,
Who grew in honour, consequence, and wealth,
And all his seven sons were rich as well.
The city had a governor—a man
With rank, renown, and soldiery—who sought
Occasion to deprive Haftwád, the base-born,
Of his dínárs, but many of the nobles
Took sides with him and his seven warlike sons.
The trumpet-call was heard in Kujárán:
They marched out with their spears, and swords, and arrows,
Led by Haftwád who played the man in fight,
Seized on the city, slew the governor,
And captured all his jewels and his treasures.
A crowd of folk assembled round Haftwád.
He went from Kujárán toward the mountain,
Upon whose top he built a hold whereto
The citizens migrated in a mass.
He fitted up the hold with iron gates;
'Twas serviceable both in peace and war.
Upon the mountain-top there was a spring,
Which by good fortune rose amidst the hold;
Around he built a wall of viewless height.
Now when the Worm outgrew its cabinet
They made a tank of masonry[1] and, when
The air had dried it, tenderly disposed
The Worm within. Each day at dawn its keeper
Would hurry from Haftwád to dress its food—
A cauldronful of rice. The growing Worm
Consumed it all. Years passed; its neck and limbs
Grew large as elephant's, and then Haftwád C. 1384

[1] Reading with P.

Surnamed the hold Kirmán,[1] his own bright daughter
Became the guardian of the Worm, and he
The leader of its troops. Wazír and scribe
Attended it; it fed on rice, milk, honey,
While at its door Haftwád, the chieftain, stood
To answer for it both in bad and good.[2]

§ 13

How Ardshír fought with Haftwád and was worsted

Now when Ardshír heard of Haftwád the news
Displeased him, and he sent against that chief
A host of valiant, high-starred warriors.
Haftwád, on hearing of them, took it lightly.
He set an ambush in a mountain-coign,
And went himself to combat with his troops.
Now when the battle raged, and while the soldiers
Plied mace and battle-ax, the force in ambush
Advanced, earth gloomed to those Íránians,
For none knew head from foot, and thou hadst said:—
"Earth manacled their hands." Such were the slain
On desert, dale, and mountain that the victors
Tired of the slaughter. The survivors sped
Back to the Sháh. Now when renowned Ardshír
Heard of the fight, the slaughter, and the plunder,
He sorrowed, summoned to him all his host,
And hasted to distribute arms and pay.
He set forth wrathfully against Haftwád;
The head of that base-born one rose to heaven;
He brought forth arms and treasure from the hold,
Misprizing both that army and the war.
Now when his eldest son, then far away,
Heard that his father was engaged in strife
He left ease, feasting, and repose, and crossed

[1] See p. 204. [2] Six couplets omitted.

The water in a boat. That atheling,
An ill-conditioned youth, was named Sháhwí. C. 1385
He thus rejoined Haftwád who joyed but kept
The right wing and the chief command himself.
Both hosts were goodly, furnished, well equipped,
And combative. The young Sháh's heart grew old
With trouble at the sight. They ranged their ranks,
The scimitars flashed out, the reek went up,
And when the drums beat on the elephants
Folk deafened two miles off. The trumpets blared,
The world re-echoed with the brazen cymbals,
While earth reeled 'neath the horse-shoes and the nails;
The air was tulip-hued with flags of chiefs,
The crash of axes on the crests of helms,
Reverberated from heaven while the rush
Of wind-foot chargers rent the ground asunder,
And pass and plain were full of headless corpses.
Such was Haftwád's host that thou wouldst have said:—
"The sea is wind-tossed." Ant and fly were cramped
For room, those armies so fulfilled the plain.
Thus was it till day waned and night outspread
Its cloak of lapis-lazuli. Ardshír
Drew in his troops. Behind him was the sea.
Now when eve's rusty livery grew dark,
And when the scouts went out from both the hosts,
The soldiers of the Sháh became the prey
Of hunger for his foeman barred the way.

§ 14

How Mihrak of Jahram sacked the Palace of Ardshír

Lived at Jahram a man of low degree[1]—
Mihrak son of Núshzád—who, when he heard

[1] Of Kaian race, according to P.

About the expedition of Ardshír,
His tarrying by the sea, and how his host
Was starving, with communications barred,
Marched on the palace of the Sháh, assembled
Troops past all count, and sacked it, lavishing
No stint of crowns and purses on his soldiers.
The Sháh received the tidings by the sea,
And said in grief: "Why did I leave my home
Defenceless and attack an alien foe?"
Called all the chiefs, spake of Mihrak at large,
C. 1386 And said: "What think ye, leaders of the host!
Of such an impasse? I have tasted much
Of fortune's bitterness, but reckoned not
On trouble from Mihrak!"
They cried: "O Sháh!
Ne'er may thine eyes behold ill-luck. Why take
Things ill because Mihrak hath proved thy foe
In secret? Thou hast greatness, and the world
Is thine. Thy slaves are we; 'tis thine to bid."
He gave command to have the tables set;
They called for wine and cups and minstrelsy.
They served up divers lambs[1] upon the board,
And all the guests disposed themselves to eat,
But when Ardshír himself took bread there came
A pointed shaft and deeply lodged itself
Within the dainty plumpness of a lamb,
Whereat those brave, wise chiefs forbore to eat.
All sorely grieved. One drew the arrow forth.
They saw that there was writing on the shaft;
Those that were clerkly of the magnates read it;
The writing on the arrow was old Persian,
And thus it ran: "If thou wilt hear, wise Sháh!
This issued from the hold's top which is safe
Through the luck of the Worm. Had I directed it

[1] Lambs are still served up whole at feasts in Persia. C. J. Wills, *Land of the Lion and the Sun*, p. 91.

Against Ardshír the feathers would have pierced him.
No monarch, such as he is, in our days
Can overthrow the Worm."
Then to the archmages
The Sháh read out the script on that sharp arrow.
The hold was two leagues off! The nobles' hearts
Were straitened, but they all evoked upon
The Glory of earth's king God's benison.

§ 15

How Ardshír heard about the Worm and made Shift to slay it

The Sháh mused much that night about the Worm
And, when the sun displaced the moon, set forth
With all his army from the sea and hurried
Toward Párs. The foe pursued him, seized the roads,
And slaughtered all the chieftains, but the Sháh
Escaped with his own meiny while behind him
The foe cried: "May the Worm's luck light its throne."
All said; "A marvel—one for all to ponder!" C. 1387
Now as he fled in fear o'er hill and plain
He saw a spacious city, and they urged
Like wolves their steeds. As he approached he saw
A house and at the door two stranger youths.
There halted he and his. The honest pair
Asked him: "Whence come ye so unseasonably,
So dusty from the road, and travel-worn?"
He said: "Ardshír hath come this way, and we
Lagged on the route. He fleeth from the Worm,
Haftwád, and that base man's ignoble crew."
The youths had ruth upon him; they grew sad
And dark of soul, made him dismount and greeted
His nobles well, prepared him pleasant quarters,
And furnished food that was acceptable.

The mighty men sat with the Sháh at meat
While those two youths began to entertain him,
And said aloud: "Exalted one! no grief
Or joy will last. Mark what Zahhák, the tyrant,
Brought on the throne of kingship, how kings' hearts
Ached through malevolent Afrásiyáb,
And how Sikandar, in these latter days,
Slew all the monarchs of the world; all these[1]
Have passed away, have left an evil name,
And not attained to jocund Paradise.
'Twill be thus with Haftwád; that miscreant
Will writhe at last."
The Sháh's heart at their words
Became as fresh as roses in the spring.
The speech of those two gracious ones consoled him,
He told his secret, and, declared himself.
"I am," he said, "Ardshír, son of Sásán,
And am in need of comforting advice.
How deal we with this Worm and with Haftwád?
May both his name and lineage cease on earth."
Thereat the two young men did homage, saying:—
"All hail! Be ill's hand ever far from thee.
Be we thy bond-slaves both in soul and body,
And thou confirmed in spirit evermore.
As for the matter that thou askest us
We will advise thee well that thou mayst use
Craft from the first. In battle with the Worm,
And with Haftwád, thou wilt not be approved
Unless thou shalt adopt the proper course.
They have their seat upon the mountain-peak;
Within it are the Worm, the troops, and treasure;
C. 1388 Before it is the city and behind
The sea, the hold is on the mountain-top,
And access difficult. The Worm withal
Deriveth from the brain of Áhriman—

[1] *I.e.* Zahhák, Afrásiyáb, and Sikandar. *Cf.* pp. 15, 224 and *note*, and Vol. i. p. 59.

The foeman of the Maker of the world.
Thou callest it a Worm, but in its skin
There is a combative, blood-thirsty dív!"
Ardshír, on hearing this, which won his love
And pleased his heart, replied: "So be it then,
And ye shall have the credit or the blame."
The young men's answer pleased his prudent heart:—
"We stand before thee ever as thy slaves,
And guides to good."
Made happy by their words
He fared triumphant and with heart all justice,
And, when he left, the youths companioned him.
He went with ardent heart and full of heed,
With head held high to Khurra-i-Ardshír.
Troops, magnates, men of lore, and counsellors
Flocked to the Sháh, who rested for a while,
Gave out supplies, then marched against Mihrak,
Son of Núshzád, to whom the world grew dark
And strait because he dared not fight; that traitor
Hid when the great king drew anear Jahram.
The great king's heart was wrathful. He abode
Until Mihrak was taken, then smote through
His neck with Indian scimitar, consigned
The headless body to the flames, and put
All captives of his kindred to the sword.
Howbeit one daughter was concealed despite
The hue and cry for her throughout the city.
Thence he departed to attack the Worm,
As all his host desired, and took with him
Twelve thousand horsemen proved and veteran.
When he had concentrated all his troops
He led them to a spot between two mountains.
A prudent man, Shahrgír by name, commanded
The host of Sháh Ardshír, who said to him:—
"Remain here on the watch with outposts, set
Both day and night, shrewd cavaliers and guides,

And furthermore both day and night employ
Patrols and sentries to safe-guard the host.
For my part I shall use a stratagem,
As did mine ancestor Asfandiyár,[1]
And if the watch should see a smoke by day,
Or in the night a blazing like the sun,
Know ye that all is over with the Worm,
Its luck and traffic gone."

C. 1389 He chose seven men,
All brave and Lions on the day of battle,
Among his chiefs. Those in his confidence
Ne'er breathed a word. He chose too many a gem
Out of his hoards, brocade, dínárs, and goods
Of every kind, and wisely spared not wealth.
He packed two boxes full of lead and solder,
And added to the load a brazen pot,
Because he was a master of his craft.
When all the baggage was in readiness
He ordered his chief equerry to bring
Ten asses, put a driver's blanket on,
And chose the gold and silver as his load.
When anxiously they started for the hold
He took with him the two young country-folk,
Who had received him on a former day,
As friends and counsellors. When near at hand
They rested on the mountain and drew breath.
The servants of the Worm were sixty men,
And every one was busy at his work.
One saw the company and called to them:—
"What is there in these packs?"
The Sháh replied:—
"All sorts of goods—clothes, gold and silver, trinkets,
Brocade, dínárs, silk stuffs, and jewelry.
I am a merchantman of Khurásán,
And have no rest from toil, am well to do

[1] When taking the Brazen Hold. See Vol. v. p. 143.

By favour of the Worm and now have come
Rejoicing to its seat. It blesseth me,
And, if I may but serve it, all is well."
Thereat the servants of the Worm flung back
The castle-gate. When they had brought the loads
Inside, the noble Sháh took charge, undid
A pack forthwith, and made the needful gifts.
He spread before the attendants of the Worm
The leathern table of the traveller,
And stood as slaves are wont, unlocked the chests,
Brought and filled cups with wine, but those whose turn
It was to feed the Worm with milk and rice
Refused to drink; their duty kept them sober.
Now as they sat Ardshír sprang up and said:—
"Abundance both of rice and milk have I
And, if the Worm's chief servitor permitteth,
Will gladly feed it for three days myself;
Fame may ensue, and I shall share its luck.
For three days then be merry and drink wine, C. 1390
At sun-rise on the fourth I will erect
A spacious warehouse higher than the walls,
For as a chapman seeking purchasers
I fain would curry favour with the Worm."
This gained his end. They said: "Do thou provide."
So that ass-driver undertook the toil,
While sat the servitors with wine in hand,
And feasted and grew drunk, and came to be
The servitors of wine, not of the Worm.
Now when the wine-cup had bemused their minds
The master of the world came with his hosts,[1]
Brought forth the metal and the brazen pot,
And lit a fire by daylight. When 'twas time
To feed the Worm its food was of boiling lead.
He bore the molten metal to the tank,

[1] *I.e.* his former entertainers—the two youths. See p. 239.

Whence that tame creature raised its head. They saw
Its tongue thrust out, just like an Arab cymbal,
As when it used to eat the rice. The youths
Poured down the molten stuff and quelled the Worm.
There came a rumble from its maw and shook
The tank and ground. Came like the wind Ardshír
With those two youths; they plied sword, mace, and shaft,
And none among those drunken servitors
Escaped their hands with life. Ardshír sent up
A black smoke from the castle-roof to tell
The exploit to the captain of the host,
To whom the look-out hurried to announce:—
"Ardshír hath won!"
Shahrgír made no delay,
But marched to meet the Sháh with his array.

§ 16

How Ardshír slew Haftwád

Now when Haftwád was ware thereof his heart
Grew full of anguish and his head of sighs.
He came to repossess the hold. The king
Ascended to the walls in haste. Haftwád
Strove but to small result, for on the ramparts
There was a Lion's foot.[1] The Íránian host
Came mountain-like, but halted seared and sore.[2]
Then Sháh Ardshír cried from the battlements:—
"O valiant lion-catcher![3] fall upon them,
For if Haftwád escapeth from our midst

[1] Persian etymology derives Ardshír from "ard," anger, and "shír," a lion. The true is "arta," great, and "khshathra," king.

[2] Their previous experiences with Haftwád had been unfortunate. *Cf.* p. 236 *seq.*

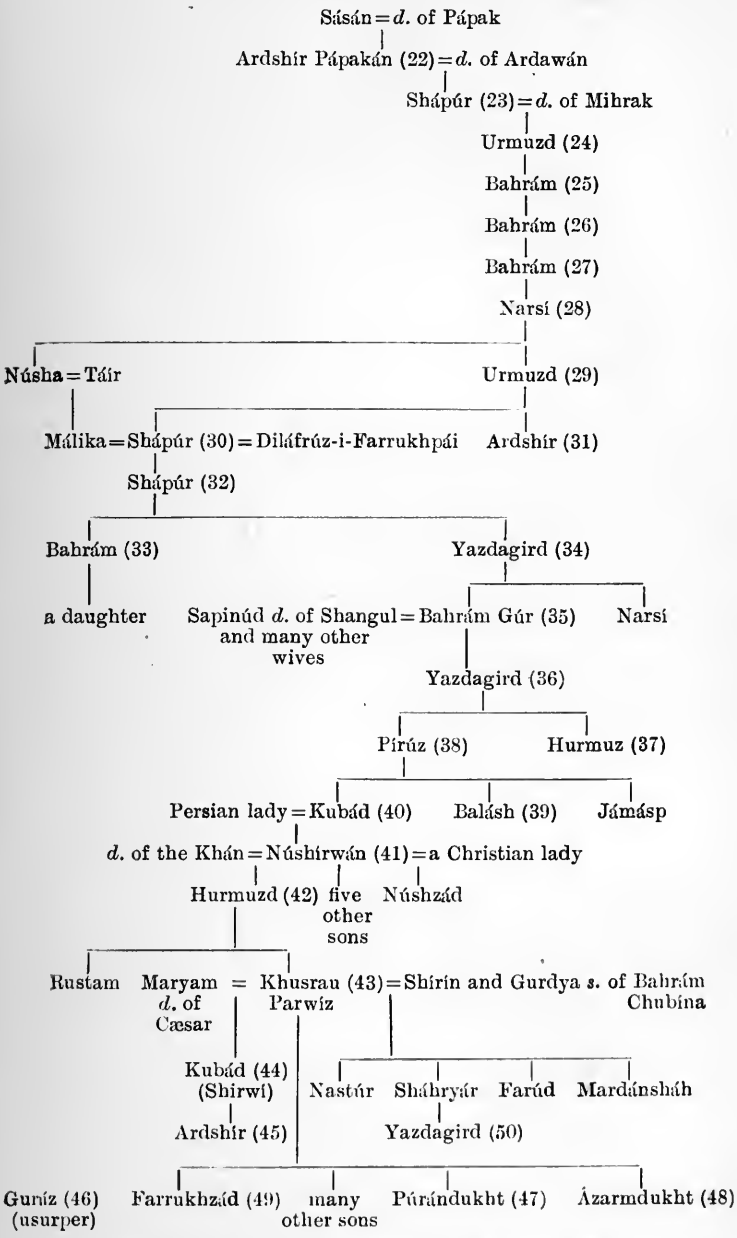
[3] The name of Ardshír's general was Shahrgír—*i.e.* City-taker. Ardshír addresses him as Shírgír, *i.e.* Lion-taker.

Thou wilt have naught in hand but toil and wind.
I have given the molten metal to the Worm;
Gone is its luck, its fierce career abated."
The troops all heard the Sháh's words, donned their helms C. 1391
And, grieved at past discomfiture, took heart,
And girt their loins for vengeance. Then the wind
Turned on the Worm's troops. Soon Haftwád was taken,
As was that knave Sháhwí—his eldest son
And general. Ardshír descended quickly;
Shahrgír met him afoot. They brought a steed
With golden trappings, and the famed king mounted;
Then ordered to set up beside the sea
Two lofty gibbets and suspended thence
His two opponents living and woke up
The heart of all his foes. As for the twain,
He came forth from the centre of the host,
And put them both to death with showers of arrows.
He gave the wealth to spoil and thus enriched
His troops. The servants brought down from the hold
All that there was. Such of the wealth as pleased him
He hurried off to Khurra-i-Ardshír.
The Sháh set up a Fire-fane on the mountain,
Restored Mihrgán and Sada, and bestowed
Upon his lucky hosts[1] crown, throne, and province,
And thence departing, triumphing and glad,
Spread justice over Párs. When man and beast
Had rested he led on his host to Zúr,
Sent to Kirmán an army, and a man
Fit for the crown and throne, proceeded thence
To Taisafún and brought his foe's throne down.
Of this our whirling world it is the way
To keep concealed from thee its mystery.
Conform to it, 'twill not conform to thee,
Because its favour changeth every day.

[1] *Cf.* p. 243, *note.*

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE SÂSÂNIANS

(According to the Shâhnáma[1])



[1] From Khusrau Parwíz onward some of the relationships, left vague in the poem, are given from other sources.

IV

THE SÁSÁNIAN DYNASTY

ARGUMENT

The poet, in this the concluding dynasty of the Sháhnáma, tells of the rise, progress, and fall of the Sásánian empire from the days of its founder, Ardshír Pápakán, to those of Yazdagird, the last Sháh of the dynasty. He commemorates the reigns of its twenty-nine Sháhs, for the most part very briefly, but in some instances at great length, as in the cases of Bahrám Gúr, Núshírwán, and Khusrau Parwíz. He records, so far as Íránian tradition kept such things in memory, the foreign relations of the empire with other kings, races, and peoples, its internal administration and domestic concerns, the adventures that befell and the wisdom that was uttered, the invention of chess and the coming of the Gipsies. He then describes the conquest of Írán by the Arabs and ends with a short passage of personal reminiscence.

NOTE

Having passed, as Firdausí says, "Sikandar's barrier"[1] and the great historic void of five centuries and more, peopled for us in the Sháhnáma by a few shades of names only, we alight at length on the authentic but unstable soil of the Sásánian dynasty; for even here the information presented to us is by no means consonant with modern Western canons of accuracy. The names are historic, and so are many of the events recorded, but there are no dates, and often what is historic is misplaced chronologically and attributed to the wrong actors and the wrong causes, sometimes very trivial ones—those, for instance, assigned by the street story-teller. Of many of the Sháhs only the facts of their accession, the length, often wrongly given, of their reigns, their inaugural speeches, and deaths are recorded. The occurrence, more than once, of a whole series of such reigns has a somewhat depressing effect on the reader and gives an appearance of truth

[1] p. 189.

to Atkinson's view that the interest of the Sháhnáma ends with the reign of Sikandar.[1] From this it might be thought that the poet, weary with his long labours and soured by hope deferred, had hurried over or scamped the concluding portion of his vast undertaking. It might be thought that even in the places where material is abundant his version of it had not the technique and attractiveness found in the earlier dynasties. In the opinion of the present writer such views are not justified by the facts of the case. It is true that here the visions of the childhood of the world fade into the light of common day, and the superhuman gives place to the human, but there is a measure of compensation in that very fact, and the study of the history of a whole epoch as it was conceived, interpreted, and handed down by popular tradition, cannot fail of interest and instruction. It must be remembered too that no other great poet ever imposed such strict limitations on himself, or so sternly adhered to them, as did Firdausí. He puts himself at the mercy of his authorities, and where they fail him, as they do sometimes in this portion of the Sháhnáma, he makes no attempt to invent incidents, but leaves a blank and passes on. This is a proceeding for which the poet should be praised rather than blamed. He was engaged in a high task, no doubt believed in the tales that he retold, just as his countrymen believe in them still, and he refused to add to the sacred story of his race as he found it in tradition. In cases, however, where his authorities offered him an opportunity he shows no falling off in vigour, as the reign of Bahrám Gúr, which will be found in the next volume, is in itself sufficient to prove. In it we seem to discern the soil and the seed whence sprang in after ages the well-beloved Nights called Arabian, but certainly of Persian origin, for we have the Sháh roaming disguised, or at least unrecognised, among his subjects of all classes, the freaks of despotic power, the humorous exaggerations, the Rabelaisian tale, and the clash of the cymbals of the Brides of the Treasure. Finally, in the story of Bahrám Chubína, which Macan admired so much,[2] the Sásánian dynasty possesses a historical romance both admirable in itself and admirably set forth by the poet. It remains to call attention to a few other points in connexion with this dynasty.

Ardshír Pápakán laid it down as a fundamental principle of government, if Iránian tradition may be credited, that the Throne and the Faith were interdependent. The Faith could not exist without the Throne, nor the Throne without the Faith. The two

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[1] AS, p. 510.

[2] C, Vol. i. p. xxxvii.

were brothers; they wore one cloak; they were two pieces of brocade interwoven; the slanderer of the Throne and the persecutor of the Faith were alike impious.[1] Whether Ardshír really spoke to this effect or not matters little. If he did not say so in word his deeds said it for him, and most of his successors followed his example. Later ages, noting this marked feature of the dynasty—the close union between the Throne and the Faith—naturally may have attributed corresponding sentiments to its founder. Accordingly the religion of Zoroaster, as represented by its official priesthood and supported by the throne, obtained during Sásánian times a position of influence and dignity such as it never previously had enjoyed, at all events since the semi-mythical epoch of Gushtásp and of Asfandiyár. Even with all its official advantages, however, the priesthood had much ado to maintain itself, amid the religious ferment of those centuries, alike against the antagonism of rival Faiths without and heresy within.[2] Orthodox Zoroastrianism was more than once almost in the position of an *Athanasius contra mundum*.[3] The Sásánian Sháhs, for the most part, seem to have done their best to support the priesthood, and the latter showed its gratitude by a deep and loyal devotion to the House of Sásán. This loyalty to the throne, coupled with aversion from all that was heterodox or unorthodox, was reflected in the national tradition as handed down by the chroniclers of the time, who for the most part were Zoroastrian priests themselves. Consequently in this part of the Sháhnáma the reader will find a strong legitimist feeling, expressed by occasional remarks or asides, running like a thread through the poem. This feeling takes the form of devotion to the House of Sásán as a whole, with the exception of Yazdagird, son of Sháp ur, "The Wicked," and to the interests of the supposed rightful Sháh or heir for the time being as against usurpers or other claimants of the throne. These little outbursts certainly are not expressions of the poet's own personal views on such matters; he found them in his authorities and reproduced them. This remark also applies to passages of religious polemics. The poet's own views on such matters probably may be found in the parable of the kerchief.[4] These polemics represent the devotion of the Zoroastrian priesthood to orthodoxy, as they understood it, just as their legitimist outbursts expressed their loyalty to the throne, provided that it was occupied by rightful and orthodox Sháhs of the House of Sásán.

A curious instance of this close union between Church and State

[1] See p. 286.
[2] *Cf.* pp. 327, 358.
[3] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 16, *note*.
[4] See pp. 92, 95.

in Sásánian times is given by Mas'údí in his "Book of Indication and Revision," but a few words may be said by way of preface. According to Zoroastrianism there are to be twelve millennia, at the expiration of the last of which—the present one—will come the Restoration of all things. Now the tenth millennium began on the day when the Revelation came to Zarduhsht,[1] and in the Dínkard we find a prophecy, after the event, that the last two centuries of that particular millennium would be periods of great misery and wretchedness.[2] The Dínkard was compiled during the ninth century A.D., and Mas'údí flourished during the first half of the tenth. This is what he tells us :—"There is a great difference between the opinion of the Persians and that of other people with reference to the epoch of Alexander, which most folk have not noticed. It is one of the secrets of the religion and royal policy of the Persians and is known only to the most erudite among the priests, as we have seen for ourselves in the province of Párs, Kirmán, and other countries where the Persians rule. It is not found in any of the books on Persian history or in any chronicle or annals. It is this. Zoroaster . . . in the Avasta—the book revealed to him—announces that in three centuries the empire of the Persians will experience a great revolution, without destruction to the religion, but that at the end of a thousand years, starting from the same epoch, that of Zoroaster, the empire and the religion will perish together. Now between Zoroaster and Alexander there is about three hundred years, for Zoroaster appeared in the time of Gushtásp . . . Ardshír, son of Pápak, possessed himself of the empire . . . about five hundred years after Alexander. We see then that there remained not more than two hundred years or thereabouts before the completion of the thousand years of the prophecy. Ardshír wished to augment by two hundred years this space of time . . . because he feared that when a hundred years should have elapsed after him men would refuse aid to the king, and to repulse his enemies, owing to their belief in the truth of the tradition relating to the future ruin of the empire. To obviate this he retrenched about half the time that had elapsed between Alexander and himself, and accordingly only made mention of a certain number of the Part Kings, who had occupied this period, and suppressed the remainder. Then he took pains to disseminate in his empire that he had made his appearance and possessed himself of the rule two hundred and sixty years after Alexander. Consequently this period was recognised and spread among men. For this reason there is a

[1] See Vol. v. p. 16.

[2] WPT, v. 94 *seq.*

difference between the Persians and other nations with respect to the era of Alexander, aud this is why confusion has been imported into the annals of the Part Kings."[1] Whatever we may think with regard to the historical value of this explanation the fact remains that the duration of the epoch between Alexander the Great and Ardshír Pápakán is reduced by Oriental historians generally. Its standard length may be put, as given by them, at 266 years. The above account makes Ardshír strike out 288 years of the actual historical number of 548 years.

In the notes to the various reigns of this dynasty no attempt will be made to present a complete historical sketch of the Persian history of the period by adding details and filling up the frequent *lacunæ* from other sources. Such history as the poem offers will be dealt with, but such as it ignores, *e.g.* many of the wars with the Eastern Roman empire, will be passed over in silence save where reference to some omitted historical event is needed for the better understanding of what has been included but misrepresented. Readers that desire to supplement the Sháhnáma will find ample material in the late Professor Rawlinson's "Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy," and in the Bibliography appended thereto, especially if they add Professor Nöldeke's "Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit des Sasaniden," which was published three years later and is invaluable.

The form of the names of the various Sháhs, taken from Professor Rawlinson, and the duration of their respective reigns, as calculated by Professor Nöldeke, are given between brackets.

A genealogical table of the Sásánians, according to the Sháhnáma, will be found at the beginning of the volume.

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[1] MM, ix. 327.

XXII

ARDSHÍR PÁPAKÁN

HE REIGNED FORTY YEARS AND TWO MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Ardshír, having become King of kings, marries the daughter of Ardawán, who attempts to poison him and is saved by Ardshír's minister. Shápúr is born and recognised by his father Ardshír. Ardshír consults Kaid about the future. Kaid's reply. The adventure of Shápúr with the daughter of Mihrak. The birth of Urmuzd, who is acknowledged by Ardshír as his grandson. Account of Ardshír's administration. He counsels Shápúr and dies. The poet ends the reign with praises of Mahmúd.

NOTE

§ 1. The forty years and two months assigned by Firdausí to the reign of Ardshír (Artaxerxes I., A.D. 226–241) is much too long. Tabarí makes it, from the fall of Ardawán, fourteen years or, according to some of his authorities, ten months longer.[1] No doubt Ardshír was a king, with his seat of government at Párs, from soon after the death of his father Pápak.[2] Probably he served, and won his spurs, in Ardawán's war against the Romans which was ended by the peace of Nisibis in A.D. 217. Nine eventful years followed and he became King of kings in A.D. 226. Firdausí, according to the text of C, makes him seventy-eight, according to the text of P sixty-eight, at the time of his death.[3]

There had been a city of Baghdád in Babylonian times, but the Arab city of that name was not founded till the days of the Khalífa Al Mansúr in A.D. 762. The city here meant is Bih-Ardshír, the Seleucia newly founded by Ardshír.[4]

We have two accounts of the assumption of the title "King of kings" by Ardshír. For the other see p. 273. From Firdausí's

[1] NT, p. 21. [2] See p. 199. [3] *Id.* p. 286. [4] NT, p. 16, and *note*.

wording it might be held that the former was the popular, the latter the official, ascription of the title. For its import in connexion with Ardshír see p. 197. *Cf.* too p. 199.

§§ 2, 3. Firdausí's account agrees partly with the Kárnámak and partly with the Arabic versions, showing clearly that the former was not his direct authority. According to K two of Ardawán's sons had fled to Kábul and thence incited Ardawán's daughter, whose name is given as Zijának, to poison Ardshír, her husband. One day accordingly, on his return from the chase, she presents to him a cup of roast meal and milk with which she has mingled the poison. As he was about to drink, the sacred Fire, Frúbá, descended on the cup and it fell from his hand. A cat and dog ate the spilt food and died on the spot. Ardshír at once ordered the high priest (the chief múbid) to have Zijának put to death. Instead of so doing, however, he concealed her in his own house, where she gave birth to a son whom she called Shápúr, *i.e.* son of the king, and brought him up till he was seven years old. The story of the self-mutilation by the high priest is omitted.[1] One day Ardshír went to the chase and followed a female onager, whereupon the male came towards Ardshír and exposed himself to death in her stead. Ardshír spared him and rode after the colt, whereat the female onager came up and offered herself to be slain in her young one's place. Ardshír, reflecting on his own conduct to his wife, whom he knew to have been with child at the time when he ordered her to execution, wept. The high priest seized the opportunity to tell Ardshír the real state of the case, and Shápúr is presented to him. Ardshír in great joy bounteously rewards the high priest and founds the city of Rás-Shápúr and a sacred Fire in commemoration of the occasion.[2] According to Tabarí, when Ardshír had obtained the sovereignty he destroyed utterly, in accordance to an oath sworn by his grandsire, the elder Sásán, the royal race of the Arsacids[3] with the exception of one girl, Ardawán's daughter, whom he found in the royal palace. She was very beautiful, and, as she gave herself out to be merely the handmaid of one of Ardawán's wives, he married her. Later on, thinking herself secure, as she was with child by him, she told him who she was. On this he ordered his minister, an

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[1] A similar story is told by Lucian in his treatise on "The Syrian Goddess" of Seleucus Nicator, his queen Stratonice, and one of his favourites—a handsome youth named Combabus—and by Hiuen Tsiang of the younger brother of a king of K'iu-chi who was left in charge of the government while the king himself went on pilgrimage. BBR, i. 22.

[2] NK, pp. 57 *seq.* [3] Historically this is incorrect. See p. 202.

aged man, to put her to death,[1] and then follows the rest of the story as told in the Sháhnáma. All these accounts make Shápúr much too young. According to Tabarí he was present at the battle of Hurmuzdagán and slew with his own hand Ardawán's secretary.[2] Tabarí thus appears to contradict himself, but the reader should bear in mind that it is the custom of Oriental historians to give several versions, derived from different sources, of the same event or person, not to digest such versions, as a Western writer would do, into a single narrative.

A similar account of the rewards bestowed by the grateful Ardshír on his faithful minister is given by Dínawarí and in some versions of the Persian translation of Tabarí, but there is no evidence that the statement that Ardshír had his minister's head engraved and stamped on the coinage is historically correct. It is true that another head besides Ardshír's appears on his earliest and some of his latest coins, but the heads are those of Pápak and and of Shápúr respectively.[3]

The Jund-i-Shápúr of F appears to be the equivalent of the Rás-Shápúr of K.[4]

§§ 4–6. This is both in K and in the Arabic versions. In F the wise Indian king of the days of Sikandar—Kaid, the Kait of K—reappears, takes the place held by the astrologers in Tabarí, and, in K, declares that only two races can hold sway in Írán—that of Ardshír and that of Mihrak.[5] F more poetically puts it that the Sháh can only find peace by the *union* of his family with that of Mihrak. On this Ardshír, aware that one daughter of Mihrak had escaped the previous massacre, tries in vain to find her. It seems worth suggesting that, in the primitive form of the legend, Ardawán, Mihrak, and Máhdik were one and the same personality. Mihrak is Mithrak in K, a very Parthian name, and Mádik or Máhdik is the king of the Kurds. Máhdik merely means "the Mede" and thus symbolises the Parthian power which, according to Íránian tradition, had its headquarters in Media Magna. In this view Ardshír's expeditions against the Kurds and Mihrak would be mere variants of his advance into, and conquest of, Media after the decisive battle of Hurmuzdagán when doubtlessly he put to death all that he could find of his late rival's family. That he wittingly spared any of them, male or female, is most unlikely, and a legend given in Tabarí [6] had to be invented to explain how it came about that he married Ardawán's daughter, the story of this marriage being a later device, as here in Shápúr's

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[1] NT, pp. 25 *seq.* [2] *Id.* 14. [3] *Id.* 30 *note*, and RSM, pp. 65 *seq.*
[4] NK p. 63. [5] NT, p. 43; NK, p. 64. [6] See p. 255.

case, to connect the Sásánians with their predecessors. It is worth noting too that in the Arabic historian Hamza the daughter of Mihrak is called Kurdzád, *i.e.* "the child of the Kurds."[1] This explains the words of Kait's prophecy in K and, what is hard to understand otherwise, why such great importance should be attached to Mihrak and his family in the various versions of the legends unless we regard them as all originating from a single historical incident in Ardshír Pápakán's career. F's insight in varying the form of Kaid's prophecy brings out the historical truth that Írán could be restored to internal peace only by the voluntary union of the old and new political dispensations.

The scene at the well between Shápúr and the daughter of Mihrak is not found in the Arabic versions. In Tabarí the girl takes refuge with shepherds and provides Shápúr with water one day when he is hunting. He falls in love with her and takes her in marriage, after which she tells him of her parentage. The Arabic versions, both in this case and that of Ardshír, represent the marriage into the enemy's family as having been made through ignorance.[2]

The recognition scene on the polo-ground, which we have had already in connexion with Shápúr,[3] here occurs, as in K, in its proper place. F adds the touch of Ardshír's unexpected return from the chase and consequent discovery. In Tabarí it is brought about by a sudden visit paid to his son's palace by Ardshír who thus encounters Urmuzd.[4]

At this point K, after giving a brief and exaggerated account of the reign of Urmuzd, comes to an end.

§§ 7, 8, 10. In addition to K there was once in existence a Pahlaví work known as the "Ahdnámak" or "Andarznámak" *i.e.* "Book of the Exhortations" *sc.* of Ardshír. In all probability its contents much resembled the subject-matter found in these sections.[5]

Tabarí states that Ardshír himself crowned his son Shápúr,[6] and the incident seems to be recorded in a bas-relief of Ardshír's at Takht-i-Bústán and in some of his later coins.[7] Mas'údí says that Ardshír became a religious recluse.[8]

The duration of the Sásánian dynasty was 425 years—A.D. 226–651. *Cf.* with Ardshír's prophecy the account of Mas'údí on p. 251, and for the length of his reign p. 254. Tabarí[9] credits him with the foundation of eight cities.

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[1] NK, p. 65, *note*.
[2] NT, pp. 26, 44.
[3] p. 263.
[4] NT, p. 44.
[5] NK, pp. 26, 27.
[6] NT, p. 19.
[7] RSM, pp. 64 *seq.*
[8] MM, ii. 159.
[9] *Id.*

§ 1

How Ardshír Pápakán sat upon the Throne in Baghdád

Now at Baghdád Ardshír assumed his seat
Upon the ivory throne and donned the crown
That maketh glad the heart, with girdle girt,
The sceptre of the Sháhs in hand, the palace
Prepared. Thenceforth folk called him "King of kings,"[1]
And no one knew him from Gushtásp. Whenas
C. 1392 He donned the crown of majesty he spake,
Victorious and glad, upon the throne
Thus: "Justice is my treasure in this world,
Which is reviving 'neath my busy hands,
A treasure this that none can take from me;
Ill-doing 'tis that bringeth ill on men.
All-holy God, if I find favour with Him,
Will not begrudge to me this sombre earth.
The world is wholly under my protection,
My policy is to approve of justice.
None—friend or foe—must slumber with his heart
All care through act of any officer,
Or chief, or warrior-cavalier of mine:
This court is free to all, both foe and friend."
The whole assembly blessed him and exclaimed:—
"Oh! may thy justice make earth prosperous!"
Where there were hostile chiefs he sent forth troops
To bring them to submission or make known
The usage of the scimitar and throne.

[1] *Cf.* pp. 193, 197, 199, 254, 273.

§ 2

The Case of Ardshír and the Daughter of Ardawán

Now when the Sháh slew Ardawán, thus winning
The world, he took to wife the slain king's daughter
To tell him where her father's hoards were hidden.
There were two sons of Ardawán in Hind,
Companions in distress, and two in ward
With full hearts and with weeping eyes. The eldest
Of these—Bahman—who was in Hindústán,
Perceiving that the realm was lost to him,
Chose a discreet and prudent messenger,
A youth who was possessed of ears to hear,
Gave him some poison secretly, and said:—
"Go to my sister, tell her: 'Seek not thou
Our foe's affections, for in Hindústán
Thou hast two brothers, exiles both, and two
Bound in the prison-house of Sháh Ardshír.
Our sire is slain, his sons are pierced, by arrows,
And thou, as it would seem, hast ceased to love us!
How can the Maker of the sky commend it?
As thou wouldst queen it in Írán, and win
In this world the approval of the brave,
Take thou this mortal Indian bane and use it
Forthwith upon Ardshír.'"
The envoy came
At eve and gave the noble girl that message.
Her soul and heart burned for her brother's sake, C. 1393
Her heart was all a-flame. She took the bane
To do his will. Now Sháh Ardshír one day
Went forth to hunt and shoot the onager,
Returned at noon and visited the daughter
Of Ardawán. That moon-faced lady ran,
And proffered to the Sháh a topaz cup
Full of cold water, sugar, and fine meal,

And mixed therewith the bane to please Bahman.
As Sháh Ardshír received the cup it fell
Out of his hand and shivered on the ground.
The queen shook with affright, her heart was riven.
Her agitation made the Sháh suspect,
Who, doubting what the turning sky would bring,
Enjoined a slave to fetch four fowls. They thought
That his surmise was false, but when the birds
Were put down to the meal they ate and died!
Thus certified the pious monarch summoned
An archimage—his minister—and said:—
"If thou shouldst seat a foe upon thy throne,
Who by thy kindness groweth so bemused
As rashly to lay hand upon thy life,
What is the punishment for one so raised,
How shall we remedy our own default?"
The archimage replied: "If any subject
Attempt the world-lord's life thou must behead
The guilty and accept no other counsel."
Thereat the Sháh commanded: "Make the daughter
Of Ardawán a corpse."
The archimage
Went out behind the queen, who quaked convicted,
But said: "O sage! my day and thine will pass.
I cannot say thee nay if thou wilt slay me,
But—I am now with child, and by Ardshír;
So if 'tis right to cause my blood to flow,
And gibbet me on high, wait till my babe
Be born, then carry out the Sháh's behest."
The shrewd archmage returned and told his master,
But he made answer: "Hearken not to her,
But do my bidding."
C. 1394 "Tis an evil day,"
The archimage reflected, "when such orders
Come from the Sháh! We all, both young and old,
Must die, and he is sonless! Though he live

To count unnumbered years yet when he dieth
A foe will have his throne. Well may I dare
To substitute high policy for such
A feckless action. I will save her life.
I may induce him to repent or else
Can do his bidding when her child is born."
He got apartments ready in his palace
That he might tend her as his soul and body,
And told his wife: "I would not have a breath
Of air behold her."
Then "I have," he thought,
"Foes and to spare, and doubts for good or ill
Attach to every one, so I will take
Such order that no slanderer shall foul
My stream."
He went his way and gelt himself,
Used cautery and drugs and bandages,
Then put his genitals in salt forthwith,
As swift as smoke enclosed them in a casket,
And sealed it up. With pallid face and groaning
He came before the lofty throne, laid down
The casket closed and sealed, and said: "Now let
The Sháh entrust this to his treasurer
With an inscription thereupon to state
The matters appertaining and the date."

§ 3

How Sháp̀úr was born to Ardshír by the Daughter of Ardawán, and how after seven Years Ardshír heard of his Son and acknowledged him

Now, when the time of birth drew near, the archmage
Told not the secret e'en to the air. The daughter
Of Ardawán brought forth a son—one ardent
And with the royal mien. The minister

Excluded all folk, named the babe Shápúr,[1]
And hid him seven years till he became
A king in looks, in mien, and Grace. It chanced
One day that the wazír drew near, perceived
Tears on Ardshír's face, and addressed him thus:—
"O Sháh! successful art thou yet thy soul
Is fed on care! In this world thou hast gained
Thy full desire and cast thy foeman's head
Down from the throne. Now is the time for mirth
And quaffing wine, not for solicitude.
C. 1395 Earth's seven climes are 'neath thy sway, and thine
Are troops and state and policy."
He answered:—
"O holy archimage and confidant!
Our scimitar hath justified the age,
Grief, travail, and distress have passed away.
My years amount to fifty-one, my hairs
Once musk are camphor, and my roses gone.
I ought to have a son before me now,
A joy of heart, a source of strength, a guide.
A sonless sire is like a sireless son,
And taken only to a stranger's breast.
A foe succeedeth to my crown and wealth,
And all my gains are travail, pains, and dust."
Then thought that shrewd old man: "'Tis time to speak."
He said: "O Sháh! who cherishest thy lieges,
Magnanimous, shrewd-hearted, and supreme!
If thou wilt promise me to spare my life
I will remove my lord's distress."
The Sháh
Replied: "O sage! why shouldst thou fear for that?
Say what thou knowest and enlarge thereon,
For what is better than a wise man's words?"
He made reply: "Pure and shrewd-hearted Sháh!

[1] *I.e.* Sháh's son.

I gave a casket to thy treasurer:
Now let the Sháh vouchsafe to ask for it."
The Sháh said to his treasurer: "He asketh
For that which he consigned to thy safe keeping.
Restore it that we may examine it,
And haply cease to live a life of care."
The treasurer produced and gave the casket
Back to the minister. The Sháh inquired:—
"What is there in it under lock and seal?"
He made reply: "The blood of mine affliction,
And parts of shame dissevered by the roots.
To me thou gavest Ardawán's own daughter
Until thou shouldst require her corpse of me.
I slew her not because she was with child,
And I feared God, but sacrificed my manhood,
When thou didst give that order, and cut off
My parts of shame that none might slander me,
Or plunge me into infamy. Thy son
Hath been in keeping of thy minister
Seven years. No other king hath son like him,
And his sole semblance is the moon in heaven.
In love I gave to him the name Sháp̀ur,
And may his fortune jubilate the sky.
His mother too is with him, educating
The prince her son."
The world's king marvelled at him,
Began to muse upon that child, then said:—
"O shrewd of heart and well advised! much toil C. 1396
Hast thou endured! I will not let it age
With thee. Select a hundred of his years,
Like him in face and stature, breast and limb,
And all in like garb, neither worse nor better.
Send them to play at polo on the ground,
And furnish balls. When those fair youths are there
My soul will yearn for love upon my child,
My heart will be a witness to the truth,

And make me know my son."

At break of day
The minister arrived and brought the boys
In dress, in stature, and in mien so like
As not to be distinguished. Thou hadst said:—
"A holiday is toward in the park,
And prince Shápúr is in the thick of it,"
For when the youth began to play he bore
The ball off from the rest so that Ardshír,
On coming to the ground, accompanied
By young and old, and looking at the boys,
Could from his bosom heave a deep, cold sigh,
Could point his son out to his minister,
And say: "Behold a young Ardshír is yonder!"
The counsellor replied: "O Sháh! thy heart
Hath testified to thine own son, but wait
Till yon fair children drive the ball anear thee."
Then Sháh Ardshír bade an attendant: "Go,
And drive the ball from them that I may see
Which boy will come forth bravely midst the brave,
As though a lion, and bear off the ball
Before my very eyes, regarding none
Of all this company, for such will be,
Past doubt, my very son in blood and body,
In limbs and race."

The servant did his bidding,
And drove the ball before the cavaliers.
The boys as swift as arrows followed it,
But, when they neared Ardshír, came to a stand,
Albeit unwillingly. Shápúr alone,
That Lion, still came on, seized, and bore off
The ball before his sire, and then, withdrawing,
Restored it to the boys. The Sháh's heart joyed,
As when an old man groweth young again,
The horsemen raised the young prince from the ground,
And passed him on from hand to hand until

The king of kings could clasp him to the breast,
And bless the Judge of all. He kissed Shápúr
On head and face and eyes, and said: "Such wonders
Should not be hidden. I ne'er dreamed of this, C. 1397
For I presumed him slain just as God greatened
My kingship and increased my monuments
Within the world! Thou canst not shun His bidding
Though thou shouldst raise thy head above the sun."
He called for gold and many precious stones
Out of his treasury. They poured them forth
And sifted [1] musk and ambergris withal
Upon Shápúr until his head was hidden
With gold, and none could see his face for jewels.
The Sháh heaped gems too on his minister,
Set him upon a seat inlaid with gold,
And gave him wealth enough to furnish all
His house and halls. The Sháh then bade the daughter
Of Ardawán to go in peace and joy
Back to the palace, pardoned all her fault,
And cleansed his Moon of rust. He had all men
Of parts within the city brought to teach
The boy to write the ancient tongue, to wear
The mien of royal haughtiness, to wheel
His steed in battle, and thus mounted show
His spear-point to the enemy, to quaff,
Give largess, entertain at feasts, array
The host, and all the toil and work of war.
He had a new die struck for all the coinage
Both gold and silver, large and small alike;
On one side was his own name, on the other
That of his great wazír—one held in honour
As an experienced man and counsellor.
Both names appeared on documents. The Sháh
Gave him the ring, the signet, and the rule,
Bestowed a treasure on the poor that lived

[1] Reading with T.

By labour, chose a site where brambles grew,
And made thereof a jocund seat, its name
Jund-i-Shápúr, thus only known to fame.

§ 4

How Ardshír, to find out the Future of his Reign, sent to Kaid of Hind, and Kaid's Reply

Shápúr grew cypress-tall and, since they feared
The evil eye, was ever with Ardshír,
Attending like wazír and minister.
The Sháh had not a day's repose from warfare,
Or leisure to disport himself, for when
C. 1398 He had relieved a place of enemies
They rose elsewhere. He said: "I pray the Maker,
Both publicly and privily, that I
May hold earth free from foes and then become
A devotee."
His glorious minister
Replied: "O Sháh, whose heart is bright, whose words
Are true! dispatch we an ambassador
To Kaid of Hind who is a man of knowledge,
And good at need, can estimate high heaven,
And tell the door of joy, the road to ruin.
He will divine, accounting it no toil,
Nor asking guerdon for his answering,
If thou without a rival wilt possess
The seven climes."
On hearing this the Sháh
Chose him a high-born youth of ready wit
To go as envoy to the sage of Hind,
With many steeds, with gold, and silk of Chín,
And said to him: "Go to the sage and say:—
'O man of fortune and of truthful speech!

Find from the stars when I shall rest from war,
And win me full possession of the realm,
For if I must be evermore in toil
I will not be so lavish of my treasure.'"

The envoy came to Kaid with gifts and largess,
And gave the message of the king of kings,
Explaining all. Kaid greeted him, grew grave,
Turned to his arts, brought forth his astrolabe,
Observed the stars, and placed upon his lap
An Indian planisphere to ascertain
High heaven's purpose touching peace, success,
Woe, and mishap, and then informed the envoy:—
"I have discerned the fortunes of Írán,
And of the Sháh. If he will blend with his
The offspring of Mihrak, son of Núshzád,
The Sháh will sit in peace upon his throne,
And need not send his armies anywhither,
His wealth will wax, his travail wane. Depart.
Weigh not these two realms' feud.[1] Írán will prove
Conformable when this hath been achieved,
And he will compass all his heart's desire."

He gave the envoy gifts, and said: "My sayings
Must not be hidden. If he shall obey,
High heaven will give him cause to prize my words."

The envoy went back to the Sháh and told
What he had heard from noble Kaid, whereat
Ardshír was vexed, his visage grew like gall.
He answered: "God forbid that I should see
Descendants from Mihrak and bring my foe
Out of the street inside my house to war C. 1399
Against my realm! Woe for my lavished treasure,

[1] We must suppose that the troubles of the Sháh arose from the fact that two of the sons of Ardawán had taken refuge in Hind which, either directly or indirectly, was assisting them and their adherents in Irán. P reads "between these two families," *i.e.* the rival dynasties of Ardshír and Ardawán.

Mine expeditions sent, and labours borne!
Mihrak hath but one daughter left, and none
Hath seen her. I will bid men search for her
In Rúm, in Hind, in Chín, and in Taráz,
And when I find her I will have her burned,
And make the dust lament for her with tears."
He sent one skilful in pursuit of foes,
And horsemen also, to Jahram. Now when
The daughter of Mihrak heard this she fled,
And lay concealed within a house ten months.
While she was hidden with a village-chieftain,
Who held her in high honour, she grew up
Like some straight cypress and increased in wisdom,
In Grace, and beauty; not a peer had she;
The realm had not so tall a cypress-tree.

§ 5

The Adventure of Sháṕúr with the Daughter of Mihrak, and his taking her to Wife

Within a little while the monarch's fortune
Grew bright. He went to hunt at dawn one day
With wise Sháṕúr. The horsemen ranged around,
And cleared the plain of game. A spacious seat
Appeared afar with garth, park, hall, and palace.
Sháṕúr rode on until he reached the village,
And halted at the mansion of the chief.
There was a pleasant garth inside the walls,
A verdant spot, and when the youth went in
He saw a maiden like the moon, who plied
A wheel and bucket at a well. Now when
She saw Sháṕúr she came and showered blessings:—
"Be happy, smiles and joy be thine, and all
Thy years unscathed! Thy courser is athirst,

No doubt, and all the water in the village
Is brackish, but in this well cold and sweet.
With thy permission I will water him."
Shápúr replied: "What words are these, fair maid!
I have attendants; they shall draw the water."
The maiden turned her back upon the youth;
She went apart and sat beside a stream.
He bade a servant: "Bring a bowl and draw."
The attendant heard and ran; rope, wheel, and bucket C. 1400
Were there, but when the bucket sank and filled
It rose not though he strove with knitted brows,
So heavy was it. Chidingly Shápúr
Came up, and said to him: "Why, thou half woman!
Did not a woman work rope, wheel, and bucket?
She pumpeth what she will but thou art pumped,
And askest help!"
He took the rope himself,
But found the work severe. Discovering
The bucket's weight he praised that fair-cheeked maid,
And said: "Good sooth, she is of royal race
To raise a bucket of such weight as this!"
When he had drawn the bucket up the damsel
Came and saluted him most graciously,
And said: "Live happily while time endureth.
May wisdom ever be thy monitor.
The virtue of Shápúr, son of Ardshír,
Could doubtless turn the water in the well
To milk!"
He said to that sweet-spoken maid:—
"How know'st thou, moon-face! that I am Shápúr?"
She answered him: "Full often have I heard
This saying from the lips of truthful men:—
'The brave Shápúr is like an elephant

In strength, as bounteous as the river Nile,
In height a cypress, with a frame of brass,
And like Bahman in all.'"[1]

He said: "O moon-face!
Tell truly what I ask. Declare thy stock,
Because thy mien is royal."

She replied:—

"The daughter of the village-chieftain I,
From whom I get my comeliness and strength."

"Lies never pass with princes," he rejoined,
"A tiller of the soil would not possess
A moon-faced daughter, fair, all scent and hue."

"O prince," she said, "when life is guaranteed me,
I will inform thee fully of my birth,
Safe from the anger of the king of kings."

He said: "Revenge on friends is not a plant
That groweth in our garden, so say on,
And fear not me or our just, noble Sháh."

"The very truth is that I am," she said,
"The daughter of Mihrak, son of Núshzád.
A pious person brought me as a child,
And gave me to this worthy village-chief;
So now, for fear of the illustrious Sháh,
I draw the water and do other chars."

Shápúr took up his lodging there and, when
The village-chief was waiting on him, said:—
C. 1401 "Give me, with Heaven as witness, this fair maid."

The village-chief accorded his desire
With all the rites of those that worship Fire.

[1] From whom, according to one of the two genealogies in the Sháhnáma, the House of Sásán was descended. See p. 199.

§ 6

How Urmuzd was born to Shápúr by the Daughter of Mihrak

It came to pass that soon that straight-stemmed Cypress,
Like blossom, came to fruit. Shápúr conveyed her
To his own palace from the chieftain's house,
And cherished her like some ripe quince.[1] Now when
Nine months had passed that Moon-face bare a son,
The image of his sire. Thou wouldst have said:—
"Asfandiyár hath come again or famed
Ardshír, the cavalier."[2] The prince, his sire,
Named him Urmuzd, for he was like a cypress
Midst herbs, and after seven years possessed
No equal in the world. His parents hid him,
And never let him go abroad to play.
Once when Ardshír went hunting for a week,
As did Shápúr withal, Urmuzd escaped
Unnoticed, weary of his tasks, and ran
Forth to the riding-ground of Sháh Ardshír,
A lasso in one hand and in the other
Two shafts, with other boys with balls and sticks,
Just as the world-lord with his retinue,
And with his shrewd high priest, came from the chase.
When he was nigh the ground one of the youths
Smote strongly and awry so that the ball
Rolled near the Sháh. None followed it, the boys
Stopped short, balked in their game, except Urmuzd
Who, rushing like a blast before the Sháh,
Bare off the ball before his grandsire's face,

[1] This sentence is inserted from P.

[2] Probably Sháh Bahman is meant. *Cf.* previous note and Vol. v. p. 282.

Amid the soldiers' hue and cry, and shouted,
So that the conquering Sháh was all amazement:—
"The sticks, the riding-ground, and pluck are mine,
And mine it is to battle with the brave!"
Thus to the archmage said Ardshír: "Inquire
About the lineage of this noble youth."
The archmage asked. None knew, or would not say.
"Take up the youth and bring him," said the king.
The archmage went and raised him from the dust,
Then bare him to the Sháh of noble men,
Who said: "Illustrious child! what is thy stock?"
He answered in loud tones: "My name and race
C. 1402 Should not be hidden: thy son's son am I—
Shápúr's—born from the daughter of Mihrak."
The monarch of the world was in amaze
Thereat, smiled, mused, bade come Shápúr, and asked
Questions past count. Shápúr, that noble man,
Was terrified, his heart was sorrowful,
His cheek was wan. The great Sháh smiled on him,
And said: "Hide not thy child; we need a son,
And whencesoe'er he cometh, it is well,
Since, so they say, he is a prince's child."
Shápúr replied: "Be blest and with thy looks
Sustain the world! He cometh from my loins,
And he is named Urmuzd; he shineth like
A tulip midst the grass. I have awhile
Concealed him from the king until the fruit-tree
Should bring forth fruit. The daughter of Mihrak
Bare this illustrious child, who is my child
Beyond all doubt."
Then, while his father listened,
He told at large what happened at the well.
Ardshír rejoiced to hear the tale and went
Back to the palace with his minister,
Embraced that darling child, then sought his throne.
He had a golden ante-throne prepared,

And bade bring torque and golden coronet
Wherewith they decked the young child's head, then fetched
Both gold and jewels from the treasury,
And heaped them till the boy's head disappeared,
Whereat his grandsire drew him from the heap,
Bestowed the gold and jewels on the poor,
And still more splendid presents on the sages,
Decked with brocade the Fire-fanes and the hall
Wherein were held Naurúz, and Sada-feast,[1]
Made ready with his lords a banquet-house,
Placed minstrels everywhere, and then addressed
The land's wise chieftains: "Never should one slight
The sayings of a learned astrologer,
For thus said Kaid of Hind: 'Ne'er will thy fortune,
Thy throne, thy realm, thy crown, thy treasure, host,
Thy royal diadem, thy Grace, and state,
Be glad and jocund till the families
Of thee and of Mihrak, son of Núshzád,
Shall be conjoined in blood.' For eight years now
The sky hath blessed our wishes. Ever since
Urmuzd was added to my peace the world
Hath granted what I would, earth's seven climes
All have been ordered, and my heart hath had
Its will of fortune."
All his underlings
Gave him thenceforth the style of "King of kings."[2]

§ 7

Of the Wisdom of Ardshír and his Method of administering the Realm

Now hear and learn the wisdom of Ardshír, C. 1403
Who toiled, gave virtue vogue, and everywhere

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 74, 123.
[2] *Cf.* p. 254.

Spread love and justice. As his forces grew
At court he sent his agents to all parts
To say: "Let none of you that hath a son
Allow him to grow up in ignorance,
But teach him horsemanship and how to fight
With mace and bow and shafts of poplar-wood."
A youth, when trained to strength and grown efficient,
Would come up from his province to the court,
The Sháh's famed court, and then the muster-master
Would have him registered and give him quarters.
These young recruits, when war broke out, went forth
Commanded by some paladin, some archmage
Among the officials anxious to excel,
One to each thousand youths. He went with them
To note their dispositions—cowardly,
Or too infirm for war—and to report
On all by letter to the king of kings,
Who when he had perused it and received
The messenger, would have a robe of honour
Of what was choicest in the treasury
Prepared for those that showed accomplishment;
But non-effectives carried arms no more.
Thus grew his troops so many that they passed
The purview of the stars, and men of counsel
Received promotion at his hands. A herald
Used to make circuit of the host, proclaiming:—
"Ye men of name and warriors of the Sháh!
Whoe'er hath sought for favour in his sight,
And washed earth with the blood of valiant men,
Shall have from me a royal gift and leave
His fame as his memorial."
He ordered
The whole world with his troops, a shepherd he
With soldiers for his flock.
He kept a staff

Of experts in his public offices,
Committing naught to those incompetent.
They made a point of style and penmanship,
And when one showed superiority,
And when his principal reported it, C. 1404
The king of kings increased for him his pay.
The second-rate served not the Sháh himself,
But gave assistance to his officers;
He only kept the scribes that were adepts,
And, when he saw such, he would praise them, saying:—
"A scribe that filleth up the treasury,
And by his talent lesseneth toil, availeth
State, host, and subjects pleading for redress.
The scribes are as the sinews of my soul,
And monarchs in disguise."
When governors
Went to their provinces he used to charge them:—
"Hold money vile and sell no man for pelf,
Because this Hostel bideth not with any,
But seek for wisdom and all righteousness;
Let greed and madness be afar from thee,
And take none of thy kith and kin; the troops
That I have given thee are friends enough.
Give largess monthly to the poor, but naught
To foes. If by thy justice thou shalt make
Thy province prosper thou wilt prosper too
And joy in justice, but if any poor
Sleep there in fear thou sellest thine own soul
For gold and silver."
All that came to court
On state affairs, or to require redress,
Were met by trusty henchmen of the Sháh,
And asked about the royal governors:—
"Are they just men or covetous? Do any
Lie wronged by them? What learnéd men are there?
Are any faint through want? Would any be

Of service to the Sháh as being old
And veteran, or devout? The king of kings
Saith: 'Let my toils and treasure gladden none
Except the men of wisdom and of lore,
For what is better than one wise and aged?
I seek experienced men and youths approved,
And patient, for if youths are wise and apt
To learn they fittingly replace the old.'"
As often as his host went forth to war
He acted prudently and cautiously,
And chose some scribe—a wise, learned, heedful man—
And charged him with a courteous embassage
Lest there be unjust strife. The envoy used
To visit the Sháh's foe to learn his case,
And list to him if he were wise and held
War's sorrows, toils, and ills calamities.
C. 1405 If so he would have presents from the Sháh,
With grant, with patent, and remembrances;
But if he had a wrathful head, a heart
Revengeful, and blood boiling in his liver,
The Sháh would give the host a donative,
That no one might be malcontent, appoint
Some paladin aspiring, watchful, wise,
And placable, and therewithal a scribe—
A man of precedent and mastery—
To keep watch that the soldiers did no wrong;
Then mounted on an elephant a man,
Whose voice could reach two miles, thus to proclaim:—
"Ye chieftains of the fray, brave, famed, and bold!
No harm must come on poor or rich and noble.
Pay for your provand at each stage and earn
My subjects' thanks, and let God's worshippers
Touch not another's goods. Whoe'er shall show
The foe his back his outlook will be gloomy,
Because his grave will be at hand, or chains
Will gall his neck and breast, or else his name

Will be struck off the roll, and he himself
Will feed on dust and on dark dust repose."
Then he would charge the captain of the host:—
"Be neither slack nor rash to attack, keep always
The elephants in front and push out scouts
Four miles. Be instant, when a fight is toward,
To go among the troops, bid them remember
Both who and what they are, why in the field:—
'They are a hundred horsemen to our one,
And yet their hundred to our one are few!
For every one of you, both young and old.
I shall receive a present from Ardshír.'
When cavaliers advance upon both sides
Let not thy warriors, in their eagerness
To fight, press on till they expose the centre,
However large the host. Dispose thy left
Against the foe's right wing that all may have
A chance of fighting and array thy right
Against his left. Let all look to their baggage.
The centre must stand fast, let no one there
Advance a foot; but if the opposing centre
Advance, advance thine own. When thou hast triumphed
Forbear to shed the blood of foes in flight,
While, if they ask for quarter, grant it them,
And be not vengeful. When thou seest the foe
Retreat, haste not to quit thine own position,
Or deem thyself secure from ambuscade, C. 1406
But, once thou art assured, see that thou heed not
Another's words. Bestow the spoil on those
That sought the fray and bravely washed their hearts
Of love of life, and bring withal all captives
Without fail to my court. I will erect them
A city where a thorn-brake stood.[1] As thou
Wouldst live unvexed and scathless turn in naught

[1] Reading with P.

From these my counsellings, and in thy triumphs
Incline to God because He is past doubt
Thy guide."
Whenever there arrived an envoy
From any part, Rúm, Turkistán, or Persia,
The marchlords got to know it, for they held
Such things of moment; lodging was provided,
This was the business of the governors,
With provand, raiment, and no stint of carpets,
Upon the route. They would inform themselves
As to the envoy's business with the Sháh,
And then a scribe upon a noble beast
Would go to Sháh Ardshír that troops might meet
The envoy. Then the conquering Sháh would have
His throne made ready and attendants ranked
On either side thereof in cloth of gold,
Would have the envoy summoned to the presence,
Seat him beside the throne, greet him, and learn
His business good or ill, name, and repute,[1]
His views of right and wrong, about his land,
About its customs, king, and armaments,
Conduct him to a palace with the state
That was befitting an ambassador,
And furnish what he needed, then invite him
To feast and revel, seat him by the throne,
Would take him out on royal hunting-days,
Escorted by a countless retinue,
Dismiss him with the forms due to an envoy,
And fashion him a monarch's robe of honour.
He sent withal archmages to all parts—
Men wise and shrewd and kindly—to build cities,
And lavish wealth thereon, that every man
Resourceless, homeless, and estranged from fortune,
Might have a living and a dwelling-place,
And thus increase the number of his subjects.

[1] Reading with P.

So his good name is current now as then
Upon the lips and in the thoughts of men,
And one sole monarch [1] in the world we find
That now recalleth lost Ardshír to mind,
And mine 'tis living glory to bestow C. 1407
Upon him.[2] May his end all goodness know.
The Shah had many secrets, for he kept
His agents everywhere. Whene'er the rich
Grew poor the Sháh would help him, if informed,
And leave him prosperous with fertile lands,
Home, slaves, and underlings, arranging all
Without the city's ken, and put his children,
If they had talent, in the charge of tutors.
In every quarter of the towns were schools,
With colleges for worshippers of Fire.
He suffered none to want save such as kept
The fact a secret, and his custom was
To go at daybreak to the public ground,
Where all that sought redress could come, and there
Judged subject and friend's son impartially.
His justice made the whole world prosperous,
And all his subjects' hearts rejoiced in him.
When any king to justice is allied,
In time's despite his footprints will abide.
Observe the policy of this brave chief,
Who, thou wouldst say, engrossed all excellence.
His agents, wise and watchful officers,
Went through the world. Where any land lay waste,
Or streams ran low, he took the taxes off;
No holding was too mean for his regard.
If any thane was poor, and losing all,
The Sháh supplied both implements and cattle
And let him not be ousted from his home.
Now hear, O king! the sayings of this sage
And make the world as bright as in his age;

[1] Mahmúd. [2] Reading with P.

As thou untroubled and unvexed wouldst be,
And pile up wealth not gained injuriously,
Seek that thy subjects may be unvexed too,
And have from all the praises justly due.
In Rúm and Chín, in Turkistán and Hind,
The world grew as 'twere Rúman silk to him,
Both toll and tax came in continually
From all lands, none opposing him. He summoned
The nobles of Írán and set those worthy
Upon the royal throne, then rose and made
Oration to them well and graciously:—
"O chieftains of the state, ye that are wise
And prudent! know that swiftly turning heaven
Assaileth not through justice nor embraceth
C. 1408 Through love, but setteth whom it will on high,
And then consigneth him to sorry dust;
His name alone surviveth, all his toils
Go with him to oblivion; one whose aims
Are good may leave a good name, naught besides.
Now as for thee, Urmuzd! thy lot will be
As holy God approveth. Turn and open
Thyself to Him who is the Lord of all,
And multiplieth good. From every ill
Take shelter with the Ruler of the world,
For ill and good are in His power, and He
Will make all hardship easy to thee, give
A bright heart to thee, and victorious fortune.
Judge first by mine experience and perpend
Mine own past good and evil while still fresh.
When I took refuge with the Lord of all
My heart was gladdened by the crown and throne.
I rule the seven climes for so seemed good
To His authority. From Rúm and Hind
I take a tribute, and the world hath grown
Like Rúman silk to me. Thanks be to God,
Who gave me strength, exalted star, and favour

From Sol and Saturn; yet who knoweth how
To praise Him worthily or give Him worship
Proportioned to His work so that He may
Be mindful of my service and set forth
His greatness and omnipotence? And now
What from our sense of justice—our delight—
We purpose we will tell. Although one tenth
From all communities is due to me,
As thane and archimage will testify,
I ask it not, I give it back to you—
The tithe on land and impost on the flocks—
Except the tithe on increase which the agent
Will pay into our treasury.[1] The tithe,
That erst I took, and impost less or more,
I have employed on useful works and kept
A countless host at court. I sought your good,
Your safety, and the abatement of the Faith
Of Áhriman. Clasp, all! your hands to God,
Be diligent and break not His behest,
Who is the Lord and Giver of all things,
The Artist of the sky above, the Helper
Of the oppressed; but glory not o'er others
By reason of His favour, nor thereby
Deceive thy heart, for pride will have a fall.
Where are the men whose crowns erst frayed the clouds?
Where those whose quarry was the mighty lion?
They, all of them, are couched on dust and brick,
And he is blest that sowed but seed of good.
List, all of you that are within my realm!
To these my final counsels. Now will I
Point out to you five courses that will profit C. 1409
Far more than throne and treasury, so list,
Ye young and old! the words of famed Ardshír.

[1] "espérant que vos chefs apporteront dans mon trésor ce que vous aurez de superflu" (Mohl).

The man who knoweth that the Just One is
Will worship holy God and Him alone.
Again, misprize not knowledge, whether thou
Be liege or lord, and, thirdly, be assured
That wise men ne'er forget, and, fourthly, know
That fear of doing wrong availeth more
Than gibbet, bonds, and dungeon. Fifthly, none
Approveth of a slanderer's words. To these
I add one counsel more, a counsel better
Than eyes and life and goods: blest is the man
That maketh this world prosper, is the same
In public and in private, and moreover
Soft-spoken, modest, wise, and cordial.
Spend not thy money for the sake of show,
Or waste it foolishly on vanities,
Else there will be no profit, none will praise,
Nor holy men approve, but choose the mean,
Maintain it, and the wise will call thee prudent.
Again, there are five ways of making bright
Thy Faith and conduct, and of furthering
Thy comfort and thy joy, for in their honey
There is no bane to harm thee. First of all,
Seek not to pass by greed or pains the lot
Assigned to thee by God; the man content
Is rich, for each spring's blooms have borne him fruit.
Next, break the neck of greed, and tell no secret
Before the women. Thirdly, court not war
And strife, for they bring toil and anguish. Fourthly,
Seclude thy heart from grief and be not troubled
O'er ills not come, and, fifthly, meddle not
With things irrelevant, for know that they
Are not thy quarry. Hear ye all! my counsel,
My profitable speech; 'twill be right dear
To all men's hearts, for they will get thereby
Security from loss. Pause not from learning
If thou wouldst fire thy mind. If thou hast children

Have them instructed and cut short their play.
Heed, all! my words and pains on your behalf.
Let all the just and shrewd of heart break not
Their mutual intercourse, and compass ye
Heart's peace in four ways good and profitable:
First, fear, respect, and reverence holy God C. 1410
That He may be thy Helper and thy Guide;
Next, rule thyself and look to thine own skirt,
Take God's commands to heart and tender them
Like thine own body; thirdly, make the right
Plain and ban fraud and falsehood; fourthly, swerve not
In thought or action from the Sháh's behest,
But love him like thyself so that thy face
May clear at his command. Confine thy heart
To loyalty to him, let not thy soul
Swerve from his bidding, love him as thy life,
Perceiving that his justice guardeth thee.
The cares of royalty are with the Sháh,
He seeketh the world's gain and not its loss.
If, knowing that his marchlords and his troops
Afflict his realm, he interveneth not
He is no world-lord, and the crown of kingship
Befitteth him not; he hath blacked out his patent
As king of kings, his Grace is gone.[1] Know this:
An unjust monarch is a ravening lion
Upon the pasture-land; so is the subject
That heedeth not with diligence and pains
The Sháh's command; his life will be all grief
And toil, and never will he reach old age
Within this Hostelry. If thou hast need
Of goodness and of greatness thou wilt win them
Not by thine avarice and arrogance.
May all my subjects' hearts be glad, and may
The world too prosper 'neath my righteous sway."

[1] *Cf.* p. 208 and *note*.

§ 8

How Kharrád praised Ardshír

When Sháh Ardshír resumed his seat, an elder,
By name Kharrád, one just in word and thought,
Advanced before the throne, thus saying: "O king!
Be blest while time endureth, ever glad,
And of victorious fortune. May realm, crown,
And throne rejoice in thee. Thou hast attained
To such an eminence that bird and beast
Rank at thy throne, before it and behind.
Exalted over all that wear the crown
Art thou—the greatest man in all the world.
Who can describe thy justice? Thou art based
On justice and on greatness. More and more
We offer up our praise and thanks to God
C. 1411 That we live in thy days and are thy lieges
In all things, eager to behold thy face,
And yearning for thy gracious words and love.
Mayst thou be safe as we are safe through thee,
And ne'er may we break fealty. Thou hast barred
To us and to our peers the foe's approach
From Hind and Chín, and rapine, war, and tumult
Have passed away; the shouts of enemies
Reach not our ears. Remain for ever happy,
And let archmages bear the toils of state.
No king is wise as thou, no thought transcendeth
Thy counsel, and thou so hast founded justice
Within Írán that it will glad our sons.
Thy words have grown so potent that thy counsels
Make old men young, and all the nobles here
Joy in thee and thy justice. Thou increasest
The stock of wisdom by thy deeds, the world
Hath been illumed by sight of thee. Thou art
A robe of honour God-bestowed on fortune,

On girdle, crown, and throne. Still may the Sháh
Continue loved and just; the world hath not
A king like thee in mind. The world is safe
By reason of thy might and Grace, and blest
Are they beneath the shadow of thy wings.
For ever be thy seat upon the throne,
The world beneath thy word and will alone."

§ 9

On the Faithlessness of Fortune

Thou, who the marrow of the tale wouldst win!
Divorce thy heart from this old Wayside Inn,
Which hath seen many like to thee and me
But with none resteth; whatsoe'er thou be—
King or attendant—it will outstay thee,
For be thou drudge, or lord of crown and throne,
Thou hast to pack thy baggage and be gone.
The sky will melt thee, though of iron mould,
And favour thee no more when thou art old;
So when the charming Cypress bendeth low,
And when the dark Narcissi overflow,
When cheeks of cercis take a saffron hue,
  And he is grave anon that erst was gay,
Then, since souls slumber not as bodies do,
  Bide not alone, thy mates are on their way.
Be thou a monarch or of subject birth
Thou'lt have no dwelling-place save darksome earth.
Where are the chieftains with their crowns and thrones,
  The cavaliers of fortune ever bright?
Where are the sages and the warlike ones, C. 1412
  The princes and the leaders in the fight?
On pillows made of bricks and dust they rest,
And he that sowed but seed of good is blest.
A great exemplary is king Ardshír,
So bear in mind my tale when thou shalt hear.

§ 10

How Ardshír charged Shápúr and died

Aged eight and seventy years[1] the watchful world-lord
Grew sick; he knew that death was drawing nigh,
That his green leaf would wither, so he summoned
Shápúr, addressed him counsel past compute,
And said: "Be mindful of my charge, but hold
The words of evil speakers merely wind.
When thou hast heard my sayings practise them,
Discerning haply worth from worthlessness.
I with the scimitar of justice righted
The world and honoured men of noble birth.
That done, the earth waxed but mine own life waned
When I had toiled and sweated much, and treasures
Had multiplied to me. So now I leave
The travail and the pleasure all to thee.
We are in turn exalted and abased,
Such is the process of the circling sky,
Which whiles afflicteth, whiles affecteth, us!
Now fortune is a vicious steed, and scath
Will wreck thee in prosperity, anon
A horse well trained whose neck is arched for thee
In all good will. Know, son! that this false Hostel
Hath terrors even for the happy man.
Be heedful of thine own and wisdom's case
If thou wouldst 'scape ill days. When monarchs honour
The Faith then it and royalty are brothers,
For they are mingled so that thou wouldst say:—
'They wear one cloak.' The Faith endureth not
Without the throne nor can the kingship stand
Without the Faith; two pieces of brocade
Are they all interwoven and set up

[1] *Cf.* p. 254.

Before the wise. The Faith doth need the Sháh,
The Sháh, were Faith to seek, would not be praised.
Each needeth other, and we see the pair
Uniting in beneficence. The man
Of Faith will carry off both worlds when he
Shall prove a lord of counsel and of wisdom.
Whenas the great king watcheth o'er the Faith, C. 1413
Call it and kingship brothers; when he vexeth
The pious, call him impious. Disallow
In Faith the slanderer of pious kings.
What said the man approved and eloquent?
'The Faith, if thou considerest, is the brain
Of Justice.'[1]

Three things vex the royal throne:
The first one is the unjust sovereign,
The second, the exalter of the worthless
Above the worthy, and the third is he
That weddeth treasure and is instant still
For more. Be thine aim bounty, Faith, and wisdom,
And let no lie pass current for it darkeneth
A man's face; ne'er will he be great and famous.
See that thou heed not treasure, for dínárs
Involve mankind in toil. If greed of treasure
Possess the great king he will vex his subjects,
For where the thane's wealth is there is the Sháh's
Who, whatsoe'er the toil and pain may be,
Should guard it for him and should bring to fruit
His travail's bough. Strive to put wrath away,
And boldly blink the faults of other men.
If thou art wroth thou wilt repent withal,
So, when they make excuse, seek how to salve them.
Whene'er the Sháh is wroth the good misprize him,
And since he is to blame in seeking ill
He should adorn his heart with good. If once
Thou sufferest fear to come within thy heart

[1] *Cf.* p. 250.

The counsels of thy foes' hearts will prevail.
Be boundless too in bounty; if thou canst,
My son! esteem not wealth. He should be king
The limit of whose bounty is the sky.
Whenever trouble is a monarch's lot
Let him hold counsel with his archimages,
Let him inquire too of the right and wrong
Thereof, and lay the matter up at heart.
"On days when thou art purposing to hunt,
And use the binding hawk, mix not thy pleasures,
As wine and feast with open air and chase;
Wine maketh heavy as all leaders know.
Abandon such pursuits when foes appear,
Spend money freely, edge the swords, and summon
The troops of all the realm. Defer not thou
The day's work to the morrow and seat not
An evil counsellor beside the throne.
C. 1414 Search not the hearts of common folk for truth,
For from such questing loss will come to thee,
And if they bring ill tidings hearken not,
Nor grieve; they worship neither God nor king,
And clutching at their feet thou hast their heads.
Such are the common people, but mayst thou
Be ever wise. Fear those that compass ill
In secret, for this straiteneth the world.
Tell naught to confidants for they have theirs,
And thou wilt meet thy sayings in the fosse,
Or find them spread abroad, and when thy secrets
Are common talk the sages will lose patience,
Thou wilt be wroth, the sage that calmeth thee
Will call thee light of head Seek not for faults
In others, that will manifest thine own,
While if thy wisdom be o'er swayed by passion
The sage will count thee not a man at all.
The Sháh and worldlord should be wise that he
May be benevolent to every one.

If any man is rash and insolent,
Prone to accuse and to calumniate,[1]
Let such have no place near to thee although
One of thy counsellors. When thou art Sháh
Lay down revenge and wrath if thou wouldst have
The praises of the pious. He that sitteth
Upon the throne of state should be a wise,
God-fearing man. Be not a chatterer,
Nor make a show of sanctimoniousness
In others' eyes. Hear what men say, lay up
The best, and note what pleaseth thee; weigh well
Thy words to sages, being complaisant
And bright to all; scorn not the poor that beg;
Seat not an adversary on a throne;
Forgive the penitent, requiring not
Revenge for what is passed; be just to all,
And cherish all; the bounteous, patient man
Is blest. What time the foe doth flatter thee
Through fear, array the host, bind on the tymbals,
And go forth to the fight while he is shrinking,
And weak of hand; but if he seeketh peace
And right, and harboureth, as thou perceivest,
No mischief in his heart, take tribute from him,
Seek not revenge, and save his face. Adorn
Thy heart with knowledge; that hath worth; that know
And practise. Thou wilt be beloved if bounteous,
And famed if wise and just. Keep thy sire's charge C. 1415
In mind and leave a like one to thy son.
As I have given my son his heritage,
And injure none thereby, do ye transmit it;
Take not the spirit of my words amiss.
Now when five hundred years have passed away,
Thy dynasty will end, for thy descendants,
And others of thy kin, will turn aside

[1] Reading with P.

From this my charge, depart from rede and knowledge
Not heeding the monitions of the wise,
But, faithlessly neglectful of my charge,
Be unjust, harsh, and tyrannous, oppress
Their subjects, scorn the pious, don the robe
Of wickedness, and grow up in the Faith
Of Áhriman. Then will be loosed what we
Have bound, this Faith that we have fulled be fouled,
This rede and charge of mine will come to naught,
My country seem all desolate. I pray
The Maker of the world, who knoweth both
The hidden and the manifest, to guard you
From every evil and that all your deeds
May win fair fame. God's blessing and our own
Shall be upon the man whose warp is wisdom,
Whose woof is justice, who in these regards
Attempteth not to break my charge or striveth
To turn my honey into colocynth.
Two score years and two months have passed since I
Assumed the crown of kingship. I possess
Six cities, all in pleasurable climes,
And all of them well-watered. I have named
One Khurra-i-Ardshír;[1] its airs are all
Musk-perfumed and its streams run milk; the second
Is titled Rám Ardshír;[2] thence reached I Párs;
The third Urmuzd Ardshír,[3] whose airs would make
An old man young—the lustre of the province
Of Khúzistán;[4] it hath folk, trade, and water.
Another one is Birka-i-Ardshír,[5]
Well stocked with gardens, pools, and rosaries,
And two are in the district of Baghdád
And the Farát, and rich in cattle, springs,
And grass—foundations both, as thou mayst say,

[1] The Glory of Ardshír.
[2] See p. 202.
[3] *Cf.* p. 302, *note*.
[4] Reading with P and T.
[5] The Cistern of Ardshír.

Of Sháh Ardshír.[1] Bear them in mind when thou
Hear'st aught concerning me.
I have prepared
My baggage for the charnel-house. Bestow
My bier and take my seat. In this world I
Have borne great toils in public and in private.
Rejoice my soul with justice and be glad,
And conquering, on the throne."
He spake, and fortune
Grew dark. Woe for his head and throne and crown!
The fashion of this jocund world is thus : C. 1416
It will not make its secrets known to us.
Blest is the man who greatness ne'er hath known,
And hath no need to vanish from the throne.
Thou strivest, winning wealth in every way,
But man and wealth abide not in one stay;
Dust in the end is wedded to us all,
Our cheeks must be enshrouded by a pall.
Come bear we all a hand good to fulfil,
And tread not this unstable world for ill.
Oh well is he that taketh cups of wine
To toast the Sháhs—those men of Faith divine—
For, as his cup of wine is slowly drained,
He droppeth off with ecstasy attained.

§ 11

Thanksgiving to the Maker and Praise of Mahmúd, the great King

To Him who made it let all praise ascend;
The Maker of space, time, and earth is He;
From Him are the beginning and the end,
From Him are passion and tranquillity:

[1] These may be Bih-Ardshír built to replace Seleucia, destroyed by Avidius Cassius in A.D. 164, and Karakh-Maishán on the lower Tigris. They are given in Tabarí's list of Ardshír's foundations. NT, p. 19.

He made the starry heavens, earth, and time
The great and little of the world are His,
From worthless stubble to the throne sublime
All things bear witness to us that He is.

Call none but Him the Author of the whole,
Whose ken naught open or concealed can shun,
Who showered blessings on Muhammad's soul,
And on his comrades also, every one.

They all were holy men and continent;
None can compute the words which erst they said;
Now by us too let countless words be spent
In thanking Him by whom the world was made.

Praise we the crown too of the king of kings,
Whose throne doth cause the moon itself to shine,
World-lord Mahmúd, the source whence largessings
And bounties spring, and who hath Grace divine.

Brave, bounteous, dowered with Grace, and just is he,
The age hath grown all joyful 'neath his sway—
The lord of peace, of crown, and treasury,
The lord of scimitar, of ax, and fray.

Our gracious world-lord, conscious what is meant
By merit, thanketh God through whom his hold
Is on the crown. Wise, fair, and eloquent
Is he, in years a youth, in wisdom old.

His Grace compelleth rain from Jupiter,
We sport beneath the shadow of his wings,
In fight he maketh heaven his echoer,
He scattereth jewels at his banquetings.

When he is wroth the mountains melt away,
The welkin quaketh o'er the dust below;
His sires were Sháhs and monarchs ere his day,
And sun and moon toy with him as they go.

May his renown last ever, may he see C. 1417
Till his last day increasing happiness.
I head my story with his eulogy,
His majesty, his conduct, and address.

Throughout the world I witness his renown;
Until the end may good attend him still;
His mien hath given lustre to the crown,
And fortune been his breastplate 'gainst all ill.

Throughout the world all men of Faith divine,
And all the kings, rejoice in him alone,
Whose glorious fortune maketh heaven to shine,
For earth but baseth his illustrious throne.

He is a mighty Elephant of bale
In fight and at the feast a faithful sky,[1]
For there, since his bright projects never fail,
Each billow of his ocean runneth high.

Earth's monarchs are his quarry in the chace,
Wild beasts and cattle in his peace abide,
In battle-days the whizzing of his mace
Dissundereth lion's heart and leopard's hide.

May his head flourish, justice fill his heart,
And with the world his head and crown ne'er part.

[1] A sky that fulfils its promise of rain.

XXIII

SHÁPÚR, SON OF ARDSHÍR

HE REIGNED THIRTY YEARS AND TWO MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Sháṕur ascends the throne and addresses the chiefs. He wars with success against Rúm, appoints Urmuzd his successor, and dies.

NOTE

This reign affords a good illustration of the inaccurate way in which events are recorded even in the most historical of the four dynasties of the Sháhnáma. Shápúr, son of Ardshír (Sapor I., A.D. 241–272), is confused with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II., A.D. 309–379). Important historical events are transferred from the former's reign to the latter's where, to save repetition, they will be dealt with. Again, Shápúr son of Ardshír's two wars with Rome, which historically are parted by a considerable interval of time, are rolled into one. The first war ended in A.D. 244, and the second did not begin till some fourteen or more years later. The latter is the one chiefly commemorated in the Sháhnáma. In the course of it the Roman Emperor Valerian, the Bazánúsh of Firdausí, was defeated and taken prisoner in Mesopotamia owing to the treachery of Macrianus, his Prætorian prefect, and died in captivity. Shápúr then made a raid into Cilicia and Cappadocia—names which appear as Kaidáfa and Pálawína in the poem.[1] Subsequently he withdrew his forces, and during his retreat was handled very roughly by Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, who later on made himself master of Mesopotamia and ruled from the Tigris to the Mediterranean till his assassination in A.D. 267. A trace of Shápúr's mishap seems to survive, but

[1] NT, p. 32, and *note*.

the tale is told in connexion with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd. The triumph over Valerian was commemorated in many memorials by his conqueror.[1] The name of the city built for the Roman captives was Gund-i-Shápúr, probably the Shápúr Gird of Firdausí as both cities are described as being in Susiana. It was between Susa and Shúshtar, and its situation is indicated by the ruins of Sháhábád.[2] The great dam in connexion with the river Kárún is still in existence. It is very likely that Shápúr's Roman prisoners helped to make it. It is known as the "Band-i-Kaisar."[3]

§ 1

How Shápúr sat upon the Throne and delivered a Charge to the Chieftains

To tell the kingship of Shápúr be thine,
And hold discourse on festival and wine.
Whenas Shápúr sat on the throne of justice,
And donned the heart-illuming crown, the sages,
Wise magnates, and archmages, met before him.
He thus harangued the noble gathering—
The great and understanding counsellors:—
"I am the lawful son of Sháh Ardshír,
The utterer and layer up of knowledge.
Heed, all of you! my bidding and be loyal,
Scan what I say and blame it if 'tis crude.
In mine experience as to good and ill
Two dispensations are conspicuous.
One is the Sháh, the warden of the world,
And guardian of the wealth of high and low.
If he is just and fortunate 'tis clear
That wisdom watcheth over, helpeth, him,
And o'er the dark clouds will exalt his head.
His whole quest is for justice, and for knowledge
That maketh music in his soul. The other
Is whosoever manfully essayeth C. 1418
To compass wisdom and is wise in knowing

[1] See the illustrations in RSM, pp. 82, 91. [2] NT, 41, *note*.
[3] Cf. *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., *s.v.* "Shushter."

That it is God to whom his thanks are due.
Blest is the sage that knoweth God; the wise
Is worthy of the kingship; gold is worthless
In wisdom's stead. The man that is content
Is well to do; the avaricious heart
Is but a house of smoke. The more the greed
The more the care, so strive to shun its fruits.
Incline to peace and things of good report,
And flee the ill-disposed, for little wits
Will grasp at others' goods. I love you more
Than there are stars to glitter in the sky;
The customs of the exalted Sháh Ardshír
Assuredly will I confirm to you,
And take a thirtieth only from the thanes
To pay my soldiers somewhat. I have weal,
An ample treasure, courage, manliness,
And constancy. We covet no man's goods,
For they turn friends to foes. The way is open
For you to us. We love the suppliant.
We will send agents everywhere, search shrewdly
The world's affairs, and ne'er ask other blessings
Than those which men invoke from God on me."
Rose high and low, prepared their tongues to make
A fair reply, called praises down on him,
And scattered emeralds on his crown. The customs
Of Sháh Ardshír revived withal, and then
Both young and old joyed in that regimen.

§ 2

How Shápúr fought with the Rúmáns, how Bazánúsh, their General, was taken Prisoner, and how Cæsar made Peace with Shápúr

Then tidings spread: "The throne of king of kings
Is occupied no more, wise Sháh Ardshír
Hath died and left Shápúr the throne and crown."

The battle-cry went up in all the coasts,
And hubbub from Kaidáfa[1] unto Rúm.
When news reached Sháh Shápúr he made him ready
Troops, flags, and drums, and led toward Pálawína
A flying column with no baggage-train.
An army that bedimmed the sun with dust
Marched from Kaidáfa, and a host withal C. 1419
From Pálawína 'neath a paladin
Hight Bazánúsh, a noble cavalier
Of ardent soul, a chief and lasso-thrower
Prized by the Cæsars. When from those two hosts
Rose tymbal-din came from the Rúman centre
An eager warrior, from the Íránian
A famous chieftain hight Garshásp the Lion;
What man or lusty elephant could match
That valiant cavalier in battle-tide?

These two engaged and strewed the stars with dust,
Used all their skill, but neither could prevail.
Then clashed the hosts together mountain-like;
Rose their drum-roll and shoutings. Bold Shápúr
Bestirred him at the centre. At the din
Of trump and Indian bell thou wouldst have said
That heaven shook; the earth rocked, and the air
Was full of dust, the war-spears gleamed like fire,
And all the men of wisdom called on God.
Amid the central host brave Bazánúsh,
All sorrowful of heart, was taken captive,
While of his Rúmans were ten thousand slain
At Pálawína in the ranks of war,
And twice eight hundred taken prisoners;
Those warriors' hearts were full of sore distress.
Then Cæsar sent a well-instructed envoy
To ask Shápúr, the son of Sháh Ardshír:—
"How much blood wilt thou pour out for dínárs?
What wilt thou say to our just Judge and Guide

[1] See p. 294.

When questioned at the Day of Reckoning?
How make excuse to Him who giveth all?
Add not to our distress for I will pay
The wonted tribute, will submit, dispatch
Abundant hostages of mine own kin,
And, if thou wilt withdraw from Pálawína,
Will send thee in addition what thou wilt."
Shápúr remained till Cæsar sent to him
The tribute in ten ox-hides of dínárs
Of Cæsar's coinage with much wealth besides—
A thousand male and female Rúman slaves,
And countless splendid pieces of brocade.
Shápúr abode a week in Pálawína,
Then leaving Rúm he journeyed to Ahwáz,[1]
And there he built a city named Shápúr Gird:
He finished it upon the day of Ard.
C. 1420 It took a year besides much toil and treasure.
He built a city for the prisoners
From Rúm and filled it with inhabitants;
The district is the gate of Khúzistán,[2]
And in the great high-way whereby all pass.
He built himself a city too in Pars,
Great, fair, and wealthy, and the ancient fortress[3]
Of Nisháp úr, they say, without forced labour.
He carried Bazánúsh about with him,
And heeded him. Now there was at Shúshtar
A stream so broad that fish could cross it not.
He said to Bazánúsh: "If thou hast skill
Make over this a bridge as 'twere a rope,
For we return to dust but it will bide
Firm through the science of its architect.
'Twill be a thousand cubits long; request
Whate'er thou needest from my treasury.
Employ thou to some purpose in this land

[1] Susiana. [2] *Id.*
[3] Mohl keeps Kuhandizh (old fort) as a proper name.

The skill of Rúman engineers and, when
The bridge is finished, come and be my guest
For life in mirth and safety, and afar
From evil and the hand of Áhriman."
Brave Bazánúsh began the work and built
The bridge in three years' space, then left Shúshtar
And set his face to hurry to his home.
Shápúr was just, in counsel well approved,
His star exalted and his throne unmoved.[1]

§ 3

How Shápúr seated Urmuzd upon the Throne and died

When thirty years and two months had gone by
The Grace and glory of the Sháh were spent.
He called Urmuzd. "The freshness of my face,"
He said, "is sere; be vigilant, be world-lord,
And ever rule with justice, but be ware
Of putting trust in sovereignty; peruse
Both day and night the volume of Jamshíd;
Do only what is just and good; be thou
The lowly's shelter and the mighty's Grace;
Toy little with dínárs, be bounteous, just,
And glorious; exclaim not at slight ills C. 1421
If thou wouldst have good fortune as thy friend,
And keep in mind my counsels, every whit,
As I myself possess them from Ardshír."
He spake, the colour paled upon his cheek,
The heart of that wise man grew full of anguish.
What can this Wayside Hostel do for thee?
Wouldst hug renown? Wouldst fill thy treasury?
A narrow coffin will be all thy spoil,
Some worthless one will batten on thy toil,

[1] In C, the reign ends here, but we have followed the arrangement of P, which seems preferable.

Thou wilt be clean forgotten by thy sons,
Thy nearest kinsfolk and companions,
The heritage wherein thou'lt have thy share
Is that of malediction, for where'er
Bezoar is the poison too is there.
Turn then to God and multiply His praise,
Who feedeth thee and guideth all thy ways.

XXIV

URMUZD, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED ONE YEAR AND TWO MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Urmuzd, whose reign proved to be a very brief one, succeeds his father and harangues the nobles. Feeling the approach of death he summons his son Bahrám, appoints him successor, gives him good counsel, and dies.

NOTE

The romantic story of Urmuzd's (Hormisdas I., A.D. 272–273), birth,[1] is all that survives in connexion with him, apart from Firdausí's common form in dealing with the short reigns,[2] in the Sháhnáma. In the Kárnámak he is represented as a great prince, being confused probably with his father. It is likely that he made a reputation for courage and energy in the wars against Rome and as governor in Khurásán. At all events, according to tradition, he earned for himself the title of "the hero." It is told of him that, being falsely accused of disloyalty, he cut off one of his hands and sent it, wrapped in silk, to his father to prove his innocence as no mutilated person could succeed to the throne. His father, deeply distressed, arranged that mutilation should be no bar in that instance.[3]

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[1] See p. 268 *seq.*

[2] *Id.* p. 249.

[3] NK, 68, and *note;* NT, 43, 45, and *notes;* RM, Pt. I., vol. ii. p. 335.

§ 1

How Urmuzd addressed the Assembly

Now will I make the diadem and throne
Of Sháh Urmuzd as brilliant as the moon
Upon the day whose name and his are one.[1]
His reign had but one fault—it ended soon.
Whenas great Sháh Urmuzd had ta'en his seat
The sheep and wolf alike came to his cistern.
He thus addressed the noble men of lore,
And chieftains veteran and experienced :—
"I shall pursue the just and right, for he
That keepeth in his mind his sire's advice
Is blest. Since God, the Giver of all good,
Hath given good to me, and therewithal
The crown that is upon the head of kings,
I would by kindness win you as my friends,
And share your secrets. Know that self-willed men
Are hated by the mighty ; led away
By their impatience they have ne'er enough,
For envy is the scimitar of fools,
And fortune ever mocketh them. Again,
Short will the life and provand be of one
Ashamed to work. Avoid the common folk
If so thou canst, their hearts are doors of greed.
Pass not in life his portal whom thou findest
Devoid of knowledge; but the men of wisdom,
With prudence and good rede, confirm the throne.
May thy heart live by prudence and good sense;
Do thou thine utmost to avoid all ill.
Knowledge and wisdom are like earth and water,
And should combine. What marvel if the heart

[1] Urmuzd was the name of the first day of each solar month—a day considered particularly propitious for beginning any undertaking—*e.g.* a journey.

Of any king that putteth from him love
Shall darken? May my subjects all rejoice
And worship God, may He approve of them,
And wisdom aid them inly and without.
The sage, conversing with the devotee C. 1422
About the Sháh, should weigh his utterance,
Because good speech is never out of date;
Speak but good words thyself and list to none
That speaketh ill; the great king's heart will note
Thy secret, and his ear will hear thy voice,
For 'Walls have ears,' as one that could both speak,
And listen, said."
The whole assembly blessed
That Sháh so shrewd of heart and pure of Faith,
And broke up glad in that o'ershadowing Cypress.
That wise Sháh kept the precepts of Shápúr,
The son of Sháh Ardshír, and all the world
Rejoiced in him. How good are kings when just
And generous! He ruled with modesty
And justice till a while had passed, and then
The place of musk with camphor was o'erspread,
And in the garth the Cercis-bloom lay dead.

§ 2

How Urmuzd gave up the Throne to Bahrám, charged him, and died

Urmuzd, when ware that death could not be shunned,
Wept many a tear of blood. He had a son,
Imperious, whom the wise Sháh called Bahrám.
He had the carpet laid within his hall,
Bade, and Bahrám appeared, to whom he said:—
"Mine own true son exalt in manliness
And knowledge! feebleness hath come upon me,
And made my face self-coloured with my hair.

Bent is the straight-stemmed Cypress, and the rose,
Erst crimson, hath the colour of the quince.
Be world-lord when thy time shall come, be wise,
And do no hurt; turn not from those that cry
For justice; pardon not oppressors' faults;
Refrain thy tongue from falsehood if thou wouldst
Illume thy throne; let wisdom be thy soul
And modesty thy minister; in speech
Be eloquent, and let thy voice be soft;
Be thine ally the Lord of victory,
And may thy quarry be thy subjects' hearts.
Abate strife and make passion alien;
God grant it rule thee not. Refuse thyself
To scandal-mongers, foolish folk, and knaves.
C. 1423 Thou wilt but suffer from the ignorant,
So heed them not. Know that none honoureth
The shameless and the babbler. Let thy lord
Be wisdom, wrath thy slave, and be not hasty
Against the temperate. Be ware lest greed
Encompass thee because it causeth wrath
And fear and need, but practise all forbearance,
And uprightness, and banish from thy heart
Both fraud and falsehood. Shun an evil name,
For that will mar thy fortune. No wise quit
The way of wisdom. Haste will bring repentance,
But tarriance will show the proper course.
Quit not the path of virtue. Patient men
Will keep their temper and will shut their eyes
To what is not to be, yet, since the bold
Take patience in excess for feebleness,
The master of the throne will choose the mean
Of wisdom. Neither haste nor slackness serve;
Let wisdom guide thy soul. See to it, thou!
That no detractors win thine approbation,
And seek no friendship with thine enemy
Although he hail thee king; that tree is green

Its fruit is colocynth, and if thou graspest
His feet thou hast his head. Exalt or base,
Whiche'er thou art, be not illuded. Fortune
Is ill to the malignant; be not so.
The assemblies of the noble scorn a chief
That breaketh covenant. Take hold on wisdom,
For that will grace thy soul, crown, host, and wealth.
Guard word and covenant, and read the motions
Of sun and moon. Affect not wealth and pleasure,
Because this Wayside Inn will cease for thee;
Consult the wise alone and keep the customs
Of former Sháhs; fray foemen by thy hosts,
And look with heed behind thee and before.
He that will flatter worthless men to gain
His ends may by his words destroy thyself;
Let such not age with thee, yet hold one less
Than man that hath no use for praise, for God
Approveth praise and straiteneth slanderers' hearts.
He that can wink at others' faults, and swallow
His wrath with ease, will grow each day in wealth, C. 1424
While hasty men will have full hearts. No sage
Is he that seeketh combat with the sea.
Slight not my sayings, make thy heart a bow,
Thy tongue an arrow, let thy chest be broadened,
And thine arm straight, then shoot at what thou wilt.
Conform thy tongue and heart withal to wisdom,
Then please thyself in talk. The brainless man
Hath all his counsel and his words inept.
When with thy counsellors consult in private.
If thou hast counsel and experience
Thou wilt be day by day more prosperous,
Thy spirit will be shrewder than thy foe's,
Thy heart and brain and counsel more prevailing.
One that is led by passion will not prosper.
By gratifying friends thou wilt increase
Their pleasure and their welfare. Frown on foes,

And make the faces of ill-wishers pale.
Give alms; so is thy treasure best employed.
Shun envy; from it spring hot tears of blood,
And upright men condemn it in a king.
For fourteen months I reigned unwittingly,
Expecting to retain the crown and throne
For years, but now my time hath come, and thou
Must gird thyself to rule."
A noble scribe
Wrote out this testament, and the wazír
Laid it before the Sháh, who heaved a sigh,
While his flushed face became like withered leaves.
Now, when those cheeks grew golden, pain and grief
Became the portion of Bahrám who mourned
For forty days and left the lofty throne
Unoccupied, for he was sorrowful.
Thus will it be while heaven shall turn above,
At whiles all anguish and at whiles all love.

'Tis the Urmuzd of Dai, and night; be thine
To rest from speech and put thy hand to wine.

XXV

BAHRÁM SON OF URMUZD

HE REIGNED THREE YEARS, THREE MONTHS, AND THREE DAYS

NOTE

To the reign of Bahrám (Varahran I., A.D. 273–276) properly belongs the end of the career of the great heresiarch, Mání, who, having been banished by Shápúr, son of Ardshír, and recalled by his son Urmuzd, was executed by order of Bahrám. Mání, however, is relegated in the Sháhnáma to the reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II.).[1]

Historically Bahrám appears to have been the son of Shápúr, son of Ardshír (Sapor I.), not of Urmuzd, son of Shápúr.[2]

§ 1

How Bahrám succeeded to the Throne, charged the Nobles, and died

The diadem of Sháh Bahrám essay—
A Sháh whose kingship swiftly passed away.[3]
Whenas Bahrám sat on the throne of gold, C. 1425
In grievous trouble at his sire's decease,
The Íránian chiefs all came to him in tears,
And girt to serve him. They invoked God's blessing
Upon him, saying: "Be while place endureth,
Because the royal throne becometh thee;

[1] See p. 358. [2] NT, p. 49, *note*.
[3] The previous reign ends here in C.

Thou hast the kingship from thine ancestors.
Be thy foes' faces pale, and may thy soul
Cease to deplore the dead."

He answered: "Chiefs,
Brave cavaliers, and nobles! let no thane,
Or other liege, put hand to ill. Behold
How this unresting Dome respecteth neither
The fostered nor the fosterer. Bind fast
The hands of passion and reject its bidding.
Whoever shall abstain from evil-doing,
And smircheth not himself by his ill deeds,
Will live glad days and pass in peace. The Sháh
Should guard the wealth of others, tender dearly
Men of good conduct, and protect the Faith,
Because it is the crown upon his head.
He that is wise in wrath, and acteth not
Injuriously, is blest. In times of stress
His heart is great and glad. Oh! may the world
Lack not the sage, and sage indeed is he
That trampleth not[1] upon a vanquished foe.
Vindictiveness proceedeth ill from those
That seek renown. Abstain and use it not.
Know that thanes, troops, and kings unoccupied,[2]
Hold no set course; the idle slumbereth,
And waketh to remorse; well said, ill done,
Gain thee no praise or jocund Paradise.
Seek fame, do well, and break no good men's hearts.
C. 1426 I am possessed of treasure and dínárs
In plenty, I have majesty and kingship,
And might of hand. Enjoy your own and know
That one who hath not is of those that have
Because my purse is open: none must want."

Not many days passed by ere that crowned head
Came to the shears. The Sháh possessed a son—
His heart's delight—Bahrám, son of Bahrám,

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Reading with P and T.

For whom he sent, set him beneath the throne,
And said: "Green offshoot from my stem! not long
Have I enjoyed the crown, but be thy time
All glorious. Rejoice, increase, and pass
Thy days and nights in mirth. So walk that thou,
When questioned at the Great Account, hast not
To turn in shame from Him who gave thee all.
By justice and by bounty cause the world
To flourish and thy subjects' hearts to joy,
For whether one be king or archimage
The world abideth not with him for ever."
Three years, three months, three days passed o'er his head,
And then the world-illuming throne was void,
And as Bahrám gave to Bahrám the world
The son gave to the sire the charnel's peace.
Know, 'tis no outrage of the turning sky;
It holdeth but as wind that passeth by
All that hath breath, and till it cease to roll
Thus will it be; why then afflict thy soul?
Why seek or speak concerning what should be?
Discourse on things like these is not for thee.
E'en though in greed thy soul be grown not sere
Thy resting place is but a narrow bier.
Since death then cometh of such wolfish breed
A mighty bowl of wine will fill my need,
And one of silvern form and cypress-tall,
A charmer sweet of speech and kind withal,
With jasmine scent, bright cheeks, a moon in mien,
Musk-scented, and with looks of sun-like sheen.

XXVI

BAHRÁM, SON OF BAHRÁM

HE REIGNED NINETEEN YEARS

NOTE

The reign of this Bahrám (Varahran II., A.D. 276–293), is in the Sháhnáma as bare of events as that of his predecessor, and Tabarí has next to nothing to say of him. Mas'údí, however, tells us that he began badly till once, when returning from the chase, the Sháh in company with the high priest passed through a hamlet, recently abandoned, amid whose ruins naught was heard but the hooting of the owls. The Sháh asked the high priest if he knew any one that understood their language. The high priest answered that he himself had that gift, and that what the bird said was true. The Sháh inquired what it was, and the high priest replied :—"This owl is a male and wishes to wed. He asked the female owl to accept him as her mate so that their offspring might bless God and perpetuate their name. The female said that she should like it of all things, but that she would accept him only on certain conditions. To begin with he must present her with twenty villages chosen from the chief demesnes that had become vacant under the reigning sovereign." "What was the male's reply?" asked the Sháh. "Your majesty!" answered the high priest, "the owl made this response :—'If the reign of this monarch prove a long one I shall be able to give you a good thousand villages, but what do you propose?' 'From our union' rejoined the female, 'will spring a numerous succession of children, and we shall be able to give each of them a share of these ruins.' 'Nothing can be simpler and easier than what you wish' replied the male, 'and I agree in advance, for I am overstocked with this kind of wealth. Tell me what you want more.'" The Sháh was struck by the high priest's apologue, and ruled thereafter for his people's good.[1]

[1] MM, ii. 169 *seq.*

§ 1

How Bahrám, Son of Bahrám, ascended the Throne, charged the Nobles, and died

While mourning Sháh Bahrám for forty days
Bahrám himself did not assume the crown.
The warriors, the men exceeding wise,
All grief, all wailing, and all lamentation,
Came and sat with him in his woe and mourning,
Wan-cheeked with lips of lapis-lazuli,
Until a prudent archmage came and said :—
" Will not the Sháh be seated on the throne ? "
For one whole se'nnight urgently he strove,
And ceased not till the throne was occupied.[1]
Now when Bahrám assumed his seat, rejoicing, C. 1427
And crowned himself as kings are wont, he first
Praised God—the Light of circling time, the Increaser
Of knowledge and of uprightness, the Marrer
Of falsehood and of fraud, the Lord of Saturn
And of revolving heaven, who asketh naught
But love and justice from His slaves—and then
Said thus : " Tried sages and pure archimages !
Hold knowledge great and be not bold with kings.
The man endowed with increase, eloquence,
And leadership by God will strive, if wise,
To compass excellence and cultivate
Humanity, whose attribute is patience,
Because the rash are held contemptible.
Security produceth happiness,
For then distress and toil have turned to wind,
And gathering wealth is like wind too to one
Of noble heart for he is rich already.
Yet get some havings if thou hast them not,

[1] The previous reign ends here in C. We follow the arrangement in P.

For folk despise the indigent. The man
Possessed of nothing hath no influence,
And none respect him. When thou art content
Thou feel'st at ease, but practise greed and thou
Wilt live in fear, so toil not thus to vex
Thy body and thy soul for greed of treasure.
Choose thou the mean if thou wouldst have folk's praise
In matters temporal. If thou contentest
The world with justice thou wilt be made glad
Thyself thereby and rich. Security
And uprightness, and no default in justice,
Are needful. When joy faileth spirit faileth,
And wisdom 'twixt the twain is impotent,
While if greed clutch thy heart thy soul remaineth
Within the gullet of the Crocodile."

When he had reigned for twenty years save one
Life mourned him, that crowned Sháh espoused the dust;
A charnel hid him from the jocund world.

C. 1428 Such is the fashion of the turning sky,
Though thou art feeble it hath mastery,
And such the fashion of this world as well;
It hath its secrets but it ne'er will tell!

XXVII

BAHRÁM BAḤRÁMIYÁN

HE REIGNED FOUR MONTHS

NOTE

According to Tabarí this Sháh (Varahran III., A.D. 293) reigned four years,[1] but Mas'údí, like Firdausí, says four months.[2] Professor Nöldeke suggests that he reigned for four months only in the capital, but ruled longer in other parts of the kingdom, probably in conflict with Narsí,[3] his uncle, historically, as Bahrám Bahrámiyán appears to have been the son of Urmuzd, son of Shápúr.[4] The true owner of the title of "Kirmánsháh" is Bahrám, son of Shápúr (Varahran IV., A.D. 388–399).

§ 1

How Bahrám Bahrámiyán succeeded to the Throne and died four Months after

Bahrám Bahrámiyán sat on the throne,
And girt himself for justice and for bounty.
They sprinkled emeralds upon his crown,
They called him Kirmánsháh, and thus he said:—
"May God, the just and only God, bestow
Upon us wisdom for our portion, justice,
And counsel. This our Wayside Hostelry
Abideth not with any. Goodness help us,
Lean we and cleave thereto, and make our heart
Our witness by our justice and our bounty,

[1] NT, p. 50. [2] MM, ii. 174. [3] NT, p. 416. [4] *Id.* 436 a.

For since the good and evil that we do
Are our memorials sow thou naught but good."
When he had reigned four months the throne and crown
Bewailed him bitterly. When certified
That death was near—that crocodile which hunteth
Rhinoceros and elephant—he gave
His son the world, and said: "Be thy reign glorious!
Array thyself, drink wine, walk delicately,
Be bountiful; make not thy day with throne
And crown unfortunate."[1]
Thus moments speed,
Their breaths uncounted by the man of greed!
O happy fortune! bring red wine to me,
For now the poet's years are sixty-three.

[1] In the glossary to C "inverted." The word properly has the meaning of "bright," but what is bright is easily reflected, what is reflected is inverted, and inversion well may imply misfortune.

XXVIII

NARSÍ, SON OF BAHRÁM

HE REIGNED NINE YEARS

NOTE

Narsí (Narses, A.D. 293–302) does not appear to have been the son of Bahrám Bahrámiyán but of Shápúr, son of Ardshír Pápakán.[1] Historically his reign was an important one as we learn from sources other than Persian and Arabic. Firdausí, Tabarí, and Mas'údí have little or nothing to record of him, but Mírkhánd states that he abdicated in favour of his son Urmuzd, and, further, that his prowess in the chase won him the title of 'The mighty Hunter.'[2]

§ 1

How Narsi succeeded to the Throne, counselled his Son, and died

Bahrám, when fortune's day no longer shone,
Surrendered to Narsí the crown and throne.
This is the way; there is no end thereto,
The wanton sky hath ever something new!
Whenas Narsí sat on the ivory seat, C. 1429
And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,
The nobles all approached with offerings,
And mourning in their sorrow for his sire.
The chief blessed them, and said: "My loving lieges,
Adherents both of justice and the Faith!

[1] NT, p. 50, *note*.

[2] RM, Pt. I., vol. ii. p. 340.

Know that the Maker so hath ordered all!
That me of all the world He hath endowed
With wisdom and with generosity,
Good counsel, modesty, and gentle speech,
And if my star shall prove beneficent
I will secure prosperity for you.[1]
When any wise man hath become thy friend
Know that he is one skin with thee.[2] Expect
Great deeds from great men, wisdom from the sage.
True courage hath reflection for its base,
And valiant men are worthy of all praise;
But he that fleeth from the work in hand
Will ne'er find fame and honour on the field.
The indolent are cowardly as well,
For indolence and cowardice agree."

This man of rede and counsel lived nine years,
And by his sayings profited the world;
But when his day approached, when fortune loured,
And when his casque of steel became like wax,
Urmuzd, bright as a tulip midst the grass,
Ran to the pillow of the noble Sháh,
Whose son he was and splendent as the moon
At night. The Sháh said: "Gently nurtured youth!
Refrain thy hand with all thy strength from ill.
Soul of Narsí art thou, Bahrám's own fortune,
Crown-worthy and the glory of the throne.
Oh! may the crown ne'er weep, the people's heart
Consume, for thee who hast such stature, Grace,
Limbs, and unmatched achievement in all knowledge.
Rule thou the world by royal precedents
As thou hast learned them from thy pious sire.
At length thine own day too will pass away,
And restless heaven tread thee down; so act then
That when thy God shall question thee thine answer

[1] Reading with P. *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 110.

May make thy bliss secure."

This said, he drew
The mantle o'er his head and heaved a sigh.
That day thou wouldst have said that he was not,
And had no throne or seat or diadem.

Thy lot is naught but toil and misery;
'Tis so—a mystery to every eye!

XXIX

URMUZD, SON OF NARSÍ

HE REIGNED NINE YEARS

NOTE

The reign of this Sháh (Hormisdas II., A.D. 302–309) seems to be regarded as uneventful by all authorities. He left, apparently, three sons, Ázarnarsí, Urmuzd, and one unnamed, in addition to one or more posthumes. After the Sháh's death Ázarnarsí succeeded, but within a year was deposed for cruelty, Urmuzd was imprisoned but escaped long afterwards to the Romans,[1] the unnamed one was blinded, and a posthumous child became Sháh.[2] He proved to be one of the most famous of the dynasty.

§ I

How Urmuzd, Son of Narsí, ascended the Throne and how his Life ended

C. 1430 When great Urmuzd came to the throne wolves' claws
Were hindered of their quarry, he maintained
The world in peace, the work of Áhriman
Was in abeyance. First of all he praised
Almighty God, all-knowing, all-providing:—
"He fashioned night and day and turning heaven,
Sol, Mars, and Saturn. Victory and Grace,
The just heart and the imperial diadem,
Proceed from Him. May justice ever fill
Our heart, and may our subjects' hearts rejoice.

[1] *Cf.* p. 325. [2] NT, p. 51, *note.*

The hearts of men ignoble win not praise;
If so thou canst consort not thou with such,
And take not counsel with the ill-disposed,
But, if thou seekest it, incline to good.
The pious will not call him bountiful
Whose bounty is designed to gain applause,
While men will hold the thankless flatterer
As naught. The hard man trembleth being friendless.
The wise man taketh not the slack as guide,
And if thou ask the indolent to help thee
Thou art no judge of men and lack'st ambition.
Beware of thinking highly of thyself,
And be not fierce because thou hast a throne.
When one ill-natured groweth poor and vile
He layeth all to fortune and will spend
His years in indolence,[1] bewailing fortune,
Is not possessed of rede and understanding,
And is no ornament to any throne.
The simple deprivation of all wealth
Will ruin him in heart and soul and brain;
He will take pride in want and evil nature,
And hold his head up high in his unwisdom,
His lack of goods, of knowledge, rede, achievement,
Of Faith and of all thankfulness to God.
May both your nights and days be prosperous,
The marrow of your foemen's lives plucked out."
The chiefs applauded and saluted him
As earth's great king. When heaven had turned nine years
Above his head his face that had resembled
Pomegranate-bloom became like yellow roses,
The head that wore the crown was sick to death;
He died without a son beside his couch.
That famed man, who discoursed so pleasantly, C. 1431
Left in his youth this ancient hostelry;

[1] Reading with P.

Such while the heavens endure will be the event,
For they are strong and we are impotent.
The people mourned for him for forty days,
Regardless of the throne, which for a while
Remained unoccupied: the nobles' heads
Were full of care. Meanwhile an archimage
Surveyed the women's bower of Sháh Urmuzd;
One tulip-cheeked and radiant as the moon,
With lashes like a dagger of Kábul,
And locks like mazy Babylonian script,
All intertwined and knotted on her head,
Was there, and that fair lady was with child;
The world rejoiced in her. The archimage
Brought her and set her on the lofty throne
Of kings with joy, o'er her they hung the crown,
And on that golden circlet drachms showered down.

XXX

SHÁPÚR, SON OF URMUZD, SURNAMED ZÚ'L AKTÁF

HE REIGNED SEVENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Sháptír is born Sháh. In his youth he builds a bridge at Taisafún and punishes the Arabs for their raids during his minority. Later on he goes to Rúm in disguise, is imprisoned, but escapes, defeats the Rúmans, takes Cæsar prisoner, and dictates terms of peace, which include the cession of Nasíbín (Nisibis). The poet then tells of the heresiarch Máni, his doctrine and death. Shápúr appoints his brother Ardshír regent, and dies soon after.

NOTE

The duration of the reign of Shápúr (Sapor II., A.D. 309–379), as given by Firdausí, is correct. He was Sháh all his life, contemporary with ten Roman Emperors, and one of the greatest of Sásánian rulers.

As has been stated already, some of the events attributed in the Sháhnáma to the reign of this Sháh really belong to that of his predecessor, the first of his name.[1]

§ 1. The story of the building of the bridge over the Tigris at Taisafún (Ctesiphon) is told also by Tabarí, who says that the additional bridge was constructed by sunset on the same day as that on which the command for its erection was given![2]

Shápúr's chief places of residence were in Susiana and Mesopotamia, not in Párs as Firdausí states.

§§ 2, 3. Two Shápúrs (Sapor I. and Sapor II.) and much history are confused in this account, in which the taking of Hatra in the early days of the Sásánian dynasty and probably by Shápúr, son

[1] See p. 294 and below.

[2] NT, p. 54.

of Ardshír, is bound up artificially by a romantic incident with the expedition made by Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, into Arabia to avenge the Arab incursions into Persian territory that had taken place during his minority. Hatra or Al Hadr was the capital of a small principality which had become independent during the later days of Parthian rule. It grew up in the Mesopotamian desert, some forty miles west of the Tigris, in an oasis formed by the river Tharthar. Its magnificent ruins stand some forty miles south of Mosul and some two hundred north of Baghdád which is itself some twenty miles higher up the Tigris than the sites of the twin cities of Ctesiphon and Seleucia. The ruins form a complete circle surrounding a central square. The circle has a diameter of a little over a mile and is made up as follows. Outside of all is a broad rampart; within this is a deep moat, now dry, and within this again an immense stone wall with towers at intervals. Within the wall are the ruins of what was once the city. The dwellings of the inhabitants now are represented for the most part by mounds of earth, but in the centre of the area surrounded by the city wall is a square walled enclosure with bastions or towers similar to those of the city wall itself. The four sides of this enclosure front to the four cardinal points, and each side measures 340 yards in length. This enclosure may be regarded as the citadel, and within it were the palace and the temple of both of which the ground-story, consisting of vaulted halls and other buildings, is still upstanding. The whole of the remains, walls, bastions, and all, are of coarse limestone beautifully fitted, every stone also being marked with a letter or number and often carved to represent human faces, foliage, birds, griffins, and other monsters.[1] The place, as will have been seen from the above description, was immensely strong, its inhabitants were warlike, it was only a little over two hundred miles from Ctesiphon and Seleucia—attractions that, as experience was to show, were not beyond the reach of raids from the more distant Palmyra[2]—and Ardshír Pápakán not unnaturally desired its reduction. This he, or his son Shápúr, actually achieved. The stronghold had withstood successfully sieges by the Emperors Trajan and Severus. It fell at last through treachery. According to the story the Arabs had made a successful foray in the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon and Seleucia during the absence of Shápúr. The leader of this raid was a certain Daizan or, as Firdausí calls him, Táir, and there may be here some reminiscence of the capture by Odenathus of some of Shápúr's harem after the war with

[1] See JRGS, Vols. ix. 467, xi. 11.

[2] *Cf.* p. 325.

Valerian.[1] At all events the raider was some Arab chief, but in our story was the king of Hatra. Shápúr, informed of what had happened, beleaguered the city. Now Daizan had a daughter, the Málika of Firdausí, and it so happened that in the course of the siege, which lasted four years, she and Shápúr fell in love with one another, and he promised, if she would get him possession of Hatra, to make her his queen. This she accomplished, her father was put to death, and Shápúr married the traitress. Now she had a very delicate skin, and, when she was reposing on silk stuffed with raw silk, complained of discomfort. It was found that a myrtle-leaf was pressing against her! Shápúr asked her on what her father had fed her. She told him on cream, marrow, the honey of virgin bees, and the finest wine. "And yet," he said, "though you have known me only a short time you love me better than your father who gave you such food!"[2] He had her bound by the hair to the tail of a wild horse and dashed to death. By rights this story should come under the reign of Shápúr, son of Ardshír, or of Ardshír himself; it has been brought, however, into connexion with that of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, by the romantic addition, found in Dínawarí and Firdausí, that the treacherous daughter—the Málika of the Sháhnáma—was the child of the king of Hatra by the daughter of Narsí—Dukhtnúsh in Dínawarí and Núsha in Firdausí—whom he had made captive in the raid above mentioned. Now Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, was noted far more than his predecessor, Shápúr, son of Ardshír, for his dealings with the Arabs, and is said to have acquired his title of "Zu'l Aktáf" on account of the severity with which he treated them. Zu'l Aktáf has been explained to mean that he dislocated their shoulders, or removed their shoulder-blades, or strung his captives together in couples by boring their shoulders and passing a ring through them. Originally, however, the title may have been one of honour only, "the

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[1] *Cf.* p. 294.

[2] This ignores the fact that love often ousts affection when the two come into antagonism. Hence the popularity in the past of Gretna Green. The story seems to show that, though the lady was in love with Shápúr, he himself was only pretending. That in the classics of Nisus and Scylla is very similar. Nisus, king of Megara, had a lock of hair on which his existence depended. He had too a daughter named Scylla. Minos, king of Crete, besieged Megara, and Scylla, who had fallen in love with him, cut off from her father's head the fatal lock, and he perished in consequence. Minos, like Shápúr, was not really in love and, like him, had the lady put to death.

broad-shouldered" like Dirázdast "the long-handed."[1] Be this as it may, the above story was adapted in Íránian legend to make it applicable to the better known of the two first Shápúrs and the one whose dealings with the hated Arabs redounded most to the credit of the empire. It is, as will be seen, softened somewhat in the adapted version. The half Persian descent of Málika is meant to account for and excuse her treachery,[2] and Shápúr's conduct to her is not brutal. A trace of the earlier and harsher version may survive in the words of Táir,[3] where he says in effect, anticipating those of Brabantio to Othello :—

"She has deceived her father and may thee."[4]

But we are not told that Shápúr acted on the hint.

The scene of the story is laid by Firdausí in distant Yaman, the 'Ináníans, of whom Táir is made the king, being a tribe in that region.

In one place Firdausí refers to Núsha as the "daughter of Bahrám."[5] She was the granddaughter.

§§ 4–10. Here we have another historical confusion but on a larger scale. Sháhs, Emperors, times, and events are confounded and transformed so into terms of romance that it is not easy to "disentangle from the puzzled skein the threads of" history.

First, Shápúr, son of Ardshír, is confused with Shápúr, son of Urmuzd.

Secondly, the Emperor Valerian is mixed up with the Arab prince Odenathus and with the Emperors Julian and Jovian. The Bazánúsh of the Sháhnáma, who in the reign of Shápúr, son of Ardshír, represented Valerian, here represents Jovian, and Julian, the Yánus of Firdausí, leads, not as Cæsar but as Cæsar's brother, an expedition against Persia.

Thirdly, a few dates are instructive. Shápúr, son of Ardshír, reigned A.D. 241–272. Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, reigned A.D. 309–379. The Emperor Valerian was taken prisoner in A.D. 258. Julian died, and Jovian made his treaty with Persia, in A.D. 363. Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, was assassinated in A.D. 267.

Fourthly, the historical events here confused are :—

The second war of Shápúr, son of Ardshír, against Rome in

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[1] See Vol. v. p. 281, and for the above generally NT, p. 33 *seq.* and *notes*, p. 53 *seq.* and *notes*.

[2] So too the damsel who rescues Shápúr from his imprisonment by Cæsar is described as being an Íránian by birth. See pp. 338–9.

[3] p. 334. [4] Act i. scene 3. [5] See p. 334.

which the Emperor Valerian was taken prisoner and died, some years later, in captivity.

The ensuing war of Odenathus, prince of Palmyra, against the conqueror of Valerian, in the course of which he captured part of the great king's harem, and marched up to the gates of Ctesiphon.

The expedition of the Emperor Julian against Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, which ended in a disastrous retreat, his own death, and the humiliating treaty made by his successor Jovian.

§ 4. Already we have had instances of kings and chiefs going in disguise to spy out the enemy. So Rustam made his way into the camp of Suhráb,[1] and Sikandar to that of Dárá,[2] to the court of queen Kaidáfa,[3] and to the palace of the Faghfúr.[4] We shall find too Bahrám Gúr, in the next volume, going as his own ambassador to Shangul, king of Hind. The exploits of Odenathus in connexion with Shápúr, son of Ardshír, and the capture of the great king's harem, seem to be adumbrated here in the capture and misfortunes of the second Shápúr at the court of Cæsar. Valerian, whose own capture is here post-dated, is credited with the successes of the Arab chieftain. Shápúr's misfortunes are ante-dated as a foil to his final triumph later on.[5]

The denouncer of Shápúr at the court of Cæsar may be identified perhaps, historically, with the Persian prince Urmuzd (Hormisdas) who was imprisoned by the nobles after the death of his father Urmuzd, son of Narsí, and after a long captivity escaped in A.D. 323 to the Romans, by whom he was held in high honour, and accompanied Julian in his campaign to the East.[6]

We have had an instance already in the case of Garsíwaz of the punishment of being sewn up in fresh raw hide, which contracts and stiffens as it dries, and is very painful if not always fatal. According to some accounts the Khalífa Walíd (A.D. 705–715), under a misapprehension, had his great general Muhammad Kásim put to death in this fashion,[7] but this does not seem to be historically correct.

§ 5. Sympathetic damsels are much in evidence in this portion of the Sháhnáma as aids to embarrassed heroes. One helped Ardshír Pápakán,[8] as did two more according to the Karnámak.[9] Shápúr is aided thus here for the second time.[10]

Such scenes of lowly life as that between Shápúr and the

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[1] Vol. ii. p. 149. [2] See p. 38. [3] *Id.* p. 127.
[4] *Id.* p. 170. [5] NT, p. 65, and *note*.
[6] NT, p. 51, and *note*; RSM, pp. 149, 194. *Cf.* p. 318.
[7] Vol. iv. p. 265; EHI, i. p. 209.
[8] p. 217. [9] p. 201. [10] For the first time see p. 331.

gardener become more frequent in the latter part of the poem.

§ 7. Here we have, for the second time, the account of the capture of Valerian, post-dated by more than a century. His treatment in captivity is represented as being much more severe in this version on account of his rough usage of the Sháh which, historically, represents the successes gained by Odenathus over Shápúr, son of Ardshír, after the defeat of Valerian. The proposed terms of peace similarly are more stringent. Their parallel is the building of the bridge at Shúshtar.[1]

§ 8. This appears to be an account of Julian's expedition to the East in A.D. 362–3. It will be seen that he is not regarded as an Emperor but as the Emperor's brother. This was necessary owing to the form that the story took in Firdausí's authorities. Cæsar (Valerian) was supposed to be still alive though a captive and was engaged in collecting all the ransom that was possible from Rúm.[2] The throne was not technically vacant, so Yánus could not be Emperor. Later on the troops of Rúm make a new choice altogether and elect Bazánúsh (Jovian). The repetition of the story of Valerian has the effect of dwarfing the more historically placed expedition of Julian, and Julian's status suffers accordingly.

§ 9. Here, after the overthrow of Yánus (Julian) Bazánúsh (Jovian) is elected Emperor in succession, romantically, to Cæsar (Valerian), historically, to Julian. Historically, too, the negotiations for peace were begun a few days after the death of Julian, and during the retreat of the Roman army, not by the newly elected Emperor Jovian but by Shápúr, who took that step to delay the retirement of the Romans till some definite agreement had been arrived at. The result was a great triumph for Persian diplomacy.

§ 10. That we have here a version of the historical treaty of peace between Jovian and Shápúr is clear from the stipulation for the cession of Nasíbín (Nisibis)—one of the most important provisions of the actual treaty. Shápúr had besieged it three times already without success. There was a stipulation that the Roman inhabitants of that and other places ceded should have liberty to withdraw. Tabarí tells us that in the case of Nisibis they were replaced by twelve thousand natives of Istakhr and elsewhere.[3]

Both the accounts of Valerian in the Sháhnáma agree that he ended his days in captivity, and the general consensus of historians is to the same effect. Whether he died a natural death or not is uncertain, but the former seems the more probable.[4]

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[1] p. 298. [2] p. 357.
[3] NT, p. 63. [4] *Cf. id.* pp. 33, 66, and *notes;* RSM, pp. 86, 87, 125.

Sháṕúr continued the ancient practice of transporting conquered populations to new homes, settling them in cities that he himself had built, restored, or renamed. The two in Khúzistán mentioned in the text—Khurram Ábád and Kinám-i-Asírán—may be represented by the ruins of Karkh and Shús, now known as Íwán-i-Kerkh, not far from the ruins of Susa. Pírúz Sháṕúr is better known as Ambar, a city on the Euphrates.[1] It served as the original capital of the 'Abbasid Khalífat but was superseded before long by Baghdád.

§ 11. There was so much in common between the first two Sháṕúrs—similarity of name, wars with the Arabs and the Romans, religious excitement and consequent persecution, and, in addition to all this, the fact that the six intervening Sháhs had failed to impress their personalities on the popular mind and consequently left hardly any trace of themselves in popular tradition—that it was only natural for events properly belonging elsewhere to gravitate towards the later, longer, and more important reign of the two. We have had several instances of this tendency already, and here we have another in the case of the famous heresiarch, Máni, whose career, historically speaking, ended before the second Sháṕúr was born. Máni's life seems wholly to have been included within the third century A.D.—a period when new religious ideas were being disseminated broadcast, and old religions were passing through a season of revival. In the Sásánian empire Zoroastrianism, Christianity with its many gnostic offshoots, and Judaism, were striving to assert themselves, and in the midst of the ferment Máni was born A.D. 215–16. He is said to have begun his public career as a religious teacher on Sunday, March 20th A.D. 242—the day apparently of the coronation of Sháṕúr, son of Ardshír.[2] Sháṕúr, at first disposed to listen to the new teacher, afterwards banished him, and he remained in exile till he was allowed to return by Sháṕúr's successor, Urmuzd, who allowed him evangelical freedom and presented him with a place of residence. Urmuzd's reign, however, proved to be a very brief one, and under the next Sháh, his son or brother, Bahrám, Máni is said to have been flayed alive, and his body, stuffed with straw, exposed on one of the gates of Gund-i-Sháṕúr, which gate consequently became known as "the Máni gate." According to some accounts Máni was recalled by Bahrám and afterwards put to death by him or by his son and successor, but at all events the great gnostic died before the time of Sháṕúr, son of Urmuzd. Máni's followers of course were persecuted.

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[1] On Sháṕúr's cities see NT, p. 57 *seq.* and *notes.*

[2] NT, pp. 47 and *note* 412 *seq.*

Mání's teaching was an eclectic one, and the materials for it were drawn from the various Faiths amid which he grew up or with which he came into contact later on. No doubt in his enthusiasm he hoped to find a formula that would reconcile them all. In the result he was regarded by the orthodox of each as the false friend who is worse than the open enemy, and suffered accordingly. His chief opponents were the priests of the state-religion—Zoroastrianism—just then in the flowing tide of its revival, but the arguments put into the high priest's mouth by Firdausí are more Mohammedan than Zoroastrian. Mání's offence, so far as his doctrine was distinguished from Christianity, lay in his high and pure asceticism, which was antagonistic to the somewhat self-indulgent Faith of Zoroaster. The Zoroastrian was a family man, a flesh-eater, and a wine-drinker. The Manichæan was not permitted to injure any living thing, whether animal or plant, for the sake of obtaining food, and was a celibate, a vegetarian, and a rechabite.

The followers of Mání were famous for the neatness and ornamentation of their sacred books, and this gave rise to the notion that Mání himself had been a painter. There are allusions to him in that capacity in the Sháhnáma.[1]

§ 12. For Ardshír see the next reign.

§ 1

How Shápúr, Son of Urmuzd, was born forty Days after his Father's Death, and how he was crowned

Passed forty days, then like the shining sun
A babe was born of that fair dame. The archmage
Named him Shápúr and gave a feast for joy.
Thou wouldst have said: "The infant is all Grace,
And wisdom is his banner and his shade."
For forty days they revelled, then prepared
The child a royal throne. The nobles came
With golden girdles and hung over it
The crown of gold. That babe of forty days
They set, when fed and swaddled up in silk,
Upon his glorious father's throne beneath

[1] See Vols. ii. p. 19 and *note*, v. 118.

The crown of gold; the chiefs all homaged him,
And showered gems. An archimage by name
Shahrwí, wise, apt, and potent, came and sat
Upon a golden seat to serve the babe
As minister, and with good rede and justice
Ruled o'er the world. He led the folk to good,
Collected troops and treasure, and adorned
The palace and the throne, for young Shápúr,
Who grew in stature with the passing years. C. 1432

Attended by that wise archmage the Sháh
Was sitting on an eve in Taisafún.
When Sol grew wan, and night's dark livery showed,
A din rose at the way o'er the Arwand.
"Greet they?" he asked.
"O famed and valiant prince!"
The archmage answered thus the little Sháh,
"The merchants and the workmen are returning
Home from their shops and, as they pass each other,
They fear to jostle, for the bridge is narrow,
So crow like cocks at drum-beat."
Said Shápúr:—
"Ye famous sages and my counsellors!
Then let us have two bridges, one to go,
The other to return, so that our subjects,
Both soldiers and civilians, may cross
At ease; our treasury shall bear the costs."

The archmages all joyed much that that young Tree
Was showing leaf, and, as the young Sháh bade,
Their chief gave orders for a second bridge.
His mother's heart rejoiced, she gave him tutors,
But by his rapid progress he outstripped them.
At seven years old he went upon the ground
To learn the art of war and play at polo;
At eight he learned the etiquette of courts;
Thou wouldst have said that he was Sháh Bahrám.[1]

[1] Reading with P. Perhaps Bahrám Gúr is meant. *Cf.* p. 378 *seq.*

He exercised himself in every grace,
And made Istakhr his royal residence
By his own glorious fathers' precedent,
Men pure, accepted, and preeminent.

§ 2

How Táír, the Arab, carried off the Daughter of Narsí and married her, how Shápúr went to Yaman to fight him, and how his Daughter fell in Love with Shápúr

Anon, and when the world-illuming crown
Grew bright, Táír, the 'Ínánian lion-hearted,
Whose scimitar would bolden heaven, led forth
From Rúm and Párs, from Kurdistán, Bahrain,
And Kádisíya, up to Taisafún
C. 1433 A host surpassing all compute of knowledge.
He gave the country up to pillage. Who
Could fight or fly him? Hearing tell of Núsha,
Who was the Sháh's aunt and a youthful Spring,
He sought her palace, while all Taisafún
Was full of hue and cry. They bore her off,
And made her prisoner, for he and his
Were coarse and ignorant. When she had spent
One year of grief and care with him she bore him
A daughter like the moon and like Narsí,
Thou wouldst have said, when he had crown and throne.
Her father called her Málika on seeing
That she was fit for queenship.
When Shápúr
Was six and twenty, and had grown to be
A valiant, sun-like monarch, he reviewed
His troops upon the plain and chose him out
Twelve thousand warriors and for each a camel
Wind-footed, and a hundred guides withal.
The warriors mounted, leading each his steed.

Then too the Sháh himself and his own meiny
Took seat upon their beasts. He girded up
His royal belt for raiding and pursued
The monarch of the 'Ínánians—Táír,
That over-weening one, that raging Lion—
And slaughtered many of his warriors,
Which when Táír perceived he showed his back.
Then followed hue and cry, and many captives
Were taken while that host fled to a stronghold
Within Yaman; men, women, children wailed.
Shápúr led forth such forces that the ways
Were barred to ant and gnat. He found[1] Táír
With troops within the hold, and turned from him
The means of fight and flight. The siege continued
A month both day and night, the garrison
Ran short of food. One morning full of ardour
Shápúr, the hero, mounted on his steed
With bow in hand, a kingly, black cuirass
Upon his breast and black flag fluttering o'er him.
Now Málika looked from the castle-walls,
And saw that flag and head of chiefs, whose cheeks
Were then like rose-leaves and his hair like musk,
His lips like jujubes and his breath musk-scented.
Both sleep and peace went from her; with her heart
Possessed by love, she sought her nurse, and said:—
"This sun-like Sháh, come hither for revenge,
Is great, my very blood, and him I call
'The world' because he is the world to me.
Now bear a message for me to Shápúr;
He came to fight us, bid him to a feast
With me. Say: 'Thou and I are of one race, C. 1434
And of the seed of brave Narsí as well.
Moreover I will aid in thy revenge,
For I am of thy kindred—Núsha's daughter.
If thou wilt marry me the hold is thine,

[1] Reading with P.

And with the palace thou shalt have its Picture.
Arrange all with my nurse and pledge thy word
Of honour.'"

She replied: "As thou commandest
So will I speak and bring thee news of him."

When night and murk took kingship of the earth
From sea to sea, when it became pitch-hued,
The hills like indigo, the stars like lamps,
And thou hadst said: "Three hundred thousand lights
Have been suspended from the eighth heaven," the nurse
Went quaking, full of fear and fright. Her heart
Was sundered through her terror of Táír.
She reached the camp, approached a trusty man,
And said: "If thou wilt bring me to the Sháh,
Thou shalt receive from me a crown and ring."

That wise and prudent man conducted her
Toward the valiant monarch from the gate.
She came, with her eyelashes swept the ground,
And told him all. Her words rejoiced the Sháh,
Who smiled. He gave her fifty score dínárs,
A necklace, pair of bracelets, crown, and cloak
Embroidered with brocade of Chín, and answered:—
"Speak much and kindly to the moon-faced maid,
And say to her: 'He sware by sun and moon,
The girdle of Zarduhsht,[1] the throne and crown:—
"Whate'er thou askest of me, though it be
To cantle mine own realm, thine ear shall hear
No angry word from me, nor will I seek
To part from thine embrace."' For I will buy her,
God willing, at the cost of throne and crown,
Of treasure and of host."

On hearing this
She hurried from the camp back to the hold,
Informed the silver Cypress what had passed,
And added: "Venus is conjunct with Sol."

[1] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 16.

She told of Sháh Shápúr, his looks and height,
All she had noted of that Moon so bright.

§ 3

How Táír was bemused by his Daughter and how she came to Shápúr, who took the Hold and slew Táír

Now Málika, when Sol's crown westward shone,
And on the earth its yellow flower became
Like teak in hue, won from the treasurer
And minister of king Táír the keys
That oped the stores of provand and of wine,
And sent the leaders and the veteran chiefs C. 1435
Supplies thereof with sweet narcissus-blooms
And fenugreek. She called to her the server,
Spake much and graciously to him, and said:—
"Thou pourest wine to-night; give it Táír
Neat, and keep all of them with wine in hand
That they may fall asleep and be bemused."
The server answered her: "Thy slave am I,
And only live because thou willest it."
Now when the sun was yellow in the west,
And murky night bade it "Avaunt," Táír
Called for a cup of royal wine, and first
They drank "The 'Ínánians." When one watch had passed
Táír slept careless of the din around,
And all withdrew to rest, whereat that Moon
Bade her slaves speak in whispers and undo
With stealth the castle-gate. Now Sháh Shápúr
Was waiting, angered at the drunken din,
But when the light shone through the gate he cried:—
"Our mate is sleepless fortune!"
Then he bade
To lodge that fair maid daintily in camp,

Collected all his forces, chose out men,
Both mounted and afoot, approved in valour
And fitted for the fray, and entering
The hold 'gan slay, and seized the ancient treasures.
The more part of the garrison were drunk,
The rest, but half awake, prepared to fight;
None showed his back through fear. The noble Sháh
Slew many while Táír, who was made captive,
Came naked and, albeit unwillingly,
Apace before him. Hold and goods were both
Shápúr's. One man was rich and only one!
He waited till the dawn and, when Sol showed
Its golden cap, they set a throne of turquoise,
As was the custom, in the hold and held
An audience. When the Sháh had made an end
The Rose of early Spring drew near to him;
She wore a ruby coronet and shone
In cloth of gold of Chín. He seated her
Beside him on the throne and presently
Called for Táír in bonds who, when he came,
Bare-headed, and beheld his daughter crowned,
C. 1436 Knew that the sorcery was hers and she
Had wrought the mischief, and he said: "O Sháh,
And noble man! see how my child hath dealt
With me! Be thou too wary of her love,
And hold all strangers enemies henceforth."
Shápúr made answer to that miscreant:—
"When thou didst take the daughter of Bahrám
From her seclusion, and insult our race,
Thou didst arouse a sleeping feud."
He bade
The deathsman to behead Táír and fling
His body to the flames. The head he trailed
In blood contemptuously and flung away.
He would not let his Arab captives speak,
But had their shoulder-blades removed—an act

Which horrified the world. The Arabs used
To call him Zú'l Aktáf because he wrenched
Their shoulders from the spine. Thence he returned
To Párs where all men came and homaged him.
All that got quarter with their shoulders whole
Refused to him no longer tax and toll.

§ 4

How Shápúr went disguised as a Merchant to Rúm, how he was taken by Cæsar, and how Cæsar ravaged the Land of Írán

Thus heaven revolved awhile, then changed its favour.
The day came when Shápúr, although possessed
Of crown and treasure, dreaded what might be,
And, when two watches of the night had passed,
Called his astrologers and asked concerning
The imperial throne and weal and woe to come.
The astrologers brought forth their astrolabes,
And cast his prospects of repose and rest,[1]
To see if ill would reach, or Grace divine
Grow greater with, the Sháh. This seen, they said:—
"Great king, world-lord, of ardent heart and pure!
A grievous, painful task confronteth thee,
But what none dareth tell."
Shápúr replied:—
"O learnéd men and seekers of the way!
By what device can this be made to pass
From me, and mine ill star not tread me down?"
The astrologers made answer: "None, O Sháh!
By courage and by knowledge can escape
The revolution of the restless sky; C. 1437
We cannot strive with it; what is to be

[1] Or "And banished rest and slumber for his sake."

Will happen all, past doubt."
The noble Sháh
Rejoined: "God is our refuge from all ill,
For He created circling heaven above,
Created strength and weakness."
He spread out
His justice through the realm and for a while
Was glad and free from trouble. Having rendered
The whole land prosperous he greatly yearned
To visit Rúm and see the state of Cæsar,
His army, treasury, and puissance.
He told his minister, a paladin
Both just and prudent, of his secret purpose,
But hid it from all other folk, and added:—
"Administer the realm with equity,
For that will make you glad."
He had prepared
Ten caravans of camels—noble beasts;
There was a chief to every caravan.
He loaded thirty camels with dínárs,
The rest with jewels and brocade. He left
The peopled parts and journeyed full of care
Till he arrived in Rúm and saw a suburb
Where dwelt both thanes and citizens. He entered
The dwelling of a man of means and asked:—
"Can I have lodging here?"
With many greetings
The goodman said: "Receive we not such guests?"
Shápúr abode that night, ate, and gave presents,
Receiving back the blessings of the thane.
At morn he packed and went to Cæsar's palace,
Like wind, and coming to the chamberlain
Saluted him and gave him gifts, who asked:—
"Who art thou? Say, because thou art a king
In limbs and looks."
Shápúr replied: "Not I.

I am a Persian, a religious man,
And with my merchandise have come from Jaz.
I have a caravan of silks and linens,
And came to court in hope to be received
By Cæsar. If among my merchandise
Aught liketh him, or of my gems and arms,
Let him accept such from his slave and place them
Among his treasures. This will please, not grieve, me.
The rest I shall sell boldly in reliance
On his protection, purchase what I need
In Rúm, and bear it to Írán."
The elder
Went and told Cæsar, who bade raise the curtain, C. 1438
And granted audience. When Shápúr approached
The presence he gave praises as was fitting,
While Cæsar, gazing on him, liked him well,
Bade spread the board, and put all strangers forth.
There was in Rúm a native of Írán,
A man of much experience, but withal
Injurious, oppressive, and accursed,
Who said to Cæsar: "O exalted one!
List to my news in secret: this great merchant,
Who taketh our dínárs for his brocade,
Is, I assert, Shápúr, the king of kings,
In speech, in countenance, in Grace, and bearing."
When Cæsar heard he was amazed, looked black,
And set a watch, but kept the matter close,
And scanned Shápúr as he arose bemused.
The guard came up, and said: "Thou art Shápúr,
Son of Narsí, disguised."
They carried him
Off to the women's house and bound his hands;
None 'scapeth from the net of bale by valour.
What booteth to consult astrologers
Since all their calculations naught availed?
They lit a candle by the drunken man,

And vilely sewed him up in ass's hide.
All said: "The wretch hath gained an ass's skin,
And lost a throne!"
There was a dark, strait cell
Whereto they bare, and whereinto they flung,
That luckless one forthwith and locked the door.
Now Cæsar gave the custody of key,
And of that captive wrapped in alien hide,
To his own wife, and told her: "Give him bread
And water lest his soul may pass too soon.
If he survive awhile he will perceive
The worth of throne and crown, and none that is not
Of Cæsar's race will covet Cæsar's throne."
She locked the cell. Her own home was elsewhere.
She had for treasuress and confidant
A moon-faced girl, Íránian by descent,
Who knew her lineage from sire to sire,
And Cæsar's wife put in her charge the key,
And brave Shápúr fast in the ass's skin,
Whom Cæsar left thus straitened, and that day
Led forth his host. Now when he reached Írán
His army drew the falchion of revenge,
c. 1439 And bore off many captives. Their brave foes
Had none to aid them, and Írán was stripped
Of men and women, children and all havings,
Both great and small. No news came to the host
Of Sháh Shápúr alive or dead. Írán
Fled before Rúm, the land was void of folk,
While countless others had a Christian call,
And flocked before the bishops, one and all.

§ 5

How the Damsel took Measures to free Sháp'ur, and how he fled with her from Rúm

Time passed, the army of Írán was scattered,
And all the while in Rúm the keepers watched
Sháp'ur both day and night, howbeit the damsel,
That was Íránian-born, rejoiced not o'er him,
But wept for him, thus clad in ass's hide,
Incessantly; her heart burned for Sháp'ur.
One day she said: "O goodly man! who art thou?
Speak and fear not, for in this ass's skin
Thy graceful form hath neither sleep nor rest.
Thou wast a Cypress with the moon full-orbed
Above it, and that moon had musk-black curls,
But now thy cypress-form is like a hoop,
Thine elephantine body like a reed.
My heart is burning, mine eyes weep, for thee
Both day and night. What wouldst thou in thine anguish?
Why tell not me thy secret?"
Said Sháp'ur:—
"If thou art well disposed to me, my Fair!
I ask thy promise—one confirmed by oath
That thou wilt keep it—not to tell my foes
My secret, but be mindful of mine anguish;
Then will I tell thee what thou wouldst—the truth."
The damsel sware to him by the All-just,
The cincture of the priest[1]—that stalwart guide—
The life of Christ, the Passion of the Cross,
The master of Írán, and love and fear:—
"I will not tell or benefit thereby."

[1] Or of "Shammas," a legendary founder of Fire-worship, in which case we may suppose that the lady, to make assurance doubly sure, pledged herself by both religions.

He told all, hiding neither good nor bad,
And said to her: "Now if thou wilt perform
My hest, and pledge thy heart to keep my secret,
C. 1440 Thy head shall be exalted o'er all dames,
The world be at thy feet. At meal-time thou
Shalt bring warm milk and supple me this hide.
Soak it because it shall become world-famous,
And after my decease the men of wisdom
Will tell the tale for many a year."
The damsel
Used her endeavours to obtain hot milk,
But furtively and speaking 'neath her breath.
On coming back with milk she used to set
Upon the fire a bowl thereof, then bear it
In secret to Shápúr, informing none.
In two weeks' time the ass's hide was moistened,
And when with aching body and full heart
Shápúr came forth therefrom he said to her
In confidence: "O pure one, vigilant,
And kindly in thy deeds! we must advise,
And frame a stratagem to 'scape from Rúm:
May blessing never light on such a land!"
The damsel said to him: "Tomorrow morn
Our chiefs will set forth to the banquet-place.
There is a feast in Rúm that men and women,
And children will attend. Whenas the queen
Shall leave the city for the merrymake
Upon the plain, the coast will be all clear,
And I will manage, reckless of mishap;
My wits shall get for thee two steeds, two maces,
And bow and arrows.
Hearing this, he praised
That worshipful, foreseeing maid, grew bold,
And in this case took wisdom for his guide.
Whenas the Fount of Light sank in the west,
And night drew o'er its head the Veil of Pitch,

Shápúr mused much: "What will she do tomorrow?"
When Sol arose in Leo, when day waxed
And slumber waned, the great men of the city
Went to the feast. That damsel, like a man
Full of resource, began to ply her schemes.
She had the empty palace to herself,
Had lion's heart withal and leopard's claws.
She brought two noble horses from the stalls,
Chose weapons fit for valiant cavaliers
With all that she had need of in dínárs,
In pearls, in rubies, and in every thing.
When all was ready, and the night had come,
The pair resolved to act and started forth
Toward Írán, both full of secret joy, C. 1441
In quest of safety. Night and day alike
They hurried onward, neither slept nor ate,
And from the city through the thornbrakes reached
A province civilised. When steeds and riders
Grew faint with hurrying they sought a place
To halt at, came upon a pleasant village
With gardens, park, and pleasances, and there,
Toil-worn and fleeing from calamity,
Knocked at a gardener's door, who hurried out —
A hospitable man of kindly heart—
And, seeing two with armour, spears, and helms,
Said to the Sháh: "Why is this visitation?
Whence hast thou sprung at this untimely hour,
Armed for an expedition?"
Said Shápúr:—
"Good friend! thou askest much of one astray!
A traveller I, a native of Írán,
And bent on flight. I am in Cæsar's danger
And in his troops', and never may I see
His head and crown! If thou wilt be my host
To-night, and play the marchlord's part discreetly,[1]

[1] *I.e.* in receiving those who have just crossed the frontier.

Sure am I that one day 'twill profit thee;
The tree that thou shalt plant will bear thee fruit."
The gardener said: "The house is thine, the gardener
Himself thy guest. Whate'er I can I will,
Informing none."
Then Sháh Shápúr alighted,
He and the damsel, and the gardener's wife
Gat ready food for them as best she could.
When they had eaten bread they turned to wine,
And had a lowly chamber dight. The gardener
Gave to Shápúr the wine forthwith, and said:—
Drink thou to whom thou wilt."
"My host," he answered,
"And gardener eloquent and excellent!
The man that bringeth wine should drink it first,
When first in years and wisdom. Thou art older
Than I and, since thou furnishest the wine,
Thou shouldst begin."
"Great sir!" the gardener said,
"The man of Grace should drink first. Lead the way
As old in wisdom though more young in years.
I seem to scent a crown upon thy locks;
Thy visage too is like the sun."
Shápúr
Smiled, took the wine, and sighed. "O pious man!"
He said, "what tidings from Írán hast thou?"
C. 1442 The gardener said: "O thou of kingly mind!
May foe ne'er harm thee. May the ills that Cæsar
Hath brought upon the Íránians now befall
Our foemen. All are scattered in Írán,
And tilth and crop remain not. Massacre
And pillage have dispersed our mighty folk,
While many have turned Christians and come zoned
Before the bishops, many don priests' caps
That they may have a land and resting-place!"
The other said: "Where then was Sháh Shápúr,

Who used to shine resplendent as the moon
Upon Urmuzd, that Cæsar thus should dare,
And fortune overcast the Íránians' lustre?"
The gardener answered him: "Exalted one!
Be majesty and pleasure ever thine.
No tidings of his whereabouts, alive
Or dead, hath reached the Íránian potentates:
The people of Írán are slaves in Rúm."
The gardener, the Sháh's host, wept bitterly,
And added: "Thou shalt stay three days, and then
My house will be the lustre of the world
Because a sage said when the world was young:—
'Unwise is he whose courtesy is scant
To guests; black fortune will ensure him want.'
So tarry, rest, and take a cup of wine,
And when thy heart is merry tell thy name."
Shápúr said: "Good! Our host is our Great King,
At present."
He abode, ate, and conversed,
That night, and when morn rose above the mountains,
When rose the Golden Banner from the dales,
The master of the garden visited
His guest, and said: "Good day to thee, and may
Thy head be o'er the rain-clouds. This abode
Was not a fitting resting-place for thee,
Nor was the season suited for repose."
Shápúr replied: "My friend! I should prefer
This house to crown and throne. And now bring forth
A Zandavasta and thy sacred twigs
That while I mutter I may ask thee questions."[1]
He did according to the Sháh's command,
Made the twigs ready and the place of prayer.
Then as he prayed the Sháh said: "Tell me truly
Where the high priest is now."
His host replied:—

[1] See Vol. i. p. 80, *s.v. Bàj*, and *Barsam*.

"Sweet-tongued and holy man! I can discern
His house from here."
The Sháh said privily:—
"Request some seal-clay of the village-chief."
C. 1443 The gardener got it and returned at once.
The world-lord pressed his signet on the clay,
Returned it to the gardener with his thanks,
And said to him: "Give this clay to the high priest,
And mark his words."
That morn the gardener
Went with the impress of the royal signet,
But on arrival found the portal barred,
And armed men stationed round. He clamoured loudly
To be admitted and proceeded straightway
Before the high priest, showed the signature,
And did obeisance. When the high priest looked,
And saw the impress, that wise statist's heart
Began to throb with joy and, weeping greatly
Upon that name, he asked: "What man is this?"
The gardener said: "My lord! the cavalier
Is staying at my house and hath with him
A Moon, slim cypress-like, wise, fair, and graceful."
The high priest said: "Now as to this aspirant,[1]
What is he like in stature and in face?"
The gardener answered: "One that ne'er hath seen
Spring, and a cypress by the water's side,
Would yet at sight of this man's looks and stature
Find music in his heart. His arms are like
A camel's thighs, his chest is like a lion's,
His cheek like blood. Shame reddeneth at his grace,
The crown's decore proceedeth from his face."

[1] Reading with P.

§ 6

How the High Priest and the Captain of the Host, hearing of Shápúr's Arrival, went to him with the Troops

The wise high priest, while listening to the gardener,
Perceived with his shrewd mind: "This Lion-heart
Can be none other than the Sháh; his mien
Befitteth but the throne!" and seeking out
A wary messenger he sent to tell
The captain of the host: "The Grace of Sháh
Shápúr is manifest. Assemble troops
From every side."
The high priest's messenger
Came speeding to the captain of the host,
Who gladdened at the words and then and there
Set both his cheeks upon the ground, and said
To God: "O righteous Judge! I serve Thee only.
Who ever thought that Sháh Shápúr and army
Would see each other more? O one just God,
The Master of the world and Guide to good!
I thank Thee."
When night raised its sable flag, C. 1444
And stars began to twinkle round the moon,
Troops gathered from all quarters, and wherever
Chiefs were they made their way, by ones and twos,
Toward that city and reached joyfully
The hospitable gardener's door. Now when
The troops had gathered, that good man approached
The Sháh who bade that they should be admitted
Although his court was lowly. As they came
They bent their faces to the ground before him.
The Sháh embraced the chieftains and began
To wail his woes, told of his sufferings
Within the ass's skin, of Cæsar's words,

And what that fair Íránian slave had done
For love of him: "I have through her and God
Preserved my life. May Fortune smile on her.
Grant but a virtuous slave and thou wilt be
The slave of such though king and glorious.
I am the slave of this fond slave whose heart
Is open and who keepeth secrets well.
Wherever I have forces, and my rule
Is recognised, send thither men and give
The tidings. Scatter scouts upon the roads,
Secure them, and the one to Taisafún
In chief. The news must not transpire. If Cæsar
Hear of me that the Grace of king of kings
Appeareth he will come, destroy my host,
And break the Íránians' hearts and backs. We cannot
Withstand him yet or cope with his lush fortune,
But when the high priest cometh and shall bring
Troops we will bar the road to ants and gnats.
We will be instant then and take new order
To clear our garden quietly of weeds,
To every corner spies shall be dispatched,
And outposts be on guard by day and night.
Thenceforth I give no Rúman liberty
To sleep in peace or lay his armour by."

§ 7

How Sháp̱úr made a Night-attack, and how Cæsar was taken

Sháp̱úr, whose troops were soon six thousand strong,
Sent veteran chiefs to spy out Taisafún,
C. 1445 And notify his high and glorious court
Of Cæsar. Instantly they went to find
How matters stood, then told the exalted Sháh:—
"No thought hath Cæsar save for wine and chase.
His troops are scattered everywhere to pillage.

There are no guards or sentries day or night,
His troops are like a flock without a shepherd.
He seeth not a foe on any side,
And so it pleaseth him to live at ease."
Shápúr rejoiced; his troubles turned to wind.
He chose three thousand of the Íránians,
All horsemen mailed on barded chargers, armed
Himself, and marched on Taisafún by night.
He marched by night and turned aside by day.
His route lay over wilderness and mountain
By track or no track, and two leagues and more
Ahead were scouts till Taisafún was nigh.
In the third watch he reached the camp of Cæsar,
Of whom he felt no fear, heard no man's voice,
No sentries' challenge and no tinkling bells.
Tents and pavilions covered all the waste.
Who wotted of that onset? In his tent
Lay Cæsar drunk, his troops were all abroad.
Shápúr, the valiant, gave his royal steed
The rein, on seeing this, led on his powers
Against the camp, and grasped his massive mace.
Rang cloudward clarion, mace, and Indian bell;
Rose battle-cry and tumult everywhere.
Thou wouldst have said: "May be the heaven is rent,
And through the air blood droppeth from the sun!"
Gleamed Káwa's flag, gloomed night, flashed violet swords;
Thou wouldst have said: "The air is raining them;
The world is in a mist!" Heaven disappeared
Amid the dust, the stars drew in their skirts,
And brave Shápúr wrecked worthless Cæsar's camp.
They slew twelve thousand Rúman cavaliers
And over, fired the camp, dashed heaven to earth, C. 1446
And in the end made Cæsar prisoner.
His good stars grew averse. Among the tents
They captured many of his nobles, horsemen

Elect and brave, and put them into bonds.
Such is the action of the lofty sky
At whiles up-lifting and at whiles low-laying,
At whiles delighting and at whiles affraying!
The innocent that hath humanity
Is best; almighty God is his ally.
When it was day, when night withdrew its skirt,
And Sol's flag showed aloft, Shápúr commanded
A scribe to come with writing implements.
They wrote to every province, to each king,
And chief. Shápúr began: "Our heart-felt praise
Be to almighty God who helpeth others
To good but hath no need of others' help.
Since Cæsar hath kept not God's laws, but sown
Naught but the seed of wrong within Írán,
Bonds chafe him sorely, for he had not wisdom
To guide his soul. He hath resigned to us
The crown of kingship and reserveth only
His infamy. His host and court are broken
By God's own might who pointed out the way.
Those Rúmans whom ye capture in your cities
Must have their portion of the scimitar.
Seek ye all justice, do as I command,
And swear allegiance unto me afresh."
A cameleer came to each quarter quickly;
And brought the letter of the ardent Sháh,
Who left the camp for Taisafún and there
Held session safely with his counsellors,
And, having donned the ancestral crown, gave thanks
To God, the Giver of all good. He bade
A scribe to go inside the prison-house,
And make a list of all the captives' names.
There were a thousand and five score and two
Of Cæsar's kindred and high rank in Rúm.
The world-lord lopped the hands and feet of those
That had been chief in ill, and then commanded

To bring in Cæsar, lord of Rúm. The guard
Brought him from prison like a man insane.
That tyrant, when he saw Shápúr's crown, wept;
He rubbed his visage red upon the ground, C. 1447
And swept it with his lashes, grovelling,
And blessing crown and throne.
"O thou compact
Of ill," the Sháh said, "Christian and God's foe,
Ascribing unto Him who hath no mate,
No period, and no origin, a son!
Thou art a very knave, a lunatic,
A miscreant, fool, and utterest naught but lies,
Which are an evil, unilluming fire.
Where are thy counsel, modesty, and heart
Inciting thee to good, if thou art Cæsar?
Why bind me in an ass's hide and so
Fling greatness to the dust? I came to feast
In merchant's guise, I came not forth to fight
With drums and troops, but thou didst clothe thy guest
In ass's skin and march against Írán.
Now shalt thou feel the clutch of valiant men,
And seek no more to fight Írán."
"O Sháh!"
Said Cæsar, "who can 'scape God's ordinance?
The royal throne put wisdom far from me,
And made my soul a hireling of the Dív.
Thou wilt be famous, doing good for ill,
Because thy name ne'er will grow old, and thou
Wilt compass all thy longing by thy prowess.
If I have safeguard for my life from thee
Wealth and dínárs are worthless in mine eyes,
Then will I be a slave about thy court,
And seek for nothing but to grace thy throne."
The Sháh replied: "Vile wretch! why didst thou turn
This country upside down? If all the spoil

That thou didst bear to Rúm (ne'er mayst thou look
On that cursed land again!) thou wilt restore
Back from thy house to this exalted folk;
Next, if whate'er was harried in Írán,
And made the lair of lions and of pards,
Thou wilt recover at thine own expense,
And in requital for thine evil deeds;
Next, if for those Íránians whom thou slewest
Thou choosest Rúmans of the royal race,
And givest me ten for every one of ours,
Surrendering their lives as hostages,
And I will take but men of Cæsar's stock
To be with me here in this happy land;
And, next, if for each tree felled in Írán,
(None well-disposed would fell the trees of others)
Thou plant another, reinstate all walls,
And thus abate the anger in our hearts,
Shall I not bind thee as thou bindest me?
Can I forgive thee for the ass's skin?
C. 1448 If thou shalt fail in aught that I have said
My men shall rend thy skin from head to foot."
As soon as he had finished his demands
Shápúr, the world-lord, as the conqueror
Split with his dagger both his prisoner's ears,
And having bored his nostrils put a bit
Therein in memory of the ass's hide,
And loaded both his feet with heavy chains;
The guard moreover bare him back to ward.
They held review and muster, and demanded
The treasury-key. The monarch massed and paid
The host, then, bent on justice and revenge,
Marched from Íran upon the coast of Rúm.
All that were in the desert and that land
They slew and set the houses there on fire,
So that the world was lighted by the blaze.
When news reached Rúm: "Our fertile lands are wasted,

And in a night-attack illustrious Cæsar
Hath been made captive," all the people wept,
And at Shápúr's name were consumed with dread.
"Ungenerous Cæsar wrought this woe," they said.

§ 8

How Shápúr went to Rúm and fought with Yánus, Cæsar's Brother

Though Cæsar's sire was dead, his mother lived;
He had a younger brother too—Yánus—
A generous and potent atheling.
Troops mustered at his gate, his warlike mother
Gave them a donative, and said to him:—
"Avenge thy brother: seest not that a host
Hath come forth from Írán?"
He beat the drums,
And carried out the Cross. The Cross was great,
The army fierce. The hosts met face to face;
The warriors had no rest. The ranks were ranged;
A shout went up; Yánus led on the van.
Black dust-clouds rose, and none could see his way
Amid the murk. Upon one flank were mountains,
And on the other, where the troops were massed,
A river ran. The din of battle rose,
Sword, mace, and arrow flashed, while azure-dim
Was air with dust of horsemen, spearheads gleamed,
And banners fluttered while the stars looked down C. 1449
Upon that strife—all wreak and malison.
The warriors of Rúm all girt their loins,
Like furious lions, for that strife. The air
Was lapis-lazuli, the ground was iron,
Dark dusk rose cloud-ward, and thou wouldst have said:—
"The air is all a mist whence diamonds pour."

The Sháh's troops likewise girt their loins for bloodshed.

Thus blew the blast of battle till the sun
Grew dim. They slew until earth's surface turned
To iron with the breast-plates of the slain.
Then from the centre Sháh Shápúr advanced
His battle, calling on his left and right,
And on his meiny. Sháh and chiefs made hot
Their steeds, earth trembled, and the armies reeled.
He charged the Rúman host, and great and small
Were one. Aware that he could not withstand
The Sháh, Yánus fled with his troops, pursued
By valorous Shápúr, who robbed the air
Of lustre with his dust-clouds. On all sides
He piled the foe in heaps, smirched earth with brains,
And slew so many of the host of Rúm
That all the plain was heads and feet and trunks.
No host and Cross remained upon the field,
No crucifix and bishop in the holds.
He took such spoil on all sides that the troops
Were in amaze. He gave it all to them,
Reserving to himself but Cæsar's wealth,
Who had seen travail in amassing it,
And found his travail end not with his treasure!
The host of Rúm, assembling, said of him:—
"Be such chief ours no more! May Cæsar's name
Cease out of Rúm! The girdle of the priests,
And their archbishop's crozier are consumed!
So now for us Rúm and Kannúj are one,
Because the call of Christ's Faith is fordone!"

§ 9

How the Rúmans placed Bazánúsh upon the Throne of Cæsar; his Letter to Shápúr and the Answer

There was a man of noble lineage,
And of the famous Cæsars' stock withal,
A man of wisdom, Bazánúsh by name,
Fraught with good counsel both in mind and tongue,
To whom the army said: "Be Cæsar thou, C. 1450
This very day the captain of the host;
The troops will be attentive to thy words:
Illume the crown and renovate the throne."
They set for him the throne of ivory
Whereon he sat in all his glory crowned,
While all the Rúmans hailed him as the Cæsar.
He sat and mused on war and battlefield,
And, knowing that to strive in fight against
The exalted Sháh would bring disaster, chose
An envoy shrewd and modest who could speak
Wise words with gentleness—a scribe expert,
Experienced, learned, wise, and well approved—
Set him hard by, dictated subtle words,
And wrote a letter full of benisons
From God almighty on the king of earth:—
"Be thy crown ever bright and all the great
Thy slaves. Thou know'st that pillaging and bloodshed,
And harrying the innocent, are hateful
To noble men both in Írán and Rúm.
If this feud first began about Íraj
'Twas settled by the might of Minúchihr.
Now Salm is dust, and Túr is swept away,
In vengeance. If Sikandar and Dárá
Embroil us now that feud is obsolete
In Rúm; the one good fortune left, the other

Was slain by his two ministers, while Cæsar,
If he be cause, is galled within thy prison
By fetters. Rúm must not be desolate,
For never there hath been a land like Rúm.
Now, if thy purpose is to waste and slay,
The Rúmans cannot either fight or flee.
Their wives and children are thy prisoners,
Or wounded by thy swords and shafts. 'Tis time
To minish wrath and vengeance; wrath and Faith
Ne'er fare together. Be our ransom then
All our possessions, for this feud is wasting
Our lives. Be kind, burn not so many cities.
Such days must cease. The Maker of the world
Will not approve a world-lord set on wrong,
And vengeance. May He bless the Sháh, and may
The Sháh's exalted star encrown the moon."

The scribe laid down his pen when he had written
That royal letter whereunto they set
The seal of Cæsar, and the ambassador
C. 1451 Set forward to the Sháh. The wise man came,
And tendered Cæsar's letter to Shápúr
Of glorious race, who, when they read to him
The letter, showering on him those fair words,
Was gracious, wept, and bent his warrior-brows.
He wrote at once an answer and detailed
All that had happened both for good and ill;
He said: "Who sewed his guest in ass's hide?
Who lighted up the mart of ancient feuds?
If thou art wise arise and come to me,
Thou and thy honest counsellors, for I
Have granted quarter and I will not fight.
The world is never straitened to the wise."

The messenger returned with this reply,
And word for word discharged his embassy.

§ 10

How Bazánúsh went to Shápúr and made a Treaty of Peace

When Bazánúsh saw that reply the heart
In his pure body throbbed with joy. He bade
A hundred nobles quit fair Rúm with him.
They made up sixty asses' loads of drachms,
Of gems, and full-dress robes, and thirty thousand
Dínárs for largess gathered from all sides.
They went before the Sháh with naked feet
And heads all bare, and, as they poured dínárs,
Bestrewed the gold with gems. Shápúr received
The Rúmans graciously and seated them
In due degree. He said to Bazánúsh:—
"From Rúm no lack of curst and unjust men
Hath come. Where there were cities in Írán
Now there are thorn-brakes. I demand redress
For what hath been laid waste and made the lair
Of pard and lion."
Bazánúsh replied:—
"Say what thou wilt and since thou gav'st us quarter
Frown not upon us."
Said the noble Sháh:—
"If thou wouldst have full pardon for the wrong
Thou must pay tribute in dínárs of Rúm—
Two hundred thousand thrice in every year,
And further give up Nasíbín to me,
If thou wouldst end my vengeance."
Bazánúsh
Replied: "Írán, Arabia, Nasíbín
Are thine, and I agree to this vast tribute,
For we can not withstand thy wrath and vengeance."
Shápúr agreed by treaty not to march
On Rúm thenceforth, excepting by permission C. 1452

In friendly wise, that Rúm might not be injured.
Then he dismissed those magnates graciously
And honourably, on their departure marched,
And thanked his Maker much. He sought Istakhr—
The world-famed glory of the land of Párs—
Rejoicing.

When the news of these events
Reached Nasíbín the people rushed to arms,
Exclaiming: "We will not let Sháh Shápúr
Take Nasíbín or bring an army hither
Because he is not Christian but observeth
The Zandavasta and the cult of Fire.
He will not hear us when he cometh hither,
And we will not accept the Zandavasta,
And ancient Faith."

The populace prevailed,
The Faithful mounted for the war. When tidings
Reached Sháh Shápúr that Nasíbín rebelled
He was enraged against the Christian Faith,
And set a countless host upon the march.
He said: "Applaud I cannot an evangel
Whose author suffered death among the Jews."

For one whole week they fought; the city's gate
Grew all too narrow for the combatants;
The Íránians slew a multitude of chiefs,
And placed those that survived in heavy bonds.
The citizens wrote to the Sháh for quarter,
Who pardoned them and bade his host withdraw.

He gained renown in all parts of the earth,
He gained supremacy o'er all the world.
Men used to call him "The victorious Sháh,"
And long did he possess the throne and crown.
She who had freed and given him his greatness,
Whom he named Diláfrúz-i-Farrukhpái,[1]
Was dearer to him than all other fair.

[1] *I.e.* The lucky-footed lustre of the heart.

Moreover on the gardener he bestowed
Great treasure and dismissed him well provided;
But Cæsar stayed in prison and in bond,
In abject, evil case, and lasso-bound,
While all the treasure that he had in Rúm,
And toiled to gather in from every side,
He had conveyed and given to Shápúr.
He lived awhile with sighs upon his lips,
Within his prison-house, and there he died,
And let another have the crown of might.
Then Sháh Shápúr dispatched the corpse to Rúm,
Encrowned with musk upon a bier, and said:—
"This is our end but where we shall find rest
I know not. One is covetous and foolish,
Another wise and dowered with Grace, but life
Will pass with both. The good and abstinent C. 1453
Alone are blest."
He mounted on the throne
Of kings and ruled the world awhile. Thereafter
He settled many folk for good or ill
Within the land of Khúzistán and built
A city for his prisoners: folk at large
Shared not therein.[1] 'Twas called Khurram Ábád,[2]
But who were they who shared that pleasant place?
The men whose hands Shápúr had stricken off
Had this assigned to them as their abode;
They had it all, and every year a robe
Of honour. He erected too in Shám
A city which he called Pírúz Shápúr,[3]
And in Ahwáz a third with palaces
And hospitals, Kinám-i-Asírán[4]
They called it; prisoners there had rest and ease.
He reigned until he passed his fiftieth year
Of sovereignty; the age had not his peer.

[1] Reading with P.
[2] Pleasant Abode.
[3] Victorious Shápúr.
[4] The Prisoners' Nest.

§ 11

How Máni, the Painter, came to Shápúr with Pretence of being a Prophet, and was slain

There came from Chín a man of eloquence,
Whose peer in painting earth will not behold,
By which accomplishment he gained his ends.
He was a man of might by name Máni.
He said: "I prove my mission by my painting,
And am the greatest of evangelists."

He came from Chín, asked audience of Shápúr,
Soliciting his help in that evangel,
And speaking with such unction that the Sháh,
Filled with misgivings and keen interest,
Convoked the archmages and held talk at large
About Máni: "This suasive man of Chín
Hath plunged me into doubts about his Faith:
Hold converse with him; ye may be converted."

They said: "This man—a worshipper of pictures—
Is not the equal of our own high priest;
Hear what Máni saith and then call for him:
Máni will be dumfoundered in his presence."[1]

The Sháh bade that Máni should come who spake
At large, discoursing with the archimages,
In presence of the Sháh, of Light and Darkness[2]
Until Máni was checked in full career
By what the high priest said to him concerning
C. 1454 The ancient Faith: "Thou worshipper of pictures!
Why layest thou thy daring hand on God—
The Being that created Heaven above,
Created space and time, with light and darkness,
Therein, and is supreme of principles?
The nights and days of high, revolving heaven

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Lit. of white and black.

Are both thy source of safety and mishap.
How canst thou take a picture for a proof,
And disregard the counsel of the Faithful,
Who say that holy God is One, and thou
Hast no alternative to serving Him?
If thou wilt give these pictures motion, then
Thou mayst appeal thereto. Thy proof, thou knowest
Is naught, and no one will esteem it valid.
Were Áhriman God's equal, darksome night
Would be like shining day, and both would be
Of equal length throughout the year, and neither
Would in their revolutions wax or wane.
The Maker of the world is compassed not
By thought, for He is higher than thought and space.
Thy words are those of lunatics. Enough!
No one will side with thee."
He spake much else,
For he was one of knowledge and of courage.
Máni was all confounded by the words,
His favour changed, the king was wroth with him,
So that his days were straitened, bidding some
To drag him from the court disgraced, and said:—
"This worshipper of pictures is unfit
To live, so since he causeth turmoil here
Flay him from head to foot, and let his skin
Be stuffed with hay, and then, that no one else
May make pretences to like dignity,
Hang up the skin upon the city-gate,
Or on the wall outside the hospital."
So did they. All the people blessed the Sháh,
And cast dust on the body of the slain.
The fortune of Shápúr was such that men
Saw in his garth no thorn upon the rose.
He was so just, so wise, and politic,
Brave, bounteous, active, that not anywhere
Was left a foe, or evil e'en a lair.

§ 12

How Shápúr made his Brother Ardshír Regent till his own Son should grow up, and how his Days ended

C. 1455 When he had naught to hope for from high heaven,
For he had passed his three score years and ten,
He called a scribe, the high priest, and Ardshír,
His younger brother, youthful still and crowned
With justice and with wisdom. Now the Sháh
Had but one son—an infant—named Shápúr,
Not yet matured by fortune, so the king,
In presence of the magnates and the scribes,
Said to Ardshír: "If thou wilt make a pact
With me in all good faith, and pledge thyself
To keep it, that what time my son shall come
To man's estate, and when the breath of greatness
Shall breathe on him, thou wilt resign to him
The treasure and the throne and crown, and be
His loyal minister, I will commit
To thee this crown of kingship and transfer
Withal to thee the treasure and the host."
Ardshír agreed before the great and wise
To give up to the child when grown to manhood,
And fit for diadem and throne of might,
The kingship and intreat him lovingly.
Whereat Shápúr, in presence of the lords,
Gave the world's crown and signet to Ardshír,
Then said: "Take seriously the world's affairs.
Know, O my brother! that an unjust king
Regardeth not the interests of the realm,
But yearneth to fill up his treasuries,
Exceeding all his officers in greed.
Blest is the upright king that serveth God
Because in him his subjects' hearts delight;
He groweth rich by equity and bounty,

He leadeth every one toward the Faith,
He guardeth all his kingdom from the foe,
He lifteth to the clouds his head and crown,
He gathereth wealth by justice and in peace,
Disperseth trouble from the heart by largess,
He passeth o'er the offences of ill-doers,
And ever practiseth humanity.
He that hath sought these virtues will attain
To wisdom and right rede and watchfulness.
Kings must be wise and teach both young and old,
For subjects not instructed in God's way
Will err, and if the king is wroth with such C. 1456
He violateth justice and the Faith.
Man's heart and brain are joint kings of his body,
The other members are the soldiery.
When, then, the heart and brain have been defiled,
And lost to good advice in their despair,
The life within that body is distraught;
Will troops left chiefless live on happily?
Left in the dark they are dispersed and cast,
A corpse, to dust. So with an unjust king:
The world [1] is turned by him all upside down.
He will be held accursed when he is dead,
And men will know him as 'The impious Sháh.'
Keep both thine eye and body in the Faith,
For eye and body both belong to God.
The king who chooseth any other way
Should wash both heart and hands of this our world.
He scattereth his subjects from his realm,
His lieges from his gate, ignoring all
The sage's words which cleanse thy heart of guile.
The tyrant is accursed: haunt not the portal
Of men intent on greed. Know, O my brother!
That from a king the sage expecteth much—
First, that he be victorious, not turning

[1] Reading with P.

From foes in fight; again, that he entreat
His troops with equity and recognise
The greatness of the high-born: whosoever
Is fitted for the kingship will not put
The men of rank into the ranks;[1] next, thirdly,
That he be upright and defeat not justice;
And fourthly, that to those who are his subjects,
And to the old retainers of his court,
He keep not tightly barred his treasury's door,
But from his branches drop a shower of fruit.
The king's gate should be not without a host,
And he should keep his treasure for his troops.
Thou wilt rejoice in treasuries increased
By justice, and thy troops will joy in thee.
Look on thy mail as thy true ornament;
Some night it may bestead thee well. Trust not
Thy guards too much; direct thine own concerns
As thou wouldst be secure though, whether thou
Shalt prove obscure or thy own age's lustre,
Death past all doubt will come to thee at last."

The brother, hearing this, wept sore. Shápúr
Wrote his last wishes out, lived on one year,
Then passed, and left this saying in men's minds:—
"Sow not within the world the seed of greed
Because thy days will pass, and foes enjoy
The product of thy toils. Whene'er the laws
Both of Urmuzd and of Bahman[2] are kept
This palace will become a happy home."

C. 1457 Bring tulip-tinted wine, O Háshimí![3]
From jars that never need replenishing.

Why seek I, who am deaf at sixty-three,
The world's grace and observance? Now I sing
(Mark thou) the story of Ardshír, the king.

[1] Reading with P.

[2] *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 327.

[3] *I.e.* O descendant of Muhammad's great-grandfather (Háshim)!

XXXI

ARDSHÍR, BROTHER OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED TEN YEARS

NOTE

The reign of Sháṕur, son of Urmuzd, was preceded, as we have seen, by those of six Sháhs, none of whom left any mark on Íránian legend, and it was followed by those of three others no less insignificant. Some of the six preceding Sháhs had been men of importance historically, but even this cannot be said of Ardshír (Artaxerxes II., A.D. 379–383) and his two successors.

Ardshír must have been either an elder brother of Shápúr or else, like him, a posthumous child. At any rate he must have been seventy years old or more at the time of his accession. Shápúr is represented elsewhere in the Sháhnáma as brotherless,[1] but historically this was not the case.[2]

Ardshír is credited by most authorities with a reign of four years only. Tabarí says that he was deposed by his subjects.[3]

§ 1

How Ardshír sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge to the Officers

Whenas Ardshír sat in the royal seat,
And graced the throne of old Shápúr, he girt
His loins and called the Íránians, seating them
Beneath the golden throne, and thus he said:—
"I would not that the process of high heaven
Should injure any. All the world shall be

[1] See p. 319. [2] See p. 318. [3] NT, p. 70.

Within my peace if it obey my will;
But if this giddy world prove recusant
We will take order for it. Now my brother
Left me the world in trust because his son
Is but a child. Our blessings on his soul,
For he hath purged the earth of wicked men.
Whenas Shápúr, son of Shápúr, shall reach
To man's estate, and knoweth how to prize
The crown and throne, I will resign to him
Them and the host according to my pledge
To Sháh Shápúr. I only hold the throne
As viceroy and in memory of his sire.
Know this: what we enjoy will pass away;
At death our travail will be turned to wind."

Through his ten years of rule he took his fill
Of joy and lavished bounty as he would.
He asked from no man tribute, toll, or tax,
But made the crown and throne a charge to none;
Men therefore called him "The Beneficent,"
For all felt safe with him.

Now when Shápúr
Was fit for crown and throne Ardshír resigned
The glorious crown, made good what he had spoken
And, like a man, maintained his pledge unbroken.

XXXII

SHÁPÚR, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED FIVE YEARS AND FOUR MONTHS

NOTE

According to Tabarí, the death of this Sháh (Sapor III., A.D. 383–388) was not due to the accidental fall of a tent-pole; the tent-ropes were cut, and the tent fell and killed him.[1]

§ 1

How Shápúr, Son of Shápúr, sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge to the Officers

Whenas Shápúr sat in his uncle's place C. 1458
Most joyed but some were sorry in Irán.
He thus harangued the noble men of lore,
And veteran, adviceful archimages:—
"Know that henceforth we favour not the liar,
For lying is not policy and that
Ensureth greatness. Treat not nidderings
As friends and sow not weeds within the garden.
The man of brains should make a mock of none.
Tongues should be guarded, not imbued with bane,
For he that speaketh much in the assembly
Will minish his repute, but when a sage
Discourseth, hear, for learning ageth not.
The covetous have aching hearts, do thou

[1] NT, p. 71.

Abstain from greed and make not friends with liars,
Or men of evil rede. Four qualities
Are needful in a man: first, being modest,
Just, and accomplished; secondly, sincere
And single-hearted; thirdly, moderate
And welcoming whatever fortune bringeth;
And, fourthly, never speaking foolishly,
But using fools for profit not for sport.
The hearts of noble men obtain both worlds,
But justice pleaseth not the hearts of churls,
Who in this world possess an evil name,
And in the other win not Paradise.
The vain withal hath but a brief career
Because he dissipateth wealth in folly,
While he is lauded that doth choose the mean;
He showereth benedictions on himself.[1]
God aid you, be your fortune ever bright,
And may He help us, for the throne of greatness
Abideth not with any."
Thus he said.
The nobles rose and blessed him.

C. 1459 When five years
And four months had passed by, the Sháh one day
Went out to hunt, the world was full of cheetahs,
Of hawks, and hounds, these flying and those coursing.
A tent was pitched to make a resting-place
Where when the Sháh had eaten he reposed;
He drank three goblets full of royal wine,
And, musing, drowsed. His comrades all dispersed
While he reclined. He slept. Then from the waste
A tempest rose, so great that none recalled
The like, and brought the wood-work of the tent
Down on the Sháh's head! He that had aspired
To win the world—the valorous Shápúr—
Died and resigned the royal crown to others.

[1] Couplets transposed.

This whirling world is evermore the same,
And constant only to the knavish one,
Who in his jugglery is void of shame
To filch from any or to foist upon.
Act, then, enjoy, disport, but fret thee not.
Why grasp at vengeance, toy with treasury?
Within this gloomy orb accept thy lot,
Seek honour, and let this world's secret be.
Discovery will make thee writhe with pain;
Then pry not, let its mystery remain.

XXXIII

BAHRÁM, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED FOURTEEN YEARS

NOTE

The Oriental title of this Sháh (Varahran IV., A.D. 388–399) renders it doubtful whether he was the son of the second or third Shápúr, and the authorities differ on the point. He is supposed generally to have reigned eleven years. He was the ruler of Kirmán at the time of his accession, and to him rightly belongs the title of Kirmánsháh which Firdausí gives to Bahrám Bahrámiyán.[1] A seal of his, so describing him ("Varahran Kerman Malka") is extant.[2] Tabarí says that he built a city in Kirmán, perhaps the existent Kirmánsháhán south-east of Yazd,[3] and that he was killed by an arrow shot at him by assassins.[4]

§ 1

How Bahrám sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge to the Officers

Wise, prudent Sháh Bahrám mourned for his sire
Some months. When seated on the place of power
He spake thus from the imperial throne: "This know:
The kings that justly gather freely spend.
May holy God be gracious unto us,
And may the foemen's hearts be filled with smoke.
His is all knowledge, and we are His slaves
For weal or woe. He is supremely just;

[1] See p. 313. [2] See RSM, p. 265. [3] NT, p. 71, and *note*. [4] *Id.* p. 72.

His kingdom knoweth neither gain nor loss.
One that is rich in generosity,
Discreet, intelligent, and vigilant,
Should lock not fast his treasures, least of all
If he is lord of throne and diadem,
And if a wealth of words be thine to give,
Be lavish, knowledge faileth not. Incline
To God in good and ill as thou wilt have
Thy good endure. If thou acknowledgest C. 1460
That all thy good and evil are from Him
Thy guerdon will be jocund Paradise;
But if thou choosest this world's vanities
Thou wilt remain unransomed in their clutch.
If God shall cease to keep thee 'neath His hand
Thou wilt abide in endless woe. I trust
To holy God that, when I lay my head
Within this darksome dust, He may account me
A conquering king, a Lustre of the world.
Is it not better then to lavish justice
Than to get wealth unjustly, for our labours
Endure here but our wealth will be past doubt
Our foe's. We leave our memory good or bad;
Forbear thine utmost to sow seed of ill."

When this Sháh's reign had come to twice seven years
The graceful Cypress of the Orchard slept;
The Sháh was sick awhile, his subjects grieved.
He had a daughter, but no son, and likewise
A younger brother unto whom he gave
Perforce the host and treasure, crown and throne,
And royal signet, then, when he had ruled
For twice seven years, this youthful world-lord died.

Old man, whose years amount to sixty-three!
Shall wine be still the burden of thy lay?
Without a warning life may end with thee;
Think of repentance then, seek wisdom's way.

May God approve this slave. May he attain
In wisdom riches and in singing gain;

For mid his song he plucketh at his hair,
Yea teareth it in his obscure estate.
No wonder, if a work—his manhood's care—
Completed in old age, he dedicate
To him who hath the sword—the king of kings,
A whole head higher than his underlings.

May his throne's seat serve Luna for a crown,
The age be wholly subject to his sway,
For his is might and with him is renown.
Oh! may the crown rejoice in him, and may
He walk in knowledge and in majesty,
From all his foemen's clutches ever free!

XXXIV

YAZDAGIRD, SON OF SHÁPÚR

HE REIGNED THIRTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Yazdagird succeeds his brother as Sháh and rules wickedly. His son Bahrám is born and brought up by the Arabs, to whom he returns after a visit to, and imprisonment by, his father. Yazdagird is warned of his death by the astrologers and tries to evade his fate, but is killed by a mysterious horse. The Íránians, resolved that none of his family shall succeed him, elect Khusrau. Bahrám, supported by the Arabs, claims the throne, proves his right to it by ordeal, and becomes Sháh.

NOTE

The authorities are divided on the question whether Yazdagird (Isdigerd I., A.D. 399–420) was a son of Bahrám, the previous Sháh, or of Shápúr. Tabarí takes the former view,[1] Mas'údí the latter,[2] which leaves it still uncertain as to which Shápúr—Shápúr, son of Urmuzd, or Shápúr, son of Shápúr—was intended.

Like Aknaton of Egypt Yazdagird seems to have been a man of remarkable character. He sought peace and ensued it, he attempted to win over furiously raging fanatics to the principles of religious toleration, failed in the attempt, tried to prevent persecutors from persecuting—an act which in those days was regarded as a kind of persecution in itself—assumed the title of "The Most Peaceful" on his coins, and acted up to it in his political relations with foreign states even when most tempting opportunities for aggrandisement presented themselves, was honoured, at least in legend, by being appointed formally by will the guardian of the son of an Eastern Roman Emperor—an office

[1] NT, p. 72. [2] MM, ii. 190.

which he is said to have accepted and faithfully executed—died a mysterious death, and received from his subjects the titles of "The Sinner" and "The Harsh." The indictment of him in Tabarí is very severe. Among his other enormities it is recorded that if any one dared to address him on behalf of another he said immediately: "How much does he pay you, for whom you ask me, or what have you received already?" on which Professor Nöldeke observes that he knew his Persians. Apparently he did, and the native chroniclers, drawn for the most part from a class that could not understand or appreciate him, have covered his memory with infamy. Against them may be placed a contemporary testimony from another source :—"The good and merciful king Yazdagird, the Christian, the blest among kings, whose memory may be a blessing and his future life still more beautiful than his former ; every day he did good to the poor and wretched."[1] This perhaps was written after he had begun to punish the Magi for interfering with the Christians, and before Abdaas, bishop of Ctesiphon, had burnt down, and refused to reinstate, the great Fire-temple of that city[2]—acts that forced Yazdagird's hand and compelled him to allow the Magi to retaliate, which they did in drastic fashion.

§§ 2–5. This account agrees closely with that given in Tabarí,[3] but scarcely can be regarded as historical, being, as Professor Nöldeke says of the latter, too poetically finished.[4]

§ 2. Surúsh is the name of the messenger of Urmuzd, but is used here as a rhyme-word. Hushyár, the name of the other astrologer, means "wise." In Tabarí the astrologers advise the Sháh that Bahrám should be brought up in a foreign land.[5]

Nu'mán was prince of Híra during the reign of Yazdagird and was succeeded by his son Munzir. Firdausí reverses the relationship, Munzir being the more prominent historically of the two. The poet makes him monarch of Yaman.[6]

§ 6. It is highly probable that such a youth as Bahrám did not get on well with his father, and he may have been sent to Híra for a while in semi-disgrace.

The name of the Roman ambassador that pleaded for him—Tainúsh—is a form of Theodosius, the reigning Eastern Roman Emperor at the time—Yazdagird's ward according to the legend.[7]

§ 7. We have here one of the legends localized in Firdausí's own neighbourhood, Sav being the spring of Tús—the poet's birth-place. Similar instances of such localization have occurred

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[1] NT, p. 74, and *notes*. [2] RSM, p. 275. [3] NT, p. 85 *seq*. [4] *Id.*, *note*.
[5] *Id.* p. 86. [6] *Id.*, *note*, and *cf.* p. 387. [7] See p. 371.

already.[1] Tabarí, however, says that Yazdagird's death is supposed to have taken place in Gurgán (Hyrcania or Mázandarán), and omits the details about the presage of the astrologers and the expedition to the spring of Sav. According to Tabarí the horse was sent in answer to the prayers of Yazdagird's oppressed subjects. Professor Nöldeke thinks that conspirators took advantage of the absence of the Sháh in distant Hyrcania to murder him and then, to cover themselves, spread abroad a fiction to account for his end, and that the various stories of the death of this Sháh may be referred to a common origin—the version of the Bástán-náma made by Ibn Mukaffa.[2]

§§ 8–13. This account agrees closely with that of Tabarí.[3] Historically it would appear that Yazdagird, at the time of his death, had another son living—Shápúr—whom he had made king of Armenia some years previously. Shápúr, hearing that his father was in ill-health, returned to court and after Yazdagird's death attempted to seize the throne, but there was another candidate for it whom the nobles preferred, and Shápúr was assassinated. On some of Yazdagird's coins a second name appears, which may be read either as Ardshír or Bahrám.[4] There seems no doubt that Yazdagird had made himself so unpopular with the Persian nobility and clergy that they were anxious that no son of his should succeed him. Bahrám, moreover, was considered probably to be too much under Arab influence as Tabarí expressly states.

§ 10. As soon as Jawánwí sees Bahrám he is conscious that he is in the presence of the rightful Sháh, on whom the divine Grace of kingship already had descended.[5]

§ 12. The selection of a successor to Yazdagird by a process of elimination is not in Tabarí.

We had instances of the mutilation of prisoners in the reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd.[6] It is said too that Alexander the Great, on approaching Persepolis, was met by a band of about 4000 Greek captives whom the Persians had maltreated grievously.[7]

§ 13. Bahrám is said to have been twenty years old at the time of his accession.[8] It was followed by a great persecution of the Christians and war with Rome. He had to put himself right with the Magi and also to find employment for his turbulent chiefs wearied of the political self-restraint of Yazdagird, The Most Peaceful.

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[1] Vols. i. pp. 235, 296; iii.,14; iv. 293; v. 202.
[2] See p. 16, and NT, 77, and *note*.
[3] *Id.* 91 *seq.*
[4] RSM, 277 *seq.*
[5] *Cf.* too pp. 221, 251, 406.
[6] See pp. 323, 334, 348, 357.
[7] HQC, v. 5.
[8] NT, p. 98.

§ 1

How Yazdagird sat upon the Throne and gave a Charge to the Officers

When Yazdagird became the world's great king
He gathered all the soldiers of the realm,
Assumed the crown which once his brother wore,
At whose sad death he joyed, and thus harangued
C. 1461 The notables: "All ye disposed to justice!
Make first your benisons to God, your hearts
All jubilant and laughing through our justice.
I will let not the wicked live who strive
To compass evil. He that cometh to us
For justice shall have rest from fraud and falsehood,
I will increase his state and banish greed
And vengeance from the heart. We will consult
None but the great men and the archimages,
Wise and shrewd-hearted; but the vicious man,
Intoxicate with power, tyrannizing
The helpless, and elated with conceit
Of his own wealth, will we withstand and quell,
But multiply our favours to the poor.
The neck of him that heedeth not our wrath,
And fareth insolently in our eyes,
Is longing for an Indian sword, his body
To pillow in the dust. Scan well our bidding,
And, thus endeavouring, make your breast-plate wisdom."
Thereat the men of mace and scimitar
All shook like willow-trees.
Now when his power
Waxed strong his love waned as his greatness grew;
He scorned the sages and grew negligent
Of royal usages. The governors,

The paladins, the notables, and all
The learned and noble sages, were as wind
To him; his dark soul had grown tyrannous;
Both love and justice ceased within his heart;
He answered no petitions; he misprized
All men alike and paused not on their faults.
All that were at his gate as ministers—
The Lustre of his fortune and his crown—
Agreed to speak not of the land to him,
And all men writhed with fear and died of fright
Because of him. When envoys came, or subjects
That clamoured for redress, a minister,
When notified, would learn their business,
And then with warm and kindly words dismiss
The envoys shamefastly, and say: "The Sháh
Will not transact affairs; ye cannot see him.
I have acquainted him with all your case,
But in his judgments right hath little place!"

§ 2

How Bahrám Gúr, Son of Yazdagird, was born and sent to be brought up by Munzir, the Arab

When of his reign seven years had passed, and all C. 1462
The archmages were in travail and dismay,
In Farwardín, when the eighth year began,
And showed the world the sun which they adored,
Upon Urmuzd's day there was born a child
With good stars and earth-brightening presages.
His sire forthwith gave him the name Bahrám,
Rejoicing in that little one. At court
There were astrologers, for it is well
To hearken to their words. One was a noble
With Grace and sense, an Indian chieftain named
Surúsh, another hight Hushyár, a Persian,

Who by his arts could curb the sky itself.
These prudent seekers of the Way appeared
Before the Sháh at his command. They used
Their astrolabes to take the stars and sought
To read the future with their Rúman tablets.
The stars ordained: "The child will be a king,
Lord of the seven climes, glad-hearted, holy."
They went before the Sháh forthwith and took
Their astrolabes and tablets. Thus they said:—
"We have collected knowledge of all kinds,
And learned that heaven will love this goodly child.
The seven climes will be his realm, and he
Will be a mighty Sháh and worshipful."
As soon as they had left the court, the chiefs,
And ministers, the holy archimages,
Sat and consulted o'er some shift whereby
The babe might favour not his sire but be
A righteous sovereign, "for if he hath
His father's temper he will wreck the realm,
The archimages and the paladins
Will not rejoice, and he will be not glad,
And bright of soul."
Then all the archimages
Approached the Sháh with open, loyal hearts,
And said: "This sprightly babe is far beyond
Reproach and calumny. Now all the world
Is under thy command; the toil and service
Of every clime are thine. Look for some place
Where knowledge is, and its possessors make
c. 1463 Their land rejoice, and choose among the great
Some statist who is lauded in that land,
And let this virtuous prince learn worth from him,
So that the world may joy in his behests."
The Sháh, on hearing this, assembled all
The envoys of his realm and sent them forth
To Rúm, to Hind, to Chín, and other lands

Inhabited. A chief, too, went among
The Arabs to discern if they would prove
A gain or loss. To every quarter fared
A crier seeking one to educate
Bahrám, some man of eloquence and learning,
Accomplishment and knowledge; so there came
From every clime an archmage wise, advised,
And fortunate, and, as they reached the court,
Each sought for that appointment from the Sháh,
Who, after welcoming them graciously,
Assigned to each a lodging in the city.
Thus on a night Nu'mán came with Munzir,
And likewise many famous Arab spearmen.

When all these chiefs had gathered thus in Párs
They came to Yazdagird, the king, and said:—
"We are thy slaves to hear and answer thee.
Who of these nobles is so fortunate
As to embrace the world-lord's precious child,
To be his teacher, and to cause the light
To shine upon the darkness of his heart?
We out of Rúm and Hindústán and Párs,
Geometricians and astrologers,
Philosophers and men exceeding wise,
Men of affairs and rhetoricians,
Are all of us the dust upon thy feet,
And all thy guides to knowledge. See thou then
Which one among us is approved by thee,
And which of us will profit thee the most."

Then spake Munzir on this wise: "We are slaves
Who only live in this world for the Sháh.
He knoweth all the worth of us, for he
Is as the shepherd, we are as the flock.
Bold, riders we, adept in horsemanship,
More than a match for sages. We possess
No readers of the stars in figures versed,
But we have minds devoted to the realm,

And in this matter we are strong, O Sháh!
Moreover we are slaves before thy son,
And sing the praises of his majesty."
When Yazdagird had heard he summoned up
His spirits and his wisdom, and, perceiving
From such an outset what would be the outcome,
Consigned Bahrám, the precious, to Munzir,
For whom, for so the Sháh bade, they prepared
A robe of honour and exalted sky-ward
C. 1464 His head. They robed his person and then called
The charger of the monarch of Yaman.
Then plain-ward from the hall of Yazdagird
Went camels, horses, litters, slaves, and nurses,
Past count, and stretched from palace to bázár.
The road through the bázárs were draped with hangings,
And all was decked from city-gate to court.
Now when Munzir approached Yaman the men
And women all went out to welcome him.
Or ever he reached home he 'gan to seek
For many women of illustrious birth,
And made his choice among the landed folk
Of Persian race, among the Arabians,
Among the wealthy, great, and eminent,
And chose four ladies—two of Arab stock
And two of royal Persian—whose high strain
Was manifest in their accomplishment,
To serve as nurses.[1] Thus they tended him
Four years. When he had had his fill of suckling,
And grew apace, they weaned him, which was hard
To do, and reared him delicately. At seven
What said he to Munzir in princely fashion?
"Great chief! make me not out a babe unweaned!
Entrust me unto tutors that are learned,
My time is being wasted; scorn me not."
Munzir replied: "Not yet, O prince! hast thou

[1] Reading with P.

A need for knowledge. When that time shall come,
And thou hast grown solicitous to learn,
I will not leave thee playing in the house:
But playing is the thing to make thee grow."
Bahrám rejoined: "Make me not out to be
An idle child for, though my years are few,
And though my neck and chest are not yet those
Of warriors, I have wisdom. As for thee,
Thou hast small wisdom though thou hast the years.
I am not as thou deemest. Know'st thou not
That one in quest of opportunities
Will start with matters that concern him most?
To seek twice is to sacrifice one's prospects.
What is ill-timed is fruitless. Of man's body
The head is chief, and thou shouldst have me taught
What the great king should know. The first thing needful
Is knowledge since it is the head of right,
And blest is he that from the first ensueth
His proper end."
Munzir scanned him with wonder,
Invoking God beneath his breath, and sent
Upon a dromedary to Shúrsán
A chief forthwith who found three archimages,
Accomplished men and well reputed there.
One was to teach the young prince penmanship, C. 1465
And lighten the dark places in his heart;
The second to instruct him in the use
Of hawk and cheetah for his recreation,
As well as polo, archery, swordmanship
Against the foeman, how to rein his steed,
And to exalt himself among the brave;
The third to inculcate the arts of kingship,
The style and business of administration,
And everything that he should bear in mind.[1]

[1] "As well as . . . . . in mind," following the readings and arrangement of P.

When these archmages came before Munzir
They held much talk with him, and in their charge
He placed the prince, because Munzir himself
Was both a scholar and a warrior.
Bahrám, that seed of kings, grew so adept
That he was competent to play the man,
And when he heard of new accomplishments
He longed to learn them. When he was eighteen
The valiant warrior was like the sun;
He needed not archmages to instruct him
In erudition, how to play at polo,
In manage of the cheetah and the hawk,
To wheel a steed upon the battlefield,
And charge. Thus said he to Munzir: "O man
Of honest rede! send these professors home."
Thereat Munzir bestowed great gifts upon them,
And they returned rejoicing. Then the prince
Said to Munzir: "Call for the spearmen's steeds,
And bid the cavaliers to wheel before me,
To couch their lances, and then name the price
Of what I fancy; I will better it."
Munzir said: "O accomplished atheling!
The keeper of my steeds is thine to bid,
The master of the horse is all thine own;
Why should I toil and trouble for such things
If thou art forced to purchase Arab steeds?"
Bahrám replied: "O famous one! may all
Thy years be satisfied with good. I want
A steed that I may spur adown the height,
And never draw the bridle in alarm,
Then, having rendered him so sure of foot,
Cause him to vie with winds upon the course,
Because one should not press a beast untried."
Munzir then bade Nu'mán: "Go thou and choose
A drove of our own valiant herdsmen's horses;
Go round the desert of the spearmen, see

What chargers thou canst get."
He hurried forth,
Chose, and produced a hundred warriors' mounts.
Bahrám, on seeing them, went on the plain, C. 1466
And wheeled about upon them for a while,
But every steed, albeit fleet as wind,
Possessed no wings when ridden by Bahrám.
At length he chose a chestnut broad of breast,
With feet like wind, and, of another brand,
A bay. Thou wouldst have said: "A crocodile
Hath come forth from the deep!" His shoes flashed fire,
And from his ruddy breast fell drops of blood.
Munzir paid for the two what they were worth
(The wood of Kúfa was their native place)
And bold Bahrám accepted the two steeds,
Bright as Ázargashasp, and guarded them,
Like some fresh apple, lest a blast should harm.
One day the young prince spake thus to Munzir:—
"O man of understanding, bright of mind!
Thou hast no pretext for thus keeping me,
Not sparing me a moment from thy sight.
There is a secret impulse in the hearts
Of all that thou beholdest. As grief paleth,
So pleasure greateneth, a man. In short
Some fair-faced damsel will increase my joy,
For woman is the solace of our pains.
In woman doth a young man find repose,
Be he a monarch or a paladin;
She is his guide to Faith and to all good.
Command to have some damsels brought to me,
Some five or six, like suns and full of charm.
Perchance, when I have chosen one or two,
My thoughts will fix on justice and the Faith.
It may be too that I shall have a child
To ease my heart, the world-lord will approve me,

And I shall have the praise of every one."
On hearing such words from the youth, Munzir
The agéd, blessed him and then bade a man [1]
To make all haste to the slave-dealer's shop
Upon that quest, who brought out forty damsels
Of Rúm, all fit to please and soothe the heart,
As tall in stature as a cypress-tree,
All objects of desire, of charm, and grace.
Bahrám chose two, among those rosy-cheeked,
With rosy skins and bones of ivory.
One of these Stars could play upon the lute,
The other with her cheeks all tulip-like
Was as Canopus of Yaman, in height
A cypress, and with tresses lasso-wise.
Munzir paid for them when they were approved.
With cheeks bright as the gem of Badakhshán [2]
Bahrám gave thanks with smiles upon his face,
And spent his days at polo and the chace.

§ 3

How Bahrám went to the Chase with a Damsel and how he displayed his Accomplishment

C. 1467 It happened that one day without attendance
Bahrám went with the lutist to the chase.
Ázáda was the Rúman damsel's name;
Her cheeks were coral-hued. Bahrám had mounted
A dromedary with the noble [3] Cypress,
Who had her lute in hand. She was his charmer,
His love; her name was ever on his lips.
For such occasions he required a camel,
And set thereon a housing of brocade,
While from it hung four stirrups. Thus he pricked

[1] Reading with P.
[2] The ruby.
[3] Ázáda, to pun on the girl's name.

O'er hill and dale. Two stirrups were of silver,
Two were of gold, and all were set with jewels,
And furthermore he had beneath his quiver
A stone-bow; that brave youth was all-accomplished.
He came upon a pair of deer and laughing
Said to Ázáda: "O my Moon! when I
Have strung my bow and in my thumb-stall notched
The string, which shall I shoot? The doe is young,
Her mate is old."
She said: "O lion-man!
Men do not fight with deer. Make with thine arrows
The female male, the agéd buck a doe,
Then urge the dromedary to its speed,
And, as the deer are fleeing from thy shafts,
Aim with thy cross-bow at one creature's ear
That it may lay its ear upon its neck,
And when the beast shall raise its foot to scratch
The ear that hath been tickled though not hurt,
Pin with one arrow head and ear and foot
Together if thou wouldest have me call thee
'The Lustre of the world.'"
Bahrám Gúr[1] set
The string upon his bow and caused commotion
Upon that quiet plain. Within his quiver
He had a double-headed shaft for use
While hunting on the waste and, when the deer
Sped off, he shot the buck's two horns away
Much to the girl's amaze. Forthwith the sportsman
Shot two shafts at the doe which struck her head
Just where the horns should be and furnished her
Therewith. Her breast grew red with blood. He rode
Toward her mate again, set in his stone-bow
A bolt, hit the buck's ear, and was well pleased, C. 1468
For he had aimed thereat. The creature scratched

[1] The first occurrence of his full title—"Onager Bahrám"—as we might say "Buffalo Bill."

Its ear. Forthwith within his bow of Chách
He set an arrow and pinned head and ear
And foot together; but Ázáda's heart
Was vexed about the deer, and when the prince
Said: "When I hunt I bring them down by thousands
Thus," she replied: "Thou art an Áhriman,
Else how canst thou shoot thus?" [1]
Bahrám stretched out,
Flung her from saddle headlong to the ground,
And made his dromedary trample her,
Besmearing hands and breast and lute with blood.
He said to her: "O thou lute-playing fool!
Why shouldst thou seek for my discomfiture?
If I had drawn mine arms apart in vain
My race had been dishonoured by the shot."
When he had trampled her beneath his camel
He never more took damsels to the chase.[2]
Next se'nnight with a noble troop he went
Forth to the hunting-ground with hawk and cheetah,
And near a mountain saw a lion that tore
An onager's flanks. Impetuously he strung
His bow and notched therein a shaft three-feathered,
Then pinned both preyer's back and heart of prey
That underneath the blood-stained lion lay!

§ 4

How Bahrám showed his Accomplishment in the Chase before Munzir

Another week Nu'mán went with Munzir
To be Bahrám's companion in the chase,

[1] Reading with T.

[2] Bahrám's feelings, though the outcome of them is more tragic, are somewhat like those of De Lorge in Browning's poem "The Glove," and Ázáda, when she sought to shame Bahrám by setting him what she intended to be an impossible task, had not the excuse that the English poet ingeniously puts into the mouth of the French lady.

And took withal some Arab men of name
As judges of his failure or success.
Munzir desired Bahrám Gúr to display
His horsemanship and strength before these men.
Anon a flock of ostriches appeared,
Each running like a dromedary loose.
On seeing them Bahrám Gúr rushed like wind.
He handled smilingly his bow and stuck
Four poplar arrows in his belt. He laid
The arrows in his bow successively
To slay those birds, and pierced in sportsman's fashion
Their plumes. No arrow by a needle's breadth
Was lower than another, none more high,
And, when the nobles went to see the outcome,
They found the horseman's shots true to a hair,
Whereat Munzir called blessings down on him,
As did the other spear-armed warriors.
Munzir said: "O my king! I joy o'er thee C. 1469
As roses joy o'er springtide. May thy Moon
Ne'er wane, thy girdlestead be weakened never."
Munzir, returning to his palace, held
Bahrám Gúr high as Saturn. Many a painter
He sought for in Yaman, and all the best
Assembled at his court. He bade them limn
On silk a picture of Bahrám Gúr shooting.
They drew with ink thereon a cavalier
To represent him, thews and all, as seated
On his tall camel, shooting wondrously;
The stone-bow, lion, deer, and onager;
His breast expanded, all his markmanship,
And strength; the ostriches, the wilderness,
And impact of the arrow. Then Munzir
Dispatched a cavalier to bear the picture
To Yazdagird, and all the host assembled
At that communication. In amaze
The chiefs all called down praises on Bahrám.

Thenceforth, whenever he did anything
Of note, they sent it pictured to the king.

§ 5

How Bahrám came with Nu'mán to Yazdagird

The Sháh was eager to behold Bahrám—
Bahrám? Nay rather an imperious Sun!
That Lion said thus to Munzir: "Albeit
I could abide however long with thee
My father's wish inciteth me to go,
And, since I shall be safe, mine own heart urgeth."
Munzir prepared whatever was required—
Gifts from Yaman, exceeding all compute,
As Arab steeds with golden furniture,
And other things of noted costliness,
Striped cloth, and falchions, of Yaman, and what
The mines afforded in 'Adan. Nu'mán,
Who was in favour at the Persian court,
Went with Bahrám, conversing of the Sháhs,
Until they reached Istakhr. When tidings came
About the Sháh's son and Nu'mán the Arab,
The archimages and shrewd-hearted sages
Went from the court to meet them. When the Sháh
Saw from afar Bahrám, his Grace, his limbs,
And girth, he stood amazed at seeing him
So tall, well trained, and fair to look upon,
Received him well and lodged him near at hand.
C. 1470 He chose Nu'mán a dwelling in the city,
And for the prince a palace as was meet,
Supplying him with handmaids and with slaves
Befitting his degree. The son attended
His sire by night and day, and had not time
To rub his head. Nu'mán abode a month,
And then requested licence to depart.

The monarch summoned him by night, then set him
Upon the throne, and said: "Munzir hath seen
Much toil in fostering high-born Bahrám,
And I must make him a return therefor,
For your esteem is as Urmuzd to me.
I laud the weighty counsels of Munzir,
For he inclineth, as I see, to wisdom;
Still, while thou tarriest at our court, I trow
That he is looking for thee on the road."
Then of dínárs out of the treasury
They gave him fifty thousand with king's raiment,
And from the stalls ten steeds that bore a name,
With gold and silver trappings, gave withal
Slaves, carpetings, perfumes, and coloured stuffs,
And goods of all kinds. These Mihrán produced
Out of the world-lord's treasures and bestowed them
All on Nu'mán, son of Munzir. He opened
The door of largess gladly to bestow
Upon Nu'mán's companions fitting gifts.
The Sháh then wrote a letter to Munzir,
A letter that was worthy of the state,
With thanks for his entreatment of the prince,
Whose love the monarch of Yaman had gained:—
I will endeavour to repay thy deeds;
Mine own head is exalt by such a son."
Bahrám Gúr wrote: "My lot here is not happy.
It was not what I hoped for from the Sháh
That he should look upon his subject thus.
I am not here as either son or servant,
Or, like a younger brother, light of heart." [1]
He told Nu'mán, what had been hidden from him,
The evil ways and customs of the world-lord.
Nu'mán, when he had left the royal court,
Came to renowned Munzir and gave to him
The world's king's letter which, when he had kissed,

[1] Or "Or as a liege glad-hearted at a court."

He laid upon his head, joyed at those gifts,
And multiplied his praises. Afterward
The envoy spake in private to Munzir
At large about Bahrám Gúr. When the scribe
Had read the other letter out to him
His visage grew like gall. He wrote forthwith
An answer full of good advice: "Famed prince!
See that thou turn not from thy father's way.
C. 1471 Approve both good and evil from the Sháh,
Be wise and serve. When princes are submiss
Ills pass. Men's heads have need to compass wisdom.
'Tis all the doing of the circling sky,
And we are impotent. It hath a heart
All love, a heart all hate, a face all frowns.
The Master of the world hath framed it so,
And we must be disposed as He disposeth.
Henceforth I will dispatch to thee dínárs,
And royal gems, according to thy needs.
Let not thy heart be troubled, for thy trouble
Importeth more to me than heaped up treasure.
Lo! now by way of offering I send
Five hundred score dínárs and lo! withal
The handmaid that was erst thy confidant,
And thine own heart's delight behind thy curtains,
To brighten thy dark soul. When thou hast spent
All these dínárs lean not upon the king,
For I will send to thee still many more,
And things of all descriptions from this realm;
But do thy service, utter words of praise,
And serve with an increasing instancy,
For e'en in thought thou canst not separate
Ill temper and the monarch of the world."
He sent off ten Arabian cavaliers—
Men who were loyal, shrewd, and eloquent.
They came to prince Bahrám with sacks of coin,
And with his loyal slave-girl. Wise Bahrám

Rejoiced thereat, his sorrows turned to wind,
And thenceforth, as Munzir advised was right,
He failed not in attendance day and night.

§ 6

How Yazdagird put Bahrám in Bonds, how he escaped by the good Offices of Tainúsh, and how he returned to Munzir

It chanced that in the banquet-hall one day
Bahrám was in attendance on the Sháh;
That night came on and he was wearied out
By standing long and could not keep awake.
His father, seeing that his eyes were closed,
Cried violently in an angry voice,
And bade an executioner: "Arrest him.
Henceforth he shall not look on crown and girdle.
Ward him within this house and then return.
He graceth not this place of fame and fight."
Within the palace, with a broken heart,
That year he looked not on his father's face
Save on Naurúz and at the Sada feast C. 1472
When he drew near among the other nobles.
It happened that Tainúsh, the Rúman, came
As envoy to the Sháh with purses, slaves,
And with the tribute sent from Rúm by Cæsar.
The king of kings received him graciously,
And lodged him worthily. Bahrám dispatched
This message to him: "Shrewd and potent man!
No grievance hath the Sháh against his subject,
Yet guiltless I am banished from him thus!
Ask him to grant me pardon for thy sake,
That so my withered fortunes may revive,
And send me to my fosterers:[1] Munzir

[1] Reading with P.

Was more to me than mother and than father."
Tainúsh gave ear, accomplished his desire,
And made Bahrám's afflicted heart rejoice.
He was released from his degrading bonds,
Bestowed much largess on the mendicants,
And gat him ready to depart in haste.
He called his followers and, when the night
Was dark, led forth the company like wind,
Exclaiming to his friends: "Thanks be to God
For our escape and safety from distress."
When he came near the monarch of Yaman,
Men, women, children, went to welcome him;
So did Nu'mán, so did Munzir, so did
Their honest spearmen. As Munzir drew nigh
Bahrám the day was darkened with the dust
Of troops, both chiefs dismounted, and Bahrám
Detailed his sufferings whereat Munzir
Wept much, and said: "What is the Sháh's star then,
For ne'er he walketh in the way of wisdom?
I fear that he will suffer for his deeds."
Bahrám said: "Never may the Sháh himself
Grow conscious even of his own ill star!"
Munzir received him then and there as guest,
And heaped new benefits upon the old.
Bahrám Gúr's whole employ was banqueting,
Disporting on the riding ground, gift-giving,
And combating. Thenceforth the grief and joy
Of Yazdagird were to his son but breezes
Upon the day of Ard.[1] Time passed. Bahrám
Was glad in hall and glorious on the waste.
Now Yazdagird, concerned about the realm,
Assembled archimages from all quarters,
And bade the readers of the stars discover
How he would die and darkness whelm his head,
And, when this happened, where his royal cheeks

[1] One of the lucky days.

Would wither. They replied: "Let not the Sháh C. 1473
Take thought of death, but when the royal fortune
Shall founder he will seek the spring of Sav,
Take thither with him troops with trump and drum,
And set out joyfully to visit Tús.
That is the place wherein the Sháh will die.
Of such a day as that his ear hath heard not,
And pondering such knowledge is not good;
It is a secret veiled by God Himself."
The Sháh, on hearing this, swore by Kharrád,
And by Barzin, and by the yellow sun:—
"I will not, whether I be glad or wroth,
Behold the spring of Sav."
Three month rolled by,
And then the Sháh's blood caused the age concern.
One day his nostrils bled, and leeches came
From every quarter to advise thereon;
They made a shift the bleeding to restrain
One week with drugs, then it began again.

§ 7

How Yazdagird, by the Advice of an Archmage, went to the Spring of Sav and was killed by a Water-horse

An archmage said to him: "Thou hast, O king!
Departed from the ways of Providence.
Thou said'st: 'I will escape the hand of death!'
But where is death not alway in full leaf?
The course for thee is this: by way of Shahd
Go in a litter to the spring of Sav,
There make thy prayer before all-holy God,
Go in abasement round that burning soil,
And say thus: 'I, a feeble slave, whose oath
Hath set a snare before his soul, have come
Now to inquire how long I have to live,

O righteous Judge!'"

The Sháh approved thereof
As helpful to his anguish, had brought forth
Three hundred litters, and, thus borne, proceeded
Toward the river Shahd both night and day
Post haste, his nostrils bleeding still at whiles.
As soon as he had reached the spring of Sav
He left his litter, gazed upon the stream,
Poured somewhat of the water on his head,
And called on God, the Giver of all good.
Anon the bleeding ceased. He ate and rested
Among his counsellors, grew proud, and said:—
"This was the course! Why need I tarry longer?"
Now when the Sháh in his conceit imagined
That he had wrought the cure upon himself,
A white steed issued from the stream, with buttocks
Round like an onager's, and short of leg.
C. 1474 It pranced and seemed as 'twere an angry lion;
'Twas stately, black of belly, raven-eyed;
It had a trailing tail, a crest, and mane,
Black hoofs, and foamed; it was a lion-slayer.
Thus to his chiefs said Yazdagird: "Let troops
Encircle it."

The herdsman with the help
Of ten rough-riders hemmed it in and took
A saddle and a lengthy coiled up lasso.
How could the Sháh wot of the World-lord's purpose
In bringing him that dragon of a steed?
It foiled alike the herdsman and the troops,
Whereat the monarch was exceeding wroth,
And taking up the saddle and the reins
Drew near the horse exultingly which proved
So docile that it did not stir a foot.
The monarch took the bridle from the herdsman,
And gently put the saddle on the mount.
He girthed it. That fleet Crocodile stood stirless.

He went to put the crupper on. That charger,
Flint-hooféd, neighed and kicked him on the head!
His head and crown descended to the dust.
  The dust received him and the dust begot.
From yon seven heavens on high what wouldst thou
    ask?
  Their revolution thou escapest not;
To pay them worship is a fruitless task.
Incline to God—the Master of the sky,
Of sun, and moon—to Him for refuge fly.
  The water-horse, when Yazdagird was slain,
Returned like flying dust to that blue spring,
And vanished 'neath the surface! None e'er looked
On such another marvel. Like a drum-roll
Rose from the host a shout: "O Sháh! thy fate
Led thee to Tús."
                The chieftains rent their clothes,
And flung dust on their heads. The archimages
Then oped the head and body of the Sháh,
Embalmed them both with musk and camphor, wrapped
The dry corpse in brocade, draped therewithal
His shining breast, and set upon his head
A crown of musk. Then on a bier of gold,
And on a teaken litter, he departed
Unthroned and crownless back again to Párs.
  Thus is it with this Wayside Hostelry!
Will peace, though thou ensue it, come to thee?
Though meek thyself, the world is unrestrained;
So having eaten let the cup be drained.
Religion is a better thing than sin
For one that hath the power to walk therein.

§ 8

How the Íránians took Counsel and placed Khusrau upon the Throne

C. 1475 Now when the monarch of the world was buried,
And from Írán the chieftains came in tears—
Archmages, governors, and paladins,
With prudent ministers, men shrewd of heart—
All met in Párs and gathered round his charnel,
As Gustaham, who rode down elephants,
And slaughtered them, Káran the warrior,
Son of Gashasp, Mílád, Árash the marchlord,
Parwíz the horseman of Gurzbán, and others.
Withal too those in hiding in Írán—
The great men and the leaders of the world,
Whom Yazdagird was wonted to abase—
Assembled in the city, and Gashasp,
The scribe—a man of eloquence—thus spake:—
"Ye nobles young and old! since God created
The world none hath beheld a king like this,
Who knew but how to slaughter and contemn,
To cause distress and travail, and withhold
His counsel and his treasure from his subjects,
Respecting none and setting all at odds.
No man hath seen a fouler Sháh or heard
Of one among the paladins of yore.
We want no more of this race on the throne,
And cry against his very dust to God.
Illustrious Bahrám is his own son,
His very kin in purpose, heart, and brain.
His talk is all Munzir. We will not have
A tyrant on the throne."
Then all that were
Chiefs in Írán swore mighty oaths and said:—

"We will not have another of this race
As king of kings with crown and throne of might."
That done, they rose and sought another Sháh.
When tidings of the death of Yazdagird
Spread 'mongst the chiefs—the monarch of the Aláns,
The paladin of Párs, Bíward, Shikbán,
The warrior of the world, Bihzád who had
Barzín to sire and was of Rustam's race,
And Sám the hero sprung from Kai Kubád—
All said: "The sovereignty is mine from earth
To Pisces," and the whole world was fulfilled
With tumult, for the head that wore the crown
Had vanished from the throne. Then in Írán
Chief, paladin, and archmage, all that were
Of ardent soul, met to debate in Párs:—
"Who is there worthy of the throne of kings? C. 1476
Consider who can enter on the work.
We see not any one, approved by God,
To wear the golden girdle on the throne,
And to allay the troubles of the time:
A kingless world is but a pasturage."
There was an ancient man, by name Khusrau,
Of generous instincts, masterful, and ardent.
Moreover he was born of noble race,
And one among the wealthy of the land.[1]
The nobles gave to him the crown and state,
And troops from all sides gathered at his gate.

§ 9

How Bahrám Gúr heard of the Death of his Father and invaded Írán

Thereafter to Bahrám Gúr tidings came:—
"Heaven hath apportioned to thy sire the grave;

[1] Reading with P and T.

Thy father, eminent midst kings, is dead,
And ta'en with him the name of sovereignty;
They have enthroned another and acclaimed him
As monarch by the title of Khusrau.
The warriors have bound themselves by oaths:—
'We will not have a monarch of the race
Because Bahrám, the son, is like the sire,
And, skin and marrow, of his father's seed.'"
Báhrám Gúr, when he heard it, tore his cheeks,
So troubled was he at his father's death,
And for two se'nnights went up from Yaman
Wails from child, man, and woman. When Bahrám
Had sorrowed for a month he graced the throne.
Nu'mán drew near together with Munzir,
And Arabs of Yaman both great and small,
All shedding tears of sorrow with their Sháh,
While anguish wrought on them the effects of fire.
Then setting loose their tongues they counselled thus:—
"O virtuous and most exalted prince!
We came to this world to be turned to dust,
Came not in quest of any remedy.
All mother-born will die, and to God's justice
We must resign our hearts."
Bahrám Gúr said
Thus to Munzir: "Already is the water
"Grown brackish in our stream! What time my race
Shall lose its royal title it will lose
Its Grace divine, men will send up in dust
The desert of the horsemen and convert
The country of the Arabs to a ditch.
Consider well, assist me, and deplore
My father's death."
Munzir gave ear and answered
Right manfully: "This is my chance and this
C. 1477 My hunt-day on the waste. Sit on the throne,
Observe, and wear through all thy years the crown,

And bracelet."

All the chiefs approved the course
Suggested by Nu'mán and by Munzir:
They left the presence and prepared for war.
Munzir gave orders to Nu'mán and said:—
"Go gather our brave Lions in a host—
Two thousand of Shíbán, ten of Kibtís,[1]
All dight for battle. I will show the Íránians
Who is the Sháh with treasure, crown, and troops!"
Nu'mán assembled him a mighty power
Of swordsmen and of spearmen, bade them raid,
And trample down the realm. To Taisafún
All the salt desert route shook with their hoofs,
The women and the children were made captive,
There was no helper, and the world was full
Of fire and harrying since the imperial throne
Was impotent. News came to Rúm and Chín,
To Turkistán, to Hind, and to Makrán:—
"The Íránian throne is void, and none is fit
To rule," and all made ready, in despite
Of justice, to invade the land. They all
Stretched out their hands toward the Íránian throne,
And rose to claim the empire for their own.

§ 10

How the Íránians heard of Bahrám's Pillaging and wrote to Munzir, and how he replied

The Íránians heard and sought a remedy.
Distracted by their woes they met, and said:—
"These Rúmans, Indians, and desert-horsemen
Have passed all bounds! We must adopt some means
To rid our hearts and souls of this distress."
They chose a noble envoy shrewd and fluent,

[1] *I.e.* Copts.

A warrior hight Jawánwí, a scribe,
A man of high degree and eloquence,
To go to parley with Munzir and say:—
"O noble lord! the world doth need thy name.
C. 1478 Thou watchest o'er Írán and o'er Túrán,
And thou art everywhere the warriors' stay.
What time this throne grew void of Sháh and crown,
And when the marches of our land with blood
Were like the plumage of the francolin,
We said that thou wouldst rule our coasts, for they
Were worthy of thee. Now thou raidest us,
And sheddest blood with rapine and contention
On every side! Thou used'st not to be
An evildoer and wast wont to fear
Reproach and malison. Consider now
If this doth please thee and doth benefit
Thee with thy hoary head. There is a Judge
Besides thyself, One higher than all thought.
The envoy will narrate what he hath seen,
Or heard from persons in authority."

Wise Jawánwí went from the chieftain's presence,
He journeyed toward the desert of the spearmen,
Spake with Munzir, and gave him the dispatch.
The Arab chief made no reply thereto,
But said to him: "Wise seeker of the way!
Repeat the matter to the king of kings,
Repeat what thou hast said to Sháh Bahrám,
And, when thou seekest for an answer, he
Will point thee out the way."

He sent a chief
With Jawánwí who reached the monarch's gate.
That man of knowledge, when he saw Bahrám,
Invoked God's blessing on the Sháh whose breast,
Whose stature, and whose limbs astonished him,
Shrewd-hearted though he was: "Thou wouldest say
That wine distilleth from his face, the scent

Of musk exhaleth from his hair!"
That man
Of eloquence grew void of Grace and sense,
And utterly forgot his embassage!
Bahrám Gúr, noting his amaze, and how
The spectacle bedimmed his eyes and heart,
Much greeted him, showed him all courtesy,
And set him graciously upon the throne.
Now when the envoy seemed at ease the Sháh
Asked: "Wherefore hast thou toiled thus from Írán?
Hereafter thou shalt have the fruit of toil,
And well filled treasury, from us."
He sent
A sage to take him to Munzir and say:—
"Write thou an answer and indite fair words.
See if the envoy hath a verbal message,
And, if so, hear it and reply at large."
Came Jawánwí and spake, at whose wise speech
Munzir's cheek flushed; he heard that shrewd one out,
Prepared to make his answer to the letter,
And said to Jawánwí: "O full of wisdom!
All that do ill will smart therefor. Now I
Have heard thy message and the nobles' greeting. C. 1479
Say thus: 'Who was the first to cause the ill?
Who needs must seek this senseless feud? Bahrám Gúr,
The king of kings, with stature, Grace, and host,
Is with us here, and they who draw the snake
Out of its hole will trail their skirts in blood.
Albeit, were I to advise, no harm
Would come upon the Íránians.'"
Jawánwí
Had seen and hearkened to the king of kings,
Had questioned him to see if he was fit
For throne and greatness, fortune and success,
And, as he listened to Munzir, conceived
A brilliant notion, and replied: "Great sir,

Who needest not the wits of other men!
If wisdom failed the Íránians, many a chief
Among them hath been slain through that defect.
Now I, old as I am, still seek for fame,
And I will speak if thou wilt hear. Our land
We gladly yield to thee and brave Bahrám,
The king of kings. With hawk and cheetah make
A royal progress in Írán to hear
What folk will say: no harm will come of it.
Speak too whate'er is right. The sage will best
The fool. Forgo all mischievous intent,
And shrink not at reproach and calumny."
Munzir, on hearing, gave him gifts and sent
Him home from that fair country, well content.

§ 11

How Bahrám Gúr arrived at Jahram with the Host of Munzir, and how the Íránians went out to him

Munzir, Bahrám Gúr, and the counsellors
All met in privy conclave and resolved
To march upon Írán. Munzir made choice
Of thirty thousand warlike Arab spearmen,
Gave ample pay, and filled the chieftains' heads
With vapouring.[1] As tidings reached Írán
Of these things Jawánwí himself returned,
And all the potentates, in deep concern,
Betook them to the Fire-fane of Barzín,
And prayed to God to change their strife to joy
And feasting.
C. 1480 When Munzir had led his troops
Across the unwatered waste, and reached Jahram,
Great Sháh Bahrám Gúr pitched his camp-enclosure.
His troops surrounded it, and to Munzir

[1] Reading with P and T.

He spake thus: "From the country of Yaman
Thou hast come to Jahram, my counsellor!
Which shall it be, when host confronteth host,
A fight or parley?"
Said Munzir: "Invite
The chiefs and, on their coming, spread the board,
And speak with them. When any are provoked
So be not thou, and we shall learn whom they
Are fain to hail as monarch of the world.
That known, we will take order and avoid
Strife if soft means suffice. If they seek war,
Turn, and display the bearing of a pard,
Then will I make this desert of Jahram
As 'twere a sea,[1] and turn the shining sun
To Pleiades. I wot when folk behold
Thy stature, mien, and lovingkindliness,
Thy wisdom, counsel, and initiative,
Thy gravity, thy knowledge, and thy patience,
That they will want none else to have the crown,
The throne, the fortune, and the pageantry;
But if they err, and wish to take away
The throne from thee, then will I with these horsemen,
And our sharp swords, bring Doomsday on the world;
Then shalt thou see me frown, and may my soul
And body be thy ransom. When they mark
My countless troops, the order that I take,
Our deeds of blood, that God is our ally,
And that the realm is thine inheritance
By right established through a long descent,
They will acclaim as Sháh none save thyself
As fit for crown and to adorn the throne."
The Sháh heard smiling; his heart throbbed with joy.
Now when the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops
The mighty men and nobles of Írán

[1] "*de sang*" (Mohl).

Made ready to go forth to meet Bahrám Gúr
The sages were convoked, an ivory throne
Was set up for the prince, and he assumed
The glorious crown, and ordered all his court
According to the use of king of kings,
Because he was the monarch of the world.
On one hand sat Munzir and on the other
Nu'mán with sword in hand, while all about
The tent-enclosure there were warriors,
But none that was not on the Arab side.
Then those Íránians that were loyalists
Came to the antechamber of the Sháh,
C. 1481 Who had the curtain lifted and the names
Of those that entered called out at the door.
They came before the presence of Bahrám Gúr,
The Sháh, beheld a splendid crown and throne,
And shouted, saying: "Mayst thou live for ever;
Far from thee ever be the evil eye."
The king of kings received them graciously,
And ranked them every one in his degree.

§ 12

How Bahrám Gúr harangued the Iránians as to his Fitness to rule, how they rejected him but promised him the Kingship if he would take the Crown from between the Lions[1]

Bahrám said: "Princes, old, experienced chiefs!
The kingship is mine own by long descent.
Why this to-do of yours?"
"Expect us not,"
The Íránians shouted, "to endure more loss!
Not one of us will have thee as the Sháh.
Thou hast an army, but the land is ours.
Thy race hath caused us anguish, toil, and woe;
By night and day we writhe and heave cold sighs."

[1] This heading combines those of two sections in C.

Bahrám thus answered: "Yea, 'tis true, for passion
Is king of every heart. If ye reject
Me, why thus seat another in my room
Without consulting me?"
An archmage said:—
"None, whether he be prince by birth or subject,
May shun the path of justice. Join with us,
And choose a Sháh that every one will bless."
They spent three days upon the task of choosing
A monarch from Írán, and then wrote down
A hundred nobles' names—fit Lustres all
For crown and throne and belt. Bahrám Gúr's name
Was one of them because he charmed the realm.
They cautiously and anxiously reduced
The hundred names to fifty, and of these
Bahrám's name stood the first, who, if he sought
His sire's place, sought but justice. Of the fifty
They wrote down thirty, and they were the choicest,
Most famous, and most potent of Írán.
Bahrám amongst the thirty led again
Because he was a prince—the destined Sháh.
The wise archmages brought the thirty down
To four, of whom Bahrám was leader still.
When the decisive moment was at hand
The Íránian ancients said: "We will not have
Bahrám who is too headstrong and self-willed,
Though brave."
An outcry rose among the chiefs,
The hearts of all were darkened, and Munzir
Addressed the Íránians thus: "I fain would know,
For good or ill, why ye are full of pain, C 1482
And stricken in your souls, about the Sháh
In his untime-worn youth? In excellence
No king on earth can match him, and in looks
No moon in heaven. His poplar shafts pierce anvils,
While with his strength he can uproot a mountain.

Though still a youth he is a sage in counsel,
Well skilled, with bright heart and retentive mind."
The chiefs, by way of answering him, sought out
Full many a stricken Persian, and assembled
Out of Írán upon that plain all those
That Yazdagird had maimed. One still survived
Lopped hand and foot but still intact of trunk;
Another had lost ears and hands and tongue,
And seemed a lifeless body, while another
Had lost both shoulders, and Nu'mán was all
Astound at those maimed forms. The eyes of one
Had been dug out with nails, and when Munzir
Beheld that sight his anger rose. Bahrám
Was sorely grieved, invoked his father's dust,
And cried: "O hapless one! why didst thou close
The eyes of thine own joy and burn thy soul
In fire?"
Munzir the aspiring said to him:—
"We cannot blink such evil. Thou hast heard
What they have had to say, now answer them,
For kings should not be at a loss."
Bahrám
Then spake on this wise: "Chiefs and veterans!
Ye all said sooth, and this is even worse!
Well may I blame my sire since I myself
Have had a sample, for he darkened all
My fine resolves: his palace was my prison.
When God had mercy, and Tainúsh released me
Out of the clutches of my sire, his hook
Had pierced me to the soul, for which cause I
Took shelter with Munzir, because I never
Saw kindness from the Sháh. May none possess
His temper, for the man is lost that lacketh
Humanity. Now I, thanks be to God,
Have wisdom, my soul eateth of its fruits,
And to this present I have prayed to Him

To be my guide to good that I might purge
My heart and spirit of such crimes as those
Wrought by the Sháh on these men. I will live
To gratify my subjects' hearts, exist
To worship God according to the Way.
I am the shepherd and my subjects form
My flock. Let all of us seek peace and justice.
Then I have character, discretion, counsel,
And virtue, which no unjust king possesseth,
Because he needs must be unjust and froward,
And we should weep for one that is unjust.
With me are greatness, kingship, and discretion, C. 1483
Benevolence and wisdom. From Shápúr,
Son of Bahrám, back to Ardshír my sires,
Both old and young, were Sháhs, and are my guides
To wisdom and the Faith, while through my mother
I am the grandson of king Samírán,[1]
And every way have wisdom for my comrade.
I am possessed of virtue, wisdom, might,
With courage, strength of hand, and horsemanship.
I know none other fit to call a man
In feast, in battle, or in anything.
I have a secret treasury well filled,
And men of name leal to their sovereign.
My justice shall make populous the world,
And all my subjects shall abide in joy.[2]
Moreover I will make a pact with you,
And pledge my tongue to God. Let us bring forth
The imperial throne of ivory, and set
The bright crown over it, then let us bring
Two savage lions of the wood and, placing
The crown between them, chain them on each side.
Then let the would be Sháh advance and take
The famed crown from the throne of ivory,

[1] "de la reine Schémiran" (Mohl). Possibly Semiramis is meant.
[2] The § ends here in C.

Place it upon his head and sit between
The lions as the Sháh, the crown above him,
And under him the throne, for we will have
None else, provided he be just and holy.
If ye reject what I have said then choose,
Ye all! some noble, and Munzir and I,
For Arab chieftains know not how to flee,
With mace and trenchant scimitar will send
The dust up from your king of kings, and strew
Your heads upon the moon. Now for your answer,
And speak advisedly in this contention."

He spake, then rose and went inside his tent.
All marvelled at his words. The chiefs, archmages,
And all the people of Írán that heard
The wise Sháh's words, exclaimed: "This is the Grace
Of God, not craftiness or lack of wit!
He speaketh naught but what is just, and justice
Well may rejoice our hearts. For his proposal
About the savage lions with the throne,
C. 1484 And royal crown, between them: if they rend him
The Judge will not require his blood of us;
'Tis his own plan, and if he perisheth
We are content, while if he shall achieve
The crown he will have distanced Farídún
In Grace, and we will have no other king.
In brief we give acceptance to his words."

That night passed by; at dawn the Sháh came forth,
And sat upon the throne. He sent and summoned
The Íránians, and discoursed of yesterday
At large. The archimages cried: "O Sháh,
More knowing than the wise! how wilt thou rule
When thou hast eminence and mastery?
How wilt thou deal concerning right and justice,
So that both fraud and falsehood may abate?"

He answered thus those sages, warriors,
And chiefs: "I will be better than my words,

Will make injustice and informing cease,
And not appoint unworthy governors,
Will rule the world by counsel and by justice,
And, having pacified it, will rejoice
At what my justice hath achieved, will give
Some of my hoarded wealth withal to those
In want, admonish those that are in fault,
And bind them if they err the second time,
Will pay the army promptly and rejoice
The sages' hearts, make tax-collectors just,
And turn their souls from darkness and chicane.
If any one shall die, not having kindred,
And leave excessive wealth, I will bestow it
On mendicants, not add it to my treasures,
Or be enamoured of this Wayside Inn.
I will hold counsel with the experienced,
And take such order as will frustrate greed.
I will consult my ministers whenever
I purpose some new scheme, and not dismiss
The assembly when a man is asking me
For justice, but will give to such their due,
Will utter righteous judgment, and requite
The ill with ill as well becometh rulers.
My witness is all-holy God, and wisdom
Is master of my tongue."

Then the high priest
And sages—well approved and veteran chiefs—
Exclaimed: "We are thy slaves and bow our heads
To thy command and will."

Then Sháh Bahrám
Said thus: "Ye men of wisdom and our guides!
If in a year I make my soul and wisdom C. 1485
Belie my promises I will renounce
Crown, throne, and heritage, and sit thenceforth
Among the luckless."

Hearing this the sages,

The magnates, and archmages shrewd of heart,
Repented of past words and, being in fault,
Desired to make all well again, exclaiming,
One to another: "Who is worthier
To be the Sháh than he in manliness,
Speech, counsel, birth? None purer hath been born
Within the world! God fashioned him of justice.
May mischief ne'er befall him. We shall have
All good from him, and turn us to the Faith,
And justice. If now we shall speak perversely,
And send our wits to sleep, he with such stature,
Such neck, and arms, is peerless in the world,
While at his back there is the Arab host,
Because in weal and woe Munzir will help him,
And if he win the throne that is his own
Who in the world is better than Bahrám?
What cause hereafter would he have to fear
The Íránians, for what are we but a pinch
Of dust to him?"
They said: "O prosperous one!
Our minds approve thee for our Sháh. None knew
Thy virtues, purity of person, wisdom,
And counsel, and we all of us have paid
Our homage to Khusrau, son of Pashín,[1]
As Sháh, we all are under oath to serve him,
And stand within his danger, so to speak.
Hereafter if he ruleth in Írán
Our borders will be desolate with war.
One party taketh pleasure in Bahrám,
Another is in favour of Khusrau.
Thine own plan is the right one, and the world
Thereafter will be under thy command:
Ordeal by the lions will suffice,
And thenceforth none will seek the sovereignty."
Bahrám gave his assent; 'twas his proposal.

[1] Reading with P and T.

At the accession of a lawful Sháh
The high priest with three sages used to go
To him, enthrone him, and felicitate
The throne, then bring the crown of gold—the source
Of glory, right, and Grace—and, crowning him,
Would press both cheeks upon his breast in joy.
The Sháh then would bestow on suppliants
All gifts presented to him. So they put
The crown and throne in charge of the high priest, C. 1486
And from the city fortunate Bahrám
Departed to the waste. Brave Gustaham
Had two fierce lions which he gave in chains
To the high priest. They dragged the savage beasts
Along, the draggers seeming mad with fright,
And to the footings of the ivory throne
Chained them, and set the crown within a nook
Upon it. All the world—spectator there
Of crown and throne—watched how the prince would fare.

§ 13

How Bahrám and Khusrau went to the Waste, and how Bahrám slew the Lions and took his Seat upon the Throne

Bahrám Gúr and Khusrau went on the waste,
And with full hearts approached the lions. Khusrau,
On seeing the fierce beasts with the crown between them,
Said to the archimages: "He that seeketh
The sovereignty should be the first to try.
Moreover he is young and I am old—
Too feeble to resist fierce lions' claws—
So let him use his youth and vigour first."
Bahrám made answer, saying: "Good, 'tis well.
We will not blink fair words."
With that he took

An ox-head mace while the world wondered at him.
An archmage said: "O wise and holy king!
Who biddeth thee fight lions? Canst thou have
More than the sovereignty? So in its quest
Give not thy life and person to destruction
Thus wantonly. Herein no blame attacheth
To us, 'tis thine own act, the world is thine."
Bahrám said: "O explorer of the Faith!
Thou and the other folk are not to blame.
I am the man to fight these savage lions;
'Tis my delight to battle with the brave."
The archmage answered: "Refuge then with God,
And, if thou needs must go, first purge thy heart
Of sin."
He did according to that word,
Repented, purged his heart, bathed in a stream,
And sought upon the plain a place of prayer.
Then as he prayed before all-holy God,
And laid his cheeks upon the dusky ground,
He said: "Almighty! let Thy servants triumph.
If I—Thy servant—justly seek to cleanse
The world of evil give my soul assurance
In this strife, let me overcome the lions."
C. 1487 Thence came the wise Sháh and at once set forth
Upon his way, armed with the ox-head mace.
Now when the valiant lions saw him coming,
One on the instant snapped its chain and charged
The exalted king. That hero smote its head,
And dimmed its eyes, then going to the other
Smote its head whence the blood ran down its breast,
Then took his seat upon the ivory throne,
Placed on his head the heart-delighting crown,
And put his trust in God who is our Refuge,
The Guider of the lost. Khusrau drew near,
Did homage, and thus said: "Exalted Sháh!
Blest be thy sitting on the throne, and may

The heroes of the world be slaves before thee.
Thou art the Sháh, we are thy slaves and further
Thy good in everything."
The mighty men
Showered jewels over him, invoking blessings
Upon his crown. A universal shout
Ascended from the world. That jubilance
Was on Surúsh's day in month Ázar
Whereon Bahrám assumed the sovereignty,
And won fruition of the crown and Grace.

A cloud hath risen and the moon's obscured;
From that dark cloud a shower of Milk is poured;
No river, plain, or upland can I spy,
The raven's plumes are lost against the sky;
In one unceasing stream egg-apples[1] fall:
What is high heaven's purpose in it all?
No fire-wood, salted meat, or barley-grain
Are left me, naught till harvest come again!
Amid this gloom, this day of tax and fear,
When earth with snow is like an ivory sphere,
All mine affairs in overthrow will end
Unless my hand is grasped by some good friend.[2]

Now will I tell to thee so strange a tale
That in the wonder wonder's self will fail.

[1] The fruit of the egg-plant (*Solanum esculentum*), of which there are two varieties—a white and a purple.

[2] Reading with P.

XXXV

BAHRÁM GÚR

HE REIGNED SIXTY-THREE YEARS

ARGUMENT

Bahrám's accession and inaugural measures. His adventures, amorous and otherwise, among his subjects. His relations with foreign potentates. His instructions to his officials, and remission of taxation. His introduction of the Gipsies into Írán, and his death.

NOTE

Bahrám Gúr (Varahran V., A.D. 420–438) is said by Tabarí and Mas'údí to have been twenty years old at the time of his accession.[1] According to Tabarí he reigned either eighteen or twenty-three years.[2] Mas'údí says the latter.[3] On the other hand Mír Khánd, who tells us that he followed the most generally received account, perhaps Firdausí's own, states that Bahrám reigned sixty-three years.[4] No doubt popular tradition lovingly prolonged to the utmost the reign of this Sháh who, like James V. of Scotland, was a "King of the Commons." The poet was at no loss for material in this part of his work, and the reign is the most diverting in the Sháhnáma. Its interest with regard to the question of the provenance of the *Arabian Nights* has been noted already.[5] As is to be expected in the circumstances the subject-matter is largely legendary, though some authentic features have been preserved, and there can be little doubt but that Bahrám's own character as depicted by Firdausí is in the main historically correct. He fulfilled the promises made by him when a candidate for the throne,

[1] NT, p. 98; MM, ii. 190. [2] NT, p. 112. [3] MM, *id.*
[4] RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 362. [5] See Vol. vi. p. 250.

but gave himself up largely to pleasure, though this does not seem to have impaired his activities at critical moments. He appears, too, to have been fortunate in his administrators. His chief minister, Mihr Narsí, who is not to be confounded with Narsí, the Sháh's brother, and three of his sons were at the head of affairs. One was the principal, or nearly so, of the official hierarchy, another was chief superintendent of the taxes, and the third was commander-in-chief.[1] Mihr Narsí and his father Buráza are stated to have held office under Yazdagird, Bahrám's father, and the former was reappointed chief minister when Yazdagird, Bahrám's son, came to the throne.[2] He was himself a prince and an Arsacid, so it would seem that the supplanted family had regained a great position for itself under the new dispensation, and that the state of things fully justified the pronouncement put by later legend into the mouth of Kaid.[3] Bahrám Gúr began his reign with a persecution of the Christians, which led to war with the Eastern Roman Empire. There is a slight allusion to such a war in the poem,[4] but the chief incident recorded to have taken place is a pacific one.[5]

§§ 1 and 2. Bahrám devotes the first days of his reign to carrying out his promises of reform made before his accession,[6] and to the relief of taxation.

§§ 3–16. We have here a series of popular legends of Bahrám's adventures when going about unrecognised among various classes of his subjects.[7] The story of the miser occurs twice.[8]

§§ 19–22. We have here the story of Bahrám's most famous exploit, which is historical, though as much cannot be said of the various details with which popular appreciation has embellished it. Historically, the foes over whom Bahrám won his great triumph were the Haitálians, or White Huns.[9] This is clear on Firdausí's own showing when he comes to the reign of Pírúz.[10] Later on again, in the reign of Núshírwán, ample distinction is made between the subjects of the Khán of Chín and the Haitálians.[11] In substituting the former for the latter on this occasion Firdausí errs in good company. Tabarí, Mas'údí, and Mír Khánd all name the Turks as the enemy,[12] and since they did not come upon the scene for another century and more,[13] we learn approximately the

[1] NT, pp. 106, 108 *seq.*
[2] ZT, ii. pp. 122, 127; NT, pp. 113.
[3] See Vol. vi. pp. 256, 267.
[4] See p. 84.
[5] See p. 100 *seq.*
[6] See Vol. vi. p. 406.
[7] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 250.
[8] §§ 4 and 15 *seq.*
[9] See Vol. i. p. 19.
[10] See p. 164 *seq.*
[11] See p. 328 *seq.*
[12] NT, p. 99; MM, ii. 190; RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 357.
[13] See Vol. i. p. 20.

earliest date at which the story of Bahrám's exploit could have been edited in its existing form. According to the Persian Tabarí [1] —the version adapted from the original Arabic by Bal'amí, the minister of the Sámánid prince Mansúr, son of Núh (A.D. 961–976), about A.D. 963—the Khán was put to flight, according to the Arabic [2] slain in the battle by Bahrám's own hand. Both agree that the Khátún, or wife of the Khán, was taken prisoner and sent to serve in the famous Fire-temple at Shíz, whither Bahrám had gone to pray for success in his expedition.[3] According to the Arabic Tabarí, Bahrám, as an act of thanksgiving for his victory, relieved his subjects of taxation for three years.[4] This probably is the popular version of the fact that great reforms in that connexion were effected during his reign, but they could not have been justified, one would think, to the extent stated by the amount of plunder taken from the Haitálians, and still less to the extent described in the Sháhnáma, which affirms that he almost reformed taxation away altogether. It may be added that the various accounts of Bahrám's expedition against the Haitálians are in substantial accord though they differ in detail, *e.g.* as to how far the enemy had advanced at the time of the battle, the route that Bahrám followed in his march, and the number of troops that he took with him.

§ 24. Bahrám's war with the Eastern Roman Empire, in which he was not very successful, came to an end in A.D. 422, but Firdausí (§ 19) makes it synchronise with that against the Haitálians which, according to the Persian Tabarí,[5] took place five years later. Next we hear of an envoy sent by Cæsar (§§ 19, 23), and then of his belated audience with the Sháh. The points discussed are not the terms of peace, but certain "hard questions,"[6] and it is only incidentally that the envoy mentions that Rúm is ready to pay tribute to Írán. We have a similar case in the reign of Núshírwán when the Rája of Hind sends the game of chess to that Sháh, who returns the compliment with the game of nard,[7] while in the next volume we shall find the disgraced counsellor Búzurjmihr regaining the favour of the same Sháh by his success in solving another problem set by Cæsar.

§§ 26–38. For instances in the Sháhnáma of kings going incognito to visit foreign courts, see Vol. vi. pp. 325, 335. In the Arabic Tabarí, Bahrám's motive for visiting Hind is to see whether by annexing a portion of it he could lighten the taxes of his own

[1] ZT, ii. 120.
[2] NT, p. 101.
[3] See p. 86; ZT, ii. 121; NT, 104.
[4] NT, 105.
[5] ZT, ii. 119.
[6] As to which see p. 102 *seq.*
[7] See p. 384 *seq.*

subjects.[1] Unlike his expedition against the Khán of Chín, as Firdausí puts it, and historically against the Haitálians, the one to Hind appears to be wholly fabulous. It is given, however, at length by Tabarí and Mír Khánd, and mentioned by Mas'údí.[2]

It will be seen that Bahrám in the course of his well meant efforts to promote the welfare of his subjects does not find it quite so easy as he expected to make everybody happy by legislation.

§ 39. Professor Nöldeke is inclined to consider Bahrám's importation of Gipsies from Hind to Írán historical.[3] The details of course belong to the province of popular legend, but are delightfully characteristic of both parties concerned. The Gipsy language appears to be a debased form of Hindústání. According to Mír Khánd the Gipsies intermarried with the Persians, and the Jats were said to be their offspring. Consequently nearly every Jat is a musician.[4]

§ 40. Firdausí is almost alone in his statement that Bahrám Gúr died in his bed. The common account is that he was killed when out hunting by falling into one of the underground watercourses, so common in Persia, and that his body never was recovered. Popular tradition places the scene of his death in a valley between Shíráz and Ispahán and known as the "Vale of Heroes," where there are numerous springs supposed to be intercommunicating and of great depth. Sir John Malcolm states that one of his escort was drowned in 1810 when bathing in the identical spring in which Bahrám is said to have perished.[5] Tabarí lays the scene of the accident in Media, and it took place, if it took place at all, probably not far from Hamadán at a spot called, according to Dínawarí, Dái Marj. Nöldeke, however, considers that the whole story was made up to account for the nickname "Gúr" bestowed upon Bahrám. The word in question means both "onager" and "tomb."[6] The same collocation of letters also means a "Fire-worshipper," and it is possible that some Muhammadan translator from the Pahlaví may have thought fit to dispatch the guebre to the grave.

[1] NT, p. 106.
[2] *Id.* RM, I, ii. 360; MM, ii. 191.
[3] NT, p. 99 *note*.
[4] RM, I, ii. 357.
[5] MHP, i. 94 and *note*.
[6] NT, 103 and *note*.

§ 1

How Bahrám ascended the Throne, charged the Officers, and wrote Letters to all the Chiefs

Whenas Bahrám Gúr sat upon the throne
The sun acclaimed him while the Sháh adored
The Maker—the all-seeing, watchful World-lord,
The Lord of victory and majesty, C. 1488
The Lord of increase and of loss—then said :—
" From Him have I received the throne and crown,
For He hath fashioned fortune, and my hopes
And fears are all in Him. I give Him thanks
For all His benefits ; do ye too praise Him,
And strive to keep His covenant unbroken."
The Íránians answered : " We are girt for service.
May this crown prove right glorious to the Sháh,
And may his heart and fortune live for ever."
Their praises done, all scattered gems before him.
Thus said Bahrám : " O chiefs experienced
In daily good and ill ! we all are slaves,
And God is One, sole-worthy to be worshipped.
From fear of evil days we will secure you,
And not expose you to malignant Need."
He spake. They rose and homaged him anew.
They spent the night in converse, and at sun-rise
The Sháh sat peacefully upon his throne,
The Íránians came to audience, and he said :—
" Ye chieftains famed and favoured by the stars !
Put we our trust in God and joy in Him,
Boast not and root out of the world our hearts."
He spake and then those Glories of his court—
His chiefs—called for their steeds. The Sháh, the third day,
Sat on the throne, and said : " Religious usage

Must be observed. We witness to God's being,
And make our souls familiar with the Faith.
There is a Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell,
And we can not escape from good and ill.
Ascribe not Faith or knowledge to the man
That doubteth of the Day of Reckoning."

The fourth day, donning on the ivory throne
The well-loved crown, he said: "Men, not my treasures,
Are my delight. This Wayside Inn I ask not,
And grudge not going, for the other world
Is everlasting and this transitory.[1]
Abstain from greed and trouble not thyself."

The fifth day he said thus: "I have no joy
In others' toils for mine aggrandisement;
We toil in quest of jocund Paradise;
He that hath sown but seed of good is blest."

The sixth day said he to his subjects: "Never
May we ensue defeat; we will protect
Our troops from foes and make malignants tremble."

C. 1489 The seventh day, when he took his seat, he said:—
"Ye chiefs wise, wary, and experienced!
Since with the vile we practise villainy
We will have conversation with the wise.
Ye that are cold to me shall fare still worse
Than with my sire, but ye that do my will
Must not experience sorrow, pain, and toil."

The eighth day, when he took his seat, he bade
Call Jawánwí of those about the court,
And said to him: "To every mighty man,
To every chief and clime, indite for me
A letter couched in just and loving terms,
And say: 'Bahrám hath mounted on the throne
With joy—a lord of bounty and of right,
A shunner of all fraud and knavery—

[1] Reading with P.

For he hath Grace and stature, love and justice :
The Judge all-holy is in all his thoughts.
" I will accept," he saith, " the obedient,
But fault-condoning maketh faults increase.
I sit upon my glorious father's throne,
I keep the customs of just Tahmúras,[1]
And treat all justly howsoe'er perverse.
I will be juster than mine ancestors,
And guide you to the Faith—that of Zarduhsht,
The prophet—quitting not my fathers' path.
I put the Faith of old Zarduhsht before me ;
The way of that true prophet is mine own.
Be ye all sovereign in your own affairs,
And guard your marches and your loyalty,
Kings of your children and your women-folk :
Blest is the man that is both wise and pure.
If God accord us life and favouring stars
We will not fill our treasury with gold ;
Such treasures keep the poor in travail. Read
This joyful letter which assureth you
Of lasting wealth and honour. To all kings
Our greeting, most to those whose warp and woof
Are love." ' "
They sealed the letters and made choice
Of glorious envoys. Archmage, man of lore,
And wary cavalier, those letters bore.

§ 2

How Bahrám pardoned the Fault of the Íránians, farewelled Munzir and Nu'mán, and remitted the Íránians' Arrears of Taxes

Next day when Sol rose, when the hills bulked large,
And sleep was broken, to Munzir there came

[1] For Tahmúras see Vol. i. p. 125.

A panic-stricken throng and said to him :—
C. 1490 "Make intercession for us with the Sháh
To pardon our offences, for the crimes
Of Yazdagird so wrought us that the blood
Froze in the nobles' hearts! So much of foul
In word and deed, iniquity, distress,
And anguish chilled our hearts toward Bahrám
Because we suffered so beneath his sire."
Munzir's warm pleadings mollified the Sháh,
Who being just and noble pardoned all,
Whate'er the fault. He decked the imperial palace,
And all the good and great resorted thither.
When they had got the place of majesty
In readiness they seated there the worthy,
In every place they spread the board and called
For wine and harp and minstrelsy. Next day
Another crowd assembled, yet the chief
Was wearied not of giving. On the third
There were both revels and festivities,
And grief was banished from the world-king's palace.
He told the offices done by Nu'mán
And by Munzir—those men of stainless birth—
On his behalf, and all the chiefs acclaimed
Those desert dwellings and those men of war.
The Sháh next oped his treasury and filled
His palace with brocade and gold, steeds, trappings,
Mail-coats and scents [1] and gems of every hue.
He gave all to Nu'mán and to Munzir,
And Jawánwí told o'er to them the gifts.
None matched the Sháh in bounty and in travail.
He gave the other Arabs many presents,
So that they left the royal halls, rejoicing.
He then had brought a royal robe of honour,
A steed, and raiment of a paladin;
These gave they to Khusrau, made much of him,

[1] Reading with P.

And seated him upon the glorious throne.
Then, turning from Khusrau,[1] the king of kings,
Descending from his throne, approached the seat
Where sat Narsí—a prince, his younger brother,
And one with him in heart and tongue. He made
Narsí the captain of the host to set
The land in order, gave up to his keeping
The host at large, and ravished all the realm
With bounty, oped the treasury, and paid
The troops who gladdened with dínárs. The Sháh,
That man of lore, then bade Gushasp, the scribe,
With prudent Jawánwí, the chief accountant,
Approach, and ordered them to cancel all
Arrears of taxes for the Íránians.
These two wise scribes went to their registers, C. 1491
And in this matter called in aid Kaiwán
Because he was the expert of the day,
And kept the world's statistics in his breast.
They added up the sum of the arrears,
And found it ninety and a hundred times
Three hundred thousand drachms.[2] These he forgave,
And burnt the registers, and all Írán
Rejoiced thereat. Whenas all folk were ware
Of that event they praised him mightily.
They all flocked to the Fire-fanes, to the halls
Where New Year's Day and Sada feast were kept,
Flung musk upon the Fire and blessed Bahrám,
The Sháh. Thereafter he dispatched officials
To go about the world. He sought and gathered
Within a certain city all the exiles
Of Yazdagird that thus the monarch's letter
Might reach those noble Persians, and inquire
Their wishes, sent each chief a robe of honour,
And gave to each a province that befitted
His station. Noble, archimage, and marchlord,

[1] *Id.* [2] *Cf.* p. 215, *note.*

Whoever heard Bahrám's deliverance,
All visited his court with open hearts,
And blithe of countenance. He bade each suitor
Repair to the high priest and, when the world
Had recognised his bidding, he let stand
A herald at his gate thus to proclaim :—
" Ye subjects of the watchful Sháh ! abstain
From sorrow and from sin, and praise henceforth
Him through whose justice earth is prosperous.
Take refuge from the world with God alone,
For He possesseth all and helpeth all.
The man that giveth heed to our command,
Not turning from our path and fealty,
To him will we increase our benefits,
And clear our mind of hate and covetise ;
But whosoever shunneth what is just
Shall suffer retribution at our hands.
If God hereafter shall vouchsafe us strength,
And matters turn out to our heart's content,
We will add benefit to benefit,
And ye shall utter praise on our account."
At these words all the people of Írán
Went full of joy and bright of countenance,
And, as the sovereignty became secure,
Joy waxed and sorrow minished, while the Sháh
In feasting, horsemanship upon the Ground,
In sport and polo, full employment found.

§ 3

How Bahrám went to the House of Lambak, the Water-carrier, and became his Guest

C. 1492 It happened that Bahrám Gúr went one day
With certain warriors to hunt the lion.

An old man, staff in hand, drew near to him,
And said : " God-fearing Sháh ! within our city
There are two men, one rich, the other poor.
Now Baráhám, the Jew, a miscreant knave,
Is rich in silver and in gold. Lambak,
The water-carrier, is of noble nature,
Fair-spoken, hospitable."
So Bahrám
Inquired about the two, their words and ways.
A worthy said : " Lambak, the water-carrier,
O great, famed, noble king ! is generous,
Doth keep a table, and is well disposed.
He passeth half the day in water-carrying,
The other half in entertaining guests,
And leaveth nothing over for the morrow,
While Baráhám is but a barren Jew,
And grasping, and his greed should be exposed.
He hath drachms, treasure, and dínárs, brocades,
And goods of all kinds, but none seeth his bread,
And he is ever wrathful at a guest." [1]
The Sháh then bade a herald : " Go, proclaim
Before the court : 'To every one concerned :
The water of the water-carrier,
Lambak, is bad to drink.' "
He stayed till Sol
Grew pale, then mounted a fleet steed and came,
Like wind, toward the dwelling of Lambak,
Knocked with the ring against the door, and cried :—
" A captain of the Íránian host am I,
The night is dark, and I have far to go.
Let me lodge here to-night. I will behave
With honour and discretion."
Then Lambak,
Pleased with the voice of one that spake so fairly,
Made answer straight : " Come in, O cavalier !

[1] This line is inserted from P.

And may the king approve thee. If ten others
Were with thee it were better : each had been
A moon above my head."
Then Sháh Bahrám
Dismounted, and Lambak saw to the steed.
He gladly rubbed it down and haltered it,
Then, when Bahrám was seated, ran and brought
A chess-board [1] and made shift to furnish food,
And all things needful, saying : "Noble sir !
C. 1493 Put by the chess-men and begin thy meal." [2]
The eating done, the host in high delight
Brought out a cup of wine. The Sháh was all
Amazement at that feast of his, kind speech,
And cheery mien, passed night there, and at dawn
Woke at the salutation of Lambak,
Who said : "Thy steed, good sooth, fared ill last night.
Stay just this one day with me, and if thou
Wouldst have a comrade we will summon one,
And find the needful. Joy with me one day."
The king made answer to the water-carrier :—
"I have not much on hand to-day."
Lambak
Departed, taking divers water-skins,
But nobody appeared to buy his water.
In dudgeon he put off his vest and, taking
His porter's knot and bucket in his arms,
Went and procured instead at the bázár
Meat and dried curds, and in due course put on
The pot. His guest took note of all his trouble.
Lambak prepared the meal ; they ate and drank,
And had another sitting. All that night
Bahrám had wine in hand ; Lambak too loved it.

[1] According to the poet's own showing later on, chess was not introduced into Persia till the reign of Núshírwán. See p. 384 *seq.*

[2] Couplet omitted.

When it was day he hurried to Bahrám,
And said : " Be merry night and day, and franked
From trouble, grief, and toil. Consort with me
For yet another day, for, know, thy presence
Is life and goods to me."
" Now God forbid
That we should not be happy for a third day,"
Bahrám said, while the water-carrier blessed him :—
" Be merry in thy heart and mate with fortune."
He took to the bázár his water-skins
And tackle, which he pledged to some rich man,
Bought what he needed and returned in haste
Rejoicing to Bahrám, and said to him :—
" Help with the food, for man must eat."
Bahrám
Took the meat promptly from him, cut it up,
And then proceeded with the cookery.
When they had eaten they took wine and goblet,
And first of all drank to the king of kings.
Lambak, when they had drunk, prepared for sleep,
And set a candle by Bahrám Gúr's couch.
The fourth day, when the sun shone and Bahrám Gúr
Awoke, his host approached and said : " Famed sir !
Thou hast resided in this small, dark house,
And doubtless in discomfort ; still if thou C. 1494
Fear'st not the Sháh stay in my mean abode
Two se'nights more if so thou hast a mind."
Then Sháh Bahrám blessed him and said : " Live thou
Thy years and months in mirth and happiness.
We have been jolly in this house three days,
While quaffing to the monarchs of the world,
And elsewhere I will speak a word for thee
That shall make bright thy heart and plans, for why
Thy hospitality shall yield thee fruit,
And, if thou perseverest, thrones and crowns."

Dust-swift he put the saddle on his steed,
Departed merrily and sought the chase.
He hunted on till night the hills 'gan ride,
Then lightly from his meiny turned aside.

§ 4

How Bahrám went to the House of Baráhám, the Jew, who treated him scurvily

He stole away and made toward the house
Of barren Baráhám, knocked at the door,
And said: "The Sháh hath come back from the chase,
But I was left behind. 'Tis night and I
Know not the way, can find not Sháh and escort.
If I may sojourn in this house to-night
I will not trouble any one."
A slave
Went and reported this to Baráhám,
Who answered: "Trouble not thyself hereat,
But say: 'Thou wilt not get a lodging here.'"
The messenger departed to Bahrám Gúr,
And said: "There is no shelter here for thee."
Bahrám replied: "Return to him and say:
'I mean to stop. I ask thee for a lodging
To-night and I will trouble thee no further.'"
The servant, hearing this, ran back and said:—
"This horseman will not budge to-night and saith
As much in many words."
Said Baráhám:—
"Go instantly and say: 'This house is small.
The Jew is very poor and every night
Reposeth, bare and hungry, on the ground.'"
They gave the message, and Bahrám Gúr said:—

" If here my lodging will prove troublesome
I will not enter but will sleep outside
The door, 'tis all I want."
Said Baráhám :—
" Brave horseman ! thoughtlessly [1] thou troublest me.
Were any one to rob thee in thy sleep
I should be plagued enough on thine account.
Come in if thou art in distress and want, C. 1495
But on condition that thou askest naught.
I have not e'en a napkin wherewithal
To wipe my body when 'tis washed at death,
Or shroud wherein to wind it."
" My good sir ! "
Bahrám rejoined, " I will not trouble thee
In any way. Thy portal will suffice.
I will be watchman, barring bell and cry."
Then Baráhám was troubled, and his soul
A brake of cares. He thought : " This saucy fellow
Will not depart. How can I cause him trouble
About his steed ? " then said again : " Great sir !
Thy many words afflict me. If thy steed
Shall leave its droppings here and stale or break
The tiles, thou shalt remove its dung at dawn,
Sweep up, bear off its refuse to the plain,
And pay for any breakages at once."
Bahrám replied : " I pledge my head to this."
Dismounting from his steed he tethered it
With its own bridle and unsheathed his sword.
He spread his saddle-cloth, used as his pillow
The saddle, and reposed upon the floor.
The Jew secured the door, brought victuals forth,
And sat him down to eat. " O cavalier ! "
He said, " remember, having heard, this saw :—
' Who hath may eat and who hath not look on.' "
He answered : " I have heard so from of old,

[1] Or " grievously."

And now I have beheld made manifest
What thou hast quoted from a sage's words."
The Jew brought wine forth and, when satiate
With food and blither for the drinking, bawled :—
" O toilful horseman ! list this ancient saw :—
' He that hath food and purposeth to eat
Will offer his thanksgiving for the meat,
For one of substance hath a happy mind,
And in his wealth a coat of mail will find ;
But Empty Pockets is a dry-lipped wight,
And, like thee, ravenous at mid of night.' "
Bahrám replied : " 'Tis passing wonderful
What I have seen, and must not be forgotten,
And if thy goblet give thee good at last
Then heigh for drinker, wine, and genial cup ! "
When o'er the mountains Sol displayed its sword
Bahrám Gúr shunned more sleep and put the saddle
On his fleet grey. His saddle ! Nay, hard pillow.
Came Baráhám and said : " O cavalier !
Thou art not faithful to thy word. Thou saidst :—
C. 1496 ' I will sweep up the droppings of the steed
At once.' Away with them as thou didst promise.
I am annoyed by a dishonest guest."
Bahrám Gúr answered : " Go and fetch a slave.
He will remove the droppings fast enough,[1]
And I will give him gold for sweeping up,
And bearing off, the refuse to the plain."
" No one have I," he said, " to sweep up refuse,
Take it away, and fling it in the ditch.
Break not thy promises deceitfully ;
Let me not say that thou hast played the knave."
Bahrám Gúr, hearing, took another course.
He had a dainty handkerchief of silk
Inside his boot, all musk and spicery ;
He took it out and put therein the droppings,

[1] Reading with P.

Then flung them all together in the ditch.
Away went Baráhám and snatched it up
While Sháh Bahrám stood dazed. "Oho!" said he,
"Thou scrupulous! If the great king shall hear
Of all thy nobleness he will secure thee
From want in this world, and will set thee high
Among the chiefs."
He went back to his palace,
And all night long was planning what to do.
Within his halls thought banished all repose,
He laughed himself but kept the matter close.

§ 5

How Bahrám bestowed the Wealth of Baráhám upon Lambak

Next morn he donned his crown and held an audience,
Then called to him Lambak, the water-carrier,
Who came before him with enfolded arms.
They brought withal and quickly Baráhám,
That curst, malicious Jew. When he arrived
They made him sit and called an honest man,
To whom the Sháh said: "Take some baggage-beasts
And, acting with the utmost honesty,
Go to the house of Baráhám forthwith,
And look thou bring what thou find'st hoarded there."
That honest man went to the Jew's abode.
The house was all brocade, dínárs, and raiment,
All carpetings, and draperies, and hoards.
There was a caravanserai attached,
And no room too on earth for all the goods—
Gold, silver, every gem, and, on the top
Of every bag, a lofty diadem.
The archmage's reckoning failed. He called for camels,

A thousand from the desert of Jahram,
C. 1497 And packed the baggage but much still remained.[1]
That good man drove apace the caravans,
And, when the bells resounded from the court-gate,
Went and informed the Sháh : " As many gems
Are here as in thy treasury, yet are left
Two hundred ass-loads ! "
Thought the Sháh, amazed :—
" The Jew hath greatly toiled, but to what profit
Since food hath failed him ? "
Then the Sháh, the world-lord,
Bestowed a hundred camel-loads of gold,
Of drachms, of carpets, and things great and small
Upon the water-carrier. Lambak
Departed with his treasures. Then the Sháh
Called Baráhám and said to him : " O thou
Consorting in thy meanness with the dust !
Dost tell me that thy prophet was long-lived,
And yet bewail life's superfluities ? [2]
A horseman came and quoted me this saw,
Out of the sayings of the past, which saith :—
' Hath will enjoy and Hath not withereth.'
So now withdraw thy grasping hand and watch
Henceforth the enjoyment of the water-carrier."
Then to that vile Jew of the synagogue
He spake at large of droppings, handkerchief
Gold-woven, and tiles, bestowed upon the knave
Four drachms, and said : " Take this as capital ;
No more befitteth thee. To mendicants
Thy wealth, to thee thy head."
He gave the poor
All that there was. The Jew departed wailing.
The Sháh gave up the house to plundering ;
'Twas well that other folk should have their fling.

[1] Reading with P.
[2] If your prophet managed to live long on little so can you.

§ 6

How Bahrám slew Lions and forbade Wine-drinking

He found employment for the hunting cheetah,
Bestirred him and was minded for the chase.
He mounted him upon a speedy steed,
And pricked forth to the plain with hawk on hand.
He found a wood that was a rich man's seat.
It was as verdurous as Paradise,
And there was neither man nor beast in sight.
He said : " Here lions should be found. No man
Of prudence would sleep here."
He entered in,
And rode about surveying it. He saw
A lion there and that he must employ
The scimitar. He shouted at the beast
And, when it bravely charged him, rode outside
The forest, blazed forth like Ázargashasp, C. 1498
And, when the lion followed, strung his bow,
A hero he, shot and transfixed the creature
Through side and heart ; that of the lioness
Grew all a-flame, and she too charged Bahrám,
Roared out and clawed at him. The cavalier
Smote with his sword her loins, and that brave beast
Gave up the fight. Now in the wood there dwelt
A country magnate, a God-fearing man,
Whose name was Mihr Bídád. That sword-stroke charmed him.
With sweet words on his tongue that old man left
The wood, drew near the Sháh, blessed him, did reverence,
And said : " O famous chief ! may fortune's star
Be at thy beck. A rural chief am I,
O holy one ! and owner of this march,

This tilth, and mansion, ox and ass and sheep.
Those lions caused me sorrow and despair;
Now by thy hand, thy thumb-ring, and thy hilt
God hath removed them. Tarry in our wood,[1]
And I will bring thee milk and wine and honey.
I have as many lambs as thou canst want
With trees fruit-laden that will furnish shade."
The Sháh alighted and surveyed the forest;
He found it verdurous, supplied with streams,
And fitted for a young man's dwelling-place.
Then Mihr Bídád went and fetched minstrelsy
As well as divers of the village-chiefs.
He slaughtered numbers of fat sheep and came,
Gold cup in hand. When they had eaten bread
The servants set on cups of wine with roses
And fenugreek. The host quaffed one and gave
Another to Bahrám and took all pains
To set him at his ease. When Mihr Bídád
Grew blithe with wine he said: "Fair-fortuned hero!
Thou favourest the Sháh or the full moon
At midnight."
Said Bahrám: "Yea, that is so;
The King of kings designed this face of mine.
He maketh as He willeth, waxing not
Nor waning, but if I am like the Sháh
Then I have given thee this seat and forest."
This said, he mounted, sought his pleasure-palace,
Bemused, but sleepless in the garth all night
Romanced about the lips of the beloved.
C. 1499 Next morn he took his seat and called for wine.
The captains of the host approached rejoicing,
And with the others came a noble man
Who from his village brought a gift of fruit—
Pomegranate, apple, quince, in camel-loads,
And posies fashioned for imperial use.

[1] Reading with P.

The world-lord, seeing him, saluted him,
And seated him among the paladins.
The lord that brought the posies and the fruit
Bore in the olden tongue the name Kírwí.
While he was joying to behold the Sháh,
The nobles, and the banquet-hall, he spied
A crystal goblet filled with wine which proved
His ruin. Reaching out among the lords
He grasped it, rose, and drank "The king of kings!"
Then cried: "A toper I, my name Kírwí.
Since in the presence of the king of kings
I drain the goblet I will drain again."

This said, he drained the goblet seven times,
And distanced all the other revellers.
Then by the Sháh's permission he departed
To learn if he could bear off all that wine.
He left the jovial city for the plain,
And when the wine was warm within his breast
He galloped from among his retinue
Toward the hills, dismounted, chose him out
A quiet, shady spot, and slumbered. Came
A black crow from the mountains and pecked out
His eyes! His escort following found him dead
And eyeless with his roadster by his side,
And wailed o'er him and at such revelry.

Now when Bahrám had wakened in his chamber
A courtier came to him, and said: "A crow
Hath pecked out both Kírwí's bright eyes while he
Was lying drunk among the hills."

The world-lord
Grew pale of cheek thereat and sorrowful,
And from the palace proclamation issued:—
"Ye men of name endowed with Grace and sense!
Wine is a thing forbidden in the world
Alike to paladin and artisan."

Thus passed a year while all held wine forbidden

E'en when the Sháh himself held revelry,
Or called for tales from old time legendry.

§ 7

The Story of the young Shoemaker, and how Bahrám allowed Wine again

C. 1500 Now at that time a young shoemaker wedded
A virtuous wife, rich and of good repute,
But failed in nuptial duty, and his mother
Lamented bitterly his grievous case.
Howbeit she had some wine in store. She took
Her son to her own house and bade the youth :—
" Drink seven cups to hearten thee. Perchance
Thou mayest break this stubborn seal to-night.
How can a woollen mattock mine in stone ? "
He quaffed cups seven or eight, and verily
His feet and hide waxed strong. The cups had made
The young man confident ; he came, achieved
His purpose, and then went back to his mother
In high delight thereat, and thus it chanced :
A lion of the Sháh's had broken loose,
And came along the road. Now at the time
The shoemaker was still in drink—a sea
That made his fingers thumbs. He ran, bestrode
The roaring lion, and then reaching out
He clutched its ears. The lion had been fed ;
The youth maintained his seat. Post-haste the keeper
Came running after them, a chain in one hand,
A lasso in the other. He beheld
A shoemaker upon the lion's back,
Perched there like some bold rider on an ass,
Ran to the palace-gate, came unabashed
Before the Sháh, and told about the wonder

That he had seen, with his own eyes, and none
Beside had heard. The world-lord all amazed
Called the high priest and chiefs, and bade the former:—
" See what the stock of this shoemaker is.
If he shall prove a paladin by birth
'Tis well, for courage fitteth paladins."
They sought and asked his mother : " Is his rank
Above his station ? "
When the talk grew long
She hurried to the Sháh and told him all,
First doing her obeisance and exclaiming :—
" Live happily till time shall be no more.
This youth, who had not come to man's estate,
Must take himself a partner and keep house,
And then prove impotent ! His wife, she said :—
' This weakling was self-sown ! ' All privily
I gave to him three cups of wine, and none
In all the world was ware thereof. Forthwith
It flushed his cheeks and made a man of him. C. 1501
Three cups of wine are his nobility ;
Who could imagine that the Sháh would wish
To hear thereof ? Shoemaker was his granddad,
And so is he, and not by birth above
His trade."
The Sháh smiled on the crone, and said :—
" This is no tale to hide."
He thus addressed
The archmage : " Wine is now permissible,
And we should drink thereof to his extent
Who in his cups still can bestride a lion,
And not be overthrown, but not to his
Who lieth all dead-drunk upon the road
What while some black crow pecketh out his eyes."
A proclamation went up from the gate :—
" O paladins who wear the golden girdle !
Drink wine in moderation, all of you !

Considering the end when ye begin,
And when the wine hath led you to delight
Then go to sleep but not in helpless plight."

§ 8

How Rúzbih, Bahrám's High Priest, ruined a Village by a Stratagem and restored it

The third day at the dawn the Sháh went forth,
He and his men, to hunt upon the plain ;
Hurmuz, his minister, was on his left,
And on his right the holy archimage.
They told him tales, discoursing of Jamshíd
And Farídún.[1] Before them were the hounds,
The cheetahs, hawks, and falcons. Thus they shortened
The tedious day. Bright Sol was high, but still
They saw no trace of deer or onager,
And so Bahrám Gúr, troubled by the heat,
Turned back in dudgeon from the hunting-field.
He came upon a verdurous spot fulfilled
With houses, men, and cattle. Many folk
Came from the settlement to see the troops,
But no man did obeisance ! Thou hadst said :—
" The earth hath tethered every ass of them ! "
The monarch, vexed and overcome by heat,
Had fixed upon that village for a halt.
Its folk disgusted him, he viewed them not
With favour, and in anger thus addressed
The high priest : " What an ill-starred spot is this !
Be it a lair for wild beasts and for game,
And may its streams run pitch."
The archimage,
Who took this for an order, turned aside

[1] See Vol. i. pp. 129 *seq*, 147 *seq*.

Toward the village and informed the folk :— C. 1502
"This verdant spot—all fruitage, men, and cattle—
Hath greatly pleased Bahrám, the king of kings,
Who hath a new design respecting it.
He raiseth all of you to noble rank
To turn this pleasant village to a city.
Here, lord and hireling, ye shall be all equal.
Men, women, children, ye shall be all chiefs,
Each of you be the master of the village."
Glad shouts rose from that prosperous settlement
Because the people were all lords alike.
Thenceforth, man's rede or woman's, 'twas all one,
And slave and hireling were their master's peers.
The village-youths, no longer checked by awe,
Cut off their elders' heads, then fell upon
Each other and, where roads were not, shed blood.
At that to-do folk fled incontinent.
The helpless aged remained, but there remained not
The implements of culture, goods, and crops.
The settlement had ruin in its face,
The trees were withered and the streams ran dry,
The land and houses were all desolate,
And shunned of man and beast. Now when a year
Had passed and spring returned the monarch went
A-hunting in those parts and reached that spot
Erst populous and blithe, and saw the place
O'erturned, trees withered, habitations waste,
And not a man or beast throughout the march.
Thereat the Sháh turned pale, the fear of God
Came on him, he was grievously distressed,
And thus addressed the archmage : "O Rúzbih !
Alack ! this place so jocund once is ruined !
Go to now and restore it with my treasures,
And take such order that the folk henceforth
Be scathless."

Going from the royal presence

The archmage sped forth to that scene of ruin.
From street to street he hurried and at last
Came on an old man unemployed. Dismounting
He spake the elder fair, made him sit down
Near by, and said to him : " Old, honoured sir !
Who wrecked this district once so populous ? "
The old man answered thus : " Our monarch once
Was passing through our parts, and thereupon
There came to us a witless archimage,
One of those useless people with big names,
And said to us : ' Ye all are chieftains here :
See that ye pay respect to nobody.
Be masters, all of you, both men and women,
And great among the great.' Such were his words,
C. 1503 And all the township was convulsed thereat,
All rapine, murder, stick ! May God befriend him
In like proportion, may grief, death, and hardship
Ne'er stale with him. Our case is growing worse,
And such that folk must weep for us."
Rúzbih,
Grieved for that old man, asked : " Who is your chief ? "
The other answered : " Who will have a place
Where there is naught excepting seed and grass ? "
Rúzbih replied : " Be thou the governor,
Be as the crown upon the head in all things,
Make requisition from the world-lord's treasures
For money, oxen, asses, grain, and produce ;
Bring to the village all the unemployed ;
They all are subjects, thou alone art chief,
And curse no more the ancient archimage,
Who spake not as he would in what he said.
If thou wilt have assistants from the court
I will dispatch them. Ask for what thou wilt."
The elder joyed to hear this and was freed
From longsome grief. He hied him home forthwith,

Brought others to his Cistern and began
To people and apportion out the lands.
They borrowed from their neighbours ox and ass,
And furnished all the plain. He and his settlers
Worked hard and planted many trees on all sides,
And, when his labour had restored one piece,
The hearts of those that dwelt therein rejoiced.
Those that had fled, their heart's blood in their eyes,
Flocked back on hearing of that restoration,
And of the toils of that white-headed chief,
And reinstated street and water-course,
While fowl, ox, ass, and sheep all multiplied
Upon the cultured parts, and everywhere
Folk planted trees till that waste spot became
Like Paradise. The third year he restored
The town : the chief was blessed in all his labours.
When jocund spring came round the Sháh went forth
Upon the plain a-hunting with Rúzbih,
The high priest. When the pair drew near the hamlet
Bahrám Gúr suddenly beheld the world
All crops and cattle, lofty mansions rose,
And all the township thronged with sheep and oxen.
'Twas all streams, pleasances, and growing crops,
And fenugreek and tulips filled the hills,
Whereon roamed sheep and lambs, for hill and dale
Had grown to be a paradise. The Sháh
Said to the high priest : " O Rúzbih ! what didst thou C. 1504
To make this verdant village waste and scatter
Its men and beasts, and what hast thou dispensed
In thus restoring it ? "
The high priest answered :—
" This ancient seat was ruined by a word,
And by a word restored, to please the Sháh.
He bade me : ' Take thou treasure and dínárs,
And make this verdant spot a wilderness,'
But I feared God and blame from great and small.

When friends, though one in heart, are two in aim
'Tis ruin, as I have perceived, to both ;
So when there are two rulers in a state
Their land will be o'erturned. I went and said
Thus to the elders of this settlement :—
' O men ! there is no ruler over you
From this time forth, but women, children, slaves,
Hirelings and husbandmen, are lords alike.'
When those who had been underlings became
Lords too the nobles' heads were all brought low,
And all the place was ruined by a word.
Thus was I far removed from all reproach,
And apprehension of God's chastisement.
Thereafter, when the Sháh had ruth on them,
I went and pointed out another course ;
I made a wise, old man and eloquent,
A man of leading and informed, the ruler.
He laboured and restored the waste, rejoicing
His subjects' hearts. When one man ruled, the counsel
Was good, prosperity increased, ill waned.
I, unobserved, had shown them what was bad,
And opened afterward the way of God.
Discourse is better than fine-watered gems
When 'tis employed aright. Let wisdom be
The Sháh, the tongue the paladin, if thou
Wouldst have thy spirit easy. May thy heart
Be glad for aye and free from wile and waste."

The Sháh, on hearing, cried : " Well done, Rúzbih !
Thou'rt worthy of a crown ! "

Bahrám Gúr gave
That old man worshipful and prescient
A purse all filled with gold dínárs. For him
A robe of honour too they fashionéd
Of royal stuffs, and cloud-ward raised his head.

§ 9

How Bahrám married a Country-miller's Daughters

Another week the monarch of the world
Went forth to hunt with lords and archimages,
Prepared to spend a month upon the chase,
To revel with his meiny, and to take
Illimitable game on waste and mountain. C. 1505
He and his escort reached in merry pin
A town. The night came on, and all was dark.
The chiefs dismissed the escort and recited
Tales of the Sháhs. He saw afar a fire,
Such as Sháhs kindle on Bahman's high day.[1]
The king of kings gazed at the light and spied
A pleasant village with a mill before it,
Where sat the village-chiefs, while all the maidens,
Each with a crown of roses on her head,
Were feasting by themselves beside the fire.
The minstrels sat about, the maidens sang
Tales of the royal wars, and every one
Began to tell a story in her turn.
They all were moon-faced, all had locks a-curl,
All were sweet-spoken, and all savoured musk.
They sat ranked on the grass and close before
The mill-door, singing, with a posy each,
And half bemused with wine and merriment.
Then from that scene of revel rose a cry,
And one exclaimed : " The toast of Sháh Bahrám !
He hath Grace, stature, mien, and love. Before him
The rolling sphere upstandeth. Thou wouldst say :—
' His face distilleth wine, the scent of musk
Proceedeth from his hair.' He only hunteth
The lion and the onager, and so
Folk title him ' Bahrám Gúr.' "

This he heard,

[1] The day Bahman of the month Bahman was a time of festivity.

And rode toward them. Drawing near the girls
He scanned the plain, beheld it filled with Moons,
And saw that he should stop short of the city.
He bade, and from the road cup-bearers came,
Provided wine and boon-companions,
And handed him a crystal cup. Meanwhile
Four of the girls, those chief in rank, came forth—
One Mushkináb,[1] the others Mushkinak,
Náztáb, and Súsanak. With cheeks like spring,
With stately mien, and hand in hand, they went
Before the Sháh and sang about Bahrám,
The king of kings, the wise and prosperous.
Bahrám Gúr asked, for they perturbed his heart :—
" Who are ye,[2] rose-cheeked ? Wherefore is this fire? "
One said : " O cavalier of cypress-height,
So like a king in everything ! our father
C. 1506 Is an old miller who is shooting game
Upon this mountain and will come anon
Since it is night, and he can see no longer."
With that the miller and his men came bringing
Their quarry. When his eyes fell on Bahrám Gúr
He rubbed his face upon the dust and bare him
With awe and reverence. The Sháh bade give
That old man just arrived a golden cup,
And said to him : " Why keepest thou these four
With sunny faces thus ? Is it not time
For them to wed ? "
The old man offered praise,
And said : " There is no husband for them ; they
Are maidens still and pure in chastity,
But that is all the property they have,
And this is all that I can say for them."

[1] Mushkináz in C. and P. Mushkinâb means " Pure Musk " ; Mushkinak is a species of bird ; Nâztáb is " Charmer," and Sûsanak " Little Lily."

[2] Reading with P.

Bahrám said : " Give me all the four, and henceforth
Regard them not as daughters."

Quoth the ancient :—

" Do not as thou hast said, O cavalier !
No cups have we, no land, no crops, no silver,
No mansion, ox, and ass."

Bahrám Gúr said :—

" 'Tis well, for I would have them portionless."

The miller said : " The four shall be thy wives,
The handmaids of the dust within thy chambers.
Thine eye hath seen their good points and their ill,
And, seeing, hath approved."

Bahrám Gúr said :—

" From holy God, the All-giver, I accept them."

He spake and rose. Steeds neighed upon the plain.
He bade the eunuchs of his escort bear
Those Idols to the royal women's house,
And through the night the troops filed o'er the waste.

The miller marvelled, mused all night, and said
Thus to his wife : " This moon-like lord so tall
And masterful, how came he here by night ? "

She answered : " He perceived the fire from far,
The noise the girls were making, and the sound
Of minstrels, harp, and revelry."

The miller
Said to his wife : " Advise me, O my spouse !
If this affair will turn out well or ill ? "

She answered : " It is all God's providence.
The man, on seeing them, asked not their race,
Thought not of dowry. On earth's face he sought
For Moons and not for money or kings' daughters.
If idol-worshippers saw these in Chín
There would be no more idol-worshipping ! "

Thus till above the Raven's back the sun C. 1507
Rose, and the world grew like a shining lamp,
They talked at large of base and upright men,

But with the day the village-chief arrived,
And said to that old man : " O brave of luck ! [1]
Good fortune visited thy couch last night !
The verdant branches of thy tree bear fruit.
One looked, beheld the merriment and fire,
And, having turned his horse about, drew near ;
So now thy daughters have become his wives,
And rest securely in his women's house.
By giving them such faces, hair, and carriage
Thou didst prepare them for the Sháh ! Bahrám,
The king of kings, is now thy son-in-law !
Henceforth thou wilt be famous through the realm.
He hath bestowed upon thee all this province
And march, so sorrow not, for thou hast 'scaped
From cares and fears. Command. 'Tis thine to bid.
We all of us are thralls and bound to thee ;
We all of us are subject to thee now,
Are subject ! Rather we are all thy slaves."
The miller and his wife in their amaze
Invoked God's name. The village-chieftain said :—
" Such locks as those and countenances too
Would bring the sun from his fourth heaven to woo."

§ 10

How Bahrám found the Treasures of Jamshíd and bestowed them upon the Poor

Another week he went forth to the chase
With favourites from the host and archimages.
Swift as the wind there came a loyal liege
With spade in hand and asking of the troops
Where was Bahrám, the Sháh, amid the throng ?
An archimage replied : " What wilt thou ? Speak.

[1] " O vaillant Rouzbeh." Mohl.

Thou canst not see the monarch of the world." [1]
The man said : " Since I may see not his face
I will speak not before his followers."
They brought before the Sháh that seeker—one
Both learned and eloquent—who seeing him
Said : " I have words to speak to thee in private."
Bahrám Gúr turned his horse's head aside,
And rode some distance from his followers' sight.
Then said the man : " O world-possessing Sháh !
Thou must observe my words. A countryman
Am I, and landlord here. I own the soil,
The homestead, and the crops. I was engaged
In making water-courses on my land
To benefit my property, and when
There was much water, and the stream ran strong,
In one place there was formed an orifice,
A wondrous clamour reached mine ears, and I C. 1508
Came crying out in terror of my life.
The clash of cymbals issued from the stream—
A sound denoting treasure." [2]
Hearing this
Bahrám Gúr went and saw a plain all verdure,
And watered, bade bring labourers with spades
From far, and lighted from his steed. They pitched
His tent among the crops. Night came. The warriors
Lit lamps and everywhere enkindled fires.
Now when the sun set up above the deep
Its banner, burnishing the violet air,
The workmen mustered from all sides, as though
A mighty army, and began to dig.
That portion of the plain was excavate,
And, as the workers wearied, there appeared
Out of the dust a mount-like place—a mansion
Of mortar and burnt brick—like Paradise.
They plied their picks ; far down a doorway showed.

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 250.

An archmage, seeing, entered by the door,
He and another uninvited guest.
They found a single chamber long and wide,
And many cubits high. Within it stood
Two buffaloes of gold and, fronting them,
A golden laver strewn with emeralds
And rubies mixed. They seemed two Signs of Taurus,
Were hollow, and were filled up with pomegranates,
With apples, and with quinces that contained
Fine-watered pearls, each like a water-drop.
The buffaloes had jewel-eyes, and heads
Decayed with age. Ranked round them there were lions
And onagers, some having ruby eyes,
And others crystal. There were golden pheasants
And peacocks, with their breasts and eyes all gems.
The minister, whose wisdom was a crown
Upon the moon, on seeing that spectacle,
Went to the Sháh and cried excitedly :—
" Arise. Enough to dower thy treasuries
Is here ! A chamber filled with precious stones
Is manifest, whose key high heaven hath kept ! "
His lord said : " One of counsel and of might
Would write his name upon his treasures. See
Whose name is there and when they were amassed."
On hearing this the high priest went and saw
The impress of the signet of Jamshíd
Upon the buffaloes, and notified
The monarch of the world : " I have beheld,
And ' Sháh Jamshíd ' is on the buffaloes."
O. 1509 The Sháh said : " O high priest in all regards
More learned than sages ! wherefore make mine own
The treasures that Jamshíd laid up of yore ?
May nothing e'er be added to my wealth
Unless by justice and the scimitar.
Bestow the whole upon the poor. God grant

That no mishap befall us. For my troops
No share is requisite, our valour openeth
The earth to us. As is the use of kings
'Tis needful that we count up all this wealth,
Sell all the gems for cash, and then assemble
From desert and from settlement the widows,
The orphans, and the impoverished men of name—
Those lost to aspiration, fame, and ease—
Then take the sum of such, including those
That, troubled by their debts, should have a share,
And give to them the money and the goods
To assoil Jamshíd the world-lord's soul, but I
Am youthful still, and sound in wind and limb ;
Why should I seek his treasures ? Let one tenth
Be for the finder, who sought out the Sháh,
But never let him hope for joy hereafter
That beareth off the cerecloth from Jamshíd.
To compass toil in consort with my troops,
And treasure and renown from Rúm and Chín,
That is for me and for my steed, Shabdíz,
And for my trenchant scimitar. No shifts,
Or shirks, for me ! "

He went back to the treasure
Won by his sweat and toil, assembled all
The warriors of the realm, and gave his troops
A whole year's pay. He held a feast that spring,
Adorned his hall of jewelled tracery,
And, when the red wine shone in crystal cups,
And he himself was jocund and right glad,
He thus harangued his friends : " Exalted ones,
Who know the token of the throne of kings !
Down from Húshang as far as famed Naudar,
Who was a memory of Farídún,
And on again right up to Kai Kubád,
Who placed the crown of greatness on his head,
See who of all these mighty men is left,

And who remaineth to applaud their justice ?
Now, since the circle of their years is cut,
Their reputation is their monument,
Which saith that this had spirit, that had not,
And one doth blame them, and another praise.
We all shall pass in turn, and not to walk
C. 1510 The world for ill is well. Why should I need
The treasure of those gone ? Why should my heart
Expand toward dínárs ? I will not set it
Upon this Wayside Inn, or make my boast
Of crown, or clutch at treasure. If the days
Pass in delight why should the wise eat grief ?
Whene'er a liege of mine, a countryman
Or courtier, shall complain of mine oppression
Then may my head and crown and treasure perish."
There was an ancient man, hight Máhiyár,
Whose years had reached eight score and four. He rose,
On hearing this, and spake thus : " O just lord !
Tales have we heard of Farídún, Jamshíd,
And others more or less renowned, but none
Hath heard of Sháh like thee—the lowly's hope,
The Glory of the great—and were the sea
Large as thy heart 'twould rise in waves of gems,
For from thy soul the radiance of Surúsh
Proceedeth, dwarfing all a wise man's wit.
Thou hast so lavished treasure in the world
That no one great or small hath seen the like.
When men spake of the era of Jamshíd,
And of the treasure of the buffaloes,
None wotted where it was—beneath the dust,
Or in the dragon's breath—but having found it
Thou didst not look thereon, for thou didst scorn
This Wayside Hostelry. Good sooth ! no king
Hath seen, nor will a hundred see, such jewels
As these in any sea, yet these and all

The buffaloes and onagers thou gavest
Without exception to the poor! May crown
And girdle never lack thee. Health be thine,
Be victor thou and fortune's favourite.
The ink would blacken many a royal roll
To tell this tale and yet not reach the end.
Thou being gone thy name will live in praise
When folk recount the story of thy days."

§ 11

How Bahrám, returning from Hunting, went to the House of a Merchant and departed displeased

One day, another week, he went to hunt,
When indisposed, and took his bow and arrows.
The plain grew sultry with the blazing sun.
He came back from his hunting leisurely,
And reached a merchant's house, to whom he said,
On looking round and seeing none beside:
"Canst give us lodging since thou wilt not find us
A trouble?"
Having helped him to dismount C. 1511
The merchant found a place for him. The Sháh,
Complaining of the colic, gave the merchant
Some drachms, and said: "Toast some old cheese with almonds."
The merchant did not do as he was asked,
Not having almonds by him, but, at night-fall
And at his leisure, got a hot roast fowl,
And served it to Bahrám upon a tray,
Who said: "I asked thee for old cheese, besought thee
To bring it, and thou hast not brought it me
Although I gave thee drachms and had complained
Of colic."
Said the merchant: "Foolish fellow!

Thy soul is starving through thy lack of wit.
Since I have brought to thee this hot roast fowl
Mere shame should stay thee asking aught beside."
Bahrám thereat ceased longing for old cheese.
Grieved at his words he ate, referring not
To what had passed. When it was sleeping-time
He slept and said naught further to the merchant.
Now when the sun rose o'er the heaving deep,
And when the Cloak pitch-hued had disappeared,
The wealthy merchant said to his apprentice :—
" O simpleton ! why didst thou buy a fowl
Not worth a drachm for more and wrong me so ?
Had't been a proper fowl then he and I
Had fallen not out last night, or hadst thou spent
A quarter of a drachm in buying cheese
He would have been to me like milk and water
To-day."
The apprentice answered : " 'Tis all one.
Know that the fowl is at my charge. Be thou
And he my guests, so quarrel not with me
About the bird."
Now when Bahrám arose
From pleasant sleep he sought his docile steed
To saddle it and go back to his palace,
And from his palace raise his crown to Saturn.
The apprentice, seeing him, said to Bahrám :—
" Give to thy slave thy company to-day."
The Sháh returned, sat down again, and marvelled
At fortune. Then the youth went out and fetched
Two hundred almonds and addressed his master :—
" Bestir thee, sir ! and have these almonds toasted,
Make ready too some cheese and some new bread,
For such the cavalier asked yesterday,
Bring food and spread the board."
He went before

Bahrám and said : " O cavalier ! I bring thee
All hot what yesterday thou didst require, C. 1512
And there is more to follow in due course."
Thus saying he set off to the bázár,
A different sort of purchaser. He bought
More almonds, sugar, fowl, and lamb to make
An ample meal, wine, saffron, musk, rose-water,
And hurried home. He brought the board all spread
With dainty meats. A sprightly youth was he
And well disposed. The eating done, he brought
Forth cups of wine, first serving king Bahrám,
And thus, till blithe and jocund, they proceeded
From eating to the cup. The Sháh addressed
His entertainer thus : " Bahrám will be
Inquiring for me, but do ye drink on,
Grow drunk, and budge not till ye prove yourselves
Wine-worshippers."
Then rubbing down and saddling
Shabdíz he started, blithe with wine, for court,
First saying to the merchant : " Toil not so
In quest of gain, O thou that sellest dear !
Thou wouldst have sold me for a quarter drachm
Yestreen, sewn up the eyes of thine apprentice
Because he bought a fowl above the price,
And have put me within the dragon's maw."
He spake and sped back to his royal seat.
Now when the sun displayed its crown in heaven
The guardian of the world sat on his throne
Of ivory and bade the chamberlain
Seek out the merchant and conduct him thither
With his apprentice. One of them was glad,
The other glum. Bahrám, on seeing the apprentice,
Made much of him and seated him rejoicing
Among the lords. They brought to him a purse,
And made his awe-gloomed spirit like the moon.
Then to the merchant said Bahrám : " Know this :

Thou shalt be slave for life to thine apprentice,
And, further, pay him twice in every month
Three score drachms from thy savings. With thy goods
He shall be entertainer and make laugh
The hearts of noble men."

Then to the high priest :—

" The king that disregardeth this world's doings,
How can he know what man is truly great,
Or how discern the evil from the good ? "[1]

So now, O sage that seekest wisdom's way !
If thou must have a saw hear what I say :—
" Avoid all avarice if man thou be,
Or be indeed below humanity."

§ 12

How Bahrám slew a Dragon and went to a Yokel's House

C. 1513 Bahrám abode a season with his lords,
With sparkling wine, with cup, and minstrelsy.
Spring came, the ground seemed Paradise, the air
Sowed tulips on earth's face, all tracts grew full
Of game, and in the brooks the waters seemed
Like wine and milk. The deer and onager
Paced in the dales or clustered on the sward,
The blackbirds haunted all the river-banks,
And all around them bent pomegranate-blooms.
" 'Tis long," the nobles said to Sháh Bahrám Gúr,
" Since we have hunted onager."

He answered :—

" Choose we a thousand horsemen from the host,
And let them bring the cheetahs and the hawks,

[1] In C the next section begins here. We follow the arrangement in P.

The falcons and the noble peregrines,
Go to Túrán and pass a month in hunting."
The royal hunter went. He found the world
All hues and scent. His gallant chieftains swept it
For onager, gazelle, and mountain-sheep—
A labour that extended o'er two days—
What while Bahrám had wine in hand ; the third,
When Sol illumed its crown, when earth grew golden,
And hill and stream became as ivory,
The valiant Sháh went to the chase and saw
A dragon like a lion. From its head
Hair hung down to the ground, and it had breasts
Like those of women. Then Bahrám Gúr strung
His bow and shot forthwith a poplar arrow
Against the dragon's chest. He shot another
Straight at its head, and gore and venom flowed
Adown its front. The king dismounted, drew
His sword, and carved up all the dragon's breast.
It had gulped down a youth and frozen him
In blood and bane. Bahrám bewailed him sorely
What while the venom blinded his own eyes.
He took the corpse out of the dragon's maw,
Ne'er may its head and breast unite again.
He rode off dizzied, suffering, and longing
For sleep and water, reached a settlement,
Arriving at a house-door from the waste,
And saw a woman shouldering a pitcher.
She veiled her face from him. He said to her :—
" Can I lodge here or must I toil on still ? "
She said : " Brave horseman ! treat this house as thine."
On hearing this he rode his courser in.
His hostess called her husband. " Bring a wisp,"
She said, " and rub his steed. At feeding-time
Feed from the sack."
She went to her own chamber, c. 1514

Swept out the house and laid down mat and pillow,
With blessings on Bahrám, went to the cistern,
Drew water, and berated to herself
Her spouse the while : " The fool will ne'er bestir
Himself on seeing some one in the house.
This is not women's work, but for my part
I, soldier-like, can only grin and bear it ! "

She brought and spread the board with vinegar
And salad, bread and curds. Went Sháh Bahrám,
And bathed his face, for he had been o'erwrought
In fighting with that dragon. So he ate
A little, then lay down and groaned, his face
Concealed beneath a kerchief made in Chín.

The woman, when she woke, said to her spouse :—
" O knave with unwashed face ! thou shouldest slay
A lamb because this cavalier is great,
And of the royal seed, hath kingly bearing,
And moon-like Grace, and he is like to none
Save Sháh Bahrám."

Her mean spouse said to her :—
" Why such to-do ? Thou hast no salted meat,
No fire-wood, and no bread, and spinnest not
A-nights as others do. When thou hast killed
A lamb, and he—this cavalier—hath eaten
And gone, then go, buy, mingle with the throng ;
The winter, cold, and blast undoubtedly
Will come on thee no less."

So spake her spouse.
She hearkened not, for she was good and wise,
And in the end her husband slew a lamb
At her entreaty for the cavalier.
When it was slain she made a pot of broth,
And lit a fire with half-burnt sticks, then brought
The tray with eggs thereon and water-cresses,
A roasted leg of lamb and everything
That she had cooked. Bahrám, when he had washed

His hands, his dinner done, felt indisposed
For slumber and still ailed. Now when the night
Foregathered with the sun the woman fetched
Wine and a harp. " O woman of few words ! "
The Sháh said, " tell to me some old-world tale
That while thou art reciting I may quaff
To chase away my pain and cares. I give thee
Free speech about the Sháh for praise or blame."
That woman of few words said : " Yea, 'tis well,
For he is first and last in everything."
Bahrám responded : " He is so indeed,
But he is just and good to nobody."
That dame of spirit said : " O honest man !
This place hath many folk and many homes,
And always cavaliers are passing through C. 1515
From public offices and ministers.
If one of them shall call a man a thief
The accused will have much trouble afterward.
The cavalier to compass some few drachms
Will make the poor man's life a misery,
Or one may smirch some honest woman's fame,
And make her fall to folly. This is loss,
Because the treasury is none the richer.
This is our trouble with our Sháh, the world-lord."
The king grew full of thought at that account—
How those in power were wronging his good name—
And then the pious Sháh thought with himself :—
" No one doth praise the just. Henceforward I
Will play the tyrant for a while that love
And justice may grow manifest from ill."
Vexed by dark thoughts he passed a sleepless night,
His heart allied to tyranny the while.
Now when Sol rent its musky-scented veil,
And showed its face in heaven, the woman left
The house and bade her spouse : " Bring pot and fire,
And in the water put all kinds of grain

Before the sun shall see it. Mind it well
While I go milk the cow."
She brought the cow
From pasture, got much grass, and threw it down
Before her; then she tried the udders, crying :—
"In God's name who hath neither mate nor peer!"
She found the udder milkless, and the heart
Of that young hostess aged. She told her husband :—
"Good man! our monarch's heart hath changed in purpose,
The world's king hath become tyrannical!
A secret change came o'er his heart last night."
He said : "What words are these? Why go and croak?"
She thus replied : "My dear one! what I say
Is sober truth, for when the Sháh, the world-lord,
Hath grown unjust the moon may shine not forth
In heaven, the udders are dry, the musk-bags lose
Their scent, adultery and guile are rampant,
The tender heart becometh flinty, wolves
Devour folk on the waste, the sage doth flee
The fool, and eggs are addled 'neath the hens
What time the Sháh becometh tyrannous.
The pasture of this cow had minished not,
Her watering-place supplied her as before,
Yet is her udder dry, her lowing changed."
On hearing this the Sháh forthwith repented,
C. 1516 And prayed to God : "O Thou who art supreme,
Almighty, and the Arbiter of fortune!
If e'er my heart shall turn away from justice
Then be the throne of kings no longer mine."
That blesséd dame, who worshipped holy God,
Tried with her hand the udder once again,
She tried it in the Lord's name, saying thus :—
"Cause Thou the milk to flow."
The milk flowed forth.

The good wife cried : " O God, our Succourer !
Thou hast recalled to justice the unjust,
For, if not so, this virtue were not his."
Then said she to the master of the house :—
" The justice of the unjust is restored.
Laugh and rejoice ; this is the Maker's boon
To us."
Now when the porridge had been cooked,
And man and wife had done that chare, the good dame,
And after her the master of the house,
Who bare the tray, went to their guest. Upon it
There was a bowl of porridge, oh ! how good
Had it been but some broth ! The Sháh ate somewhat,
Then spake thus to that kindly dame : " Take thou
This whip outside and hang it where folk pass.
Choose out a proper bough because the wind
Must harm it not, then note the passers by
With one eye on the whip."
The good-man went
Forthwith, he hung the whip upon a tree,
And kept his eye thereon a while. There came
Innumerable troops along the road,
And all that saw the whip there hailed Bahrám.
They lighted down before that lengthy whip,
And passed saluting. " 'Tis the Sháh, none else !"
The good-man told his spouse. " Naught but the throne
Could fit a face like that ! "
Then full of awe
Both ran to him and cried : " O Sháh ! O great !
O mighty one ! O sage, high priest and world-lord !
A humble woman and her gardener-spouse
Have been thy poor hosts in this house. Withal
They did not do their best. We ne'er suspected
That 'twas the Sháh, that such an one as he
Would come to this place as a guest, would come

To this poor home of ours."

Bahrám replied :—

" Good friend ! I give to thee this march, the land,
And village. Be thou ever hospitable ;
Be that, and give up garden-work."

He spake,
And laughing left the house, gat on his steed
C. 1517 Wind-footed, and from that poor village reached
His jewelled halls. The nobles of Írán
Went thither for the chase, three hundred strong,
And each with thirty servants in his train
Of Turkman, Rúman, or of Persian strain.

§ 13

How Bahrám went to the Chase and espoused the Daughters of the Thane Barzín

The third day after this the Sháh went forth
With escort, the equipment for the chase,
Ten camels all in housings of brocade
With stirrups silver and with dossers gold,
Ten camels with the Sháh's pavilion,
And his brocaded seat. In front of these
Were seven elephants which bare the throne
Of turquoise hued like Nile ; its feet were all
Of gold and crystal ; 'twas the throne itself
Of Sháh Bahrám Gúr. Every swordsman there
Had thirty pages who had golden belts
And bridles, while a hundred camels served
To bear the minstrels wearing massive crowns.
The falconers had eight score hawks with them,
And ten score noble peregrines and falcons.
Among them there was one bird black of hue,

More precious in the Sháh's eyes than the rest,
With sable talons and with yellow beak,
Like gold a-gleam on lapis-lazuli.
They called it a tughral. Its eyes were like
Two goblets full of blood. The Khán of Chín
Had sent it with a throne and crown, with amber,
A golden torque inlaid with emeralds,
With two score armlets, and with thrice twelve earrings,
Three hundred camel-loads of rarities
Of Chín, and fifteen score of ruby signets.
Behind the falconers they led eight score
Of cheetahs for that Lustre of the world—
The Sháh—with jewelled torques and chains of gold.
Thus came the king of kings upon the plain,
And raised his crown o'er Jupiter. The sportsmen
Made for the river whither used the Sháh
Auspiciously to fare each seventh year.
As they drew near they found the river full
Of water-fowl. He had the tabor beaten,
And the tughral flew off. The imperious bird
Was all impatience ; in its claws a crane
Was helpless quarry, and a pard had been
Its proper prey. At length it soared from sight, C. 1518
And bound a crane, then soared again and flew
Like shaft from bow, the falconer pursuing.
The Sháh was vexed that it had flown away,
And followed by the tinkling of its bells.
He came upon a spacious pleasure-ground,
With mansion rising in a coign thereof,
And thither went with certain of his men,
The rest remaining on the hunting-field.
On entering Bahrám Gúr saw a garden
As 'twere a mountain-skirt. Upon the ground
Brocade was spread, and all the place was full
Of slaves and wealth. A pool was in the centre
Whereby an old man sat. Three girls like ivory

Sat by him wearing turquoise crowns. Their cheeks
Were like the spring, their statures tall, their eyebrows
Arched, and their tresses lassos ; each girl held
A crystal goblet, and Bahrám Gúr saw them.
His eyes were dazzled at the spectacle
Just as his heart was gloomed for his tughral.
On seeing him that wealthy thane grew pale
As fenugreek with fear. A wise old man
Was he, Barzín by name, but ill-affected
Toward the Sháh. As swift as wind he left
The hauz,[1] approached the Sháh, and kissed the ground,
Then said : " O monarch of the sun-like face !
May heaven revolve according to thy will.
I do not dare to say to thee : ' Abide
With thy two hundred horsemen on my march.'
Still, if the Sháh take pleasure in my garden,
The glory of Barzín hath reached the moon."
" To-day," the world's king answered, " the tughral
Escaped us. I am vexed about that fowler,
Which hunted birds as leopards hunt their quarry."
Barzín replied : " I saw a sable bird
Just now with golden bells and pitch-hued body,
Its beak and talons turmeric in hue ;
It came and settled on yon walnut-tree :
By thy good fortune it is come to hand."
The Sháh said to a servant : " Go and look."
He went like wind and cried : " Glad ever be
The world-lord ! The tughral is on a bough ;
E'en now the falconer is taking it."
The hawk thus found, the old man said : " O Sháh
Without a mate or equal on the earth !
Oh ! may thine entertainer prove auspicious,
And all the wearers of a crown thy slaves.

[1] See Vol. i. p. 203 *note*.

Call for a wine-cup in our present joy, C. 1519
And, when thou art refreshed, ask what thou wilt."
The king of kings dismounted at the pool,
And old Barzín grew glad. With that there came
Bahrám's chief minister and therewithal
The captains of the host and treasurer.
Barzín brought forth a golden cup and first
Drank to the monarch of the world, then brought
And offered to the Sháh a cup of crystal,
Who seeing took and drained the proffered draught
Below the inscription-line, whereat Barzín
In high delight had wine-jars set about
The place, and in his cups said to his daughters :—
" My clever chicks ! no chieftain of the host,
But Sháh Bahrám hath visited this garden !
So come, thou songstress ! let us have a song,
And thou, my moon-faced daughter ! bring thy harp."
All three drew near the Sháh, and on their heads
Were jewelled crowns. One danced, another played
Upon the harp, the third possessed a sweet
And soothing voice. While they made minstrelsy
The king of kings in high contentment drained
His goblet dry. He said thus to Barzín :—
" What girls are these who live with thee in joy ? "
Barzín thus answered him : " O Sháh ! may none
Behold the age without thee. Know that these
Are mine own daughters and my heart's delight.
One is a caroler, another harpeth,
The third observeth measure in the dance.
I need not aught, O Sháh ! for I have money,
Domain, and pleasure-ground, and my three daughters
Are, as the Sháh perceiveth, like glad spring.
O moon-face ! " said he to the songstress, " fear not,
But sing a song about the Sháh."

The Idols

Took heart to sing and play. The songstress sang :—

" O moon-faced king ! the moon in heaven
Alone is like to thee,
The royal throne thine only seat.
Thou with thy moon-like blee,

And teak-like stature art the pride
Of throne and crown. Oh ! rare
For those that see thy face at morn,
For those that scent thy hair !

Thy loins are tiger-like, thy limbs
Are mighty, thy crown's Grace
Is as the cloud-rack high, and like
Pomegranate-bloom thy face.

For rapture of thy love hearts laugh,
Like ocean is thine own ;
Like cloud thy hand. As thy fit prey
I see the lion alone.

C. 1520 Thou splittest with thy shaft a hair,
And by thine equity
Convertest water into milk.
When hostile armies see

Thy lasso and thy puissant arm
Their hearts and brains are rent
However mighty their array,
Howe'er on battle bent."

Bahrám Gúr, having heard the ditty, drained
The massive crystal cup and thus addressed
Barzín : " O noble sir, experienced much
Is this world's heat and cold ! thou wilt not find
A better son-in-law than me who am
'Mid kings a hero and the king of men.
Bestow thy daughters on me—all the three—

And I will raise thy coronet to Saturn."
" O king ! " Barzín replied, " may wine and bearer
Find favour in thy sight. Who will dare say
That he hath such a Venus in his house ?
If now thou wilt accept me as a slave
To serve before the throne of king of kings
Then will I pay my service to thy crown,
Thy throne, thy Grace, thy fortune, and thy state ;
Moreover my three daughters are thy handmaids
To stand before thee as thy slaves. The Sháh
Approved of them as such or ever he
Saw these three Moons afar. As teaks are they
In stature and as ivory in hue,
Fit for the throne and to adorn the crown.
Now will I tell the monarch of the world
What fortune I possess for good and ill :
Of clothes and carpets, stuffs and draperies,
Good sooth have I stored up in mine abode
Two hundred camel-loads or more as well
As necklaces and bracelets, crowns and thrones,
All for my daughters' pleasure."
Hearing this
Bahrám replied : " Leave what thou hast in store,
Where now it is, and seek mirth with the wine-cup."
The elder answered : " My three moon-like daughters
I give thee by the rites of Gaiúmart
And of Húshang. Dust are they 'neath thy feet,
And all the three live but to do thy will."
The eldest daughter's name was Máh Áfríd,
The second's Farának, and the cadette's
Was Shambalíd. Approving them at sight
The Sháh preferred them 'mongst his lawful wives,
And bade a noble of his escort bring
Four golden litters,[1] and, when all three Idols
Were set therein, they were encircled there

[1] The fourth was for himself and needful. See below.

By forty Rúman slaves—their devotees—
Who called down praises on them as they went.
C. 1521 While they departed to their golden home
The glorious Sháh caroused. A servant hung
His whip above the court-gate, for the escort,
Save by the token of the whip, ne'er knew
Where Sháh and nobles were. When any one
Beheld the handle and its lengthy thong
He used to run thereto and do obeisance.
Bahrám drank on until he was bemused,
Then glorious took his seat within a litter,
And went back to his women's golden house—
The house that was perfumed with ambergris.
On his return he tarried for a week,
And much he feasted, lavished, and held converse.
The eighth day he went hunting with Rúzbih,
And with a thousand cavaliers. He saw
That all the plain was full of onager,
Drew from its case his royal bow, and strung it,
Invoking God who giveth victory.
'Twas springtide and the onager were pairing.
From all the world they met confronting there,
And rent each other's hides, the face of earth
Was reddened with their blood. Bahrám abode
While two bucks fought together furiously,
Then when the valiant buck that gained the day
Was covering a doe he laughed to see
The onagers, took hold upon his bow-string,
Shot, piercing the buck's flank so that the arrow
Went home up to its plumes, and skewered buck
And doe together, thrilling all his escort.
All who beheld that shot acclaimed the Sháh :—
" Oh ! be the evil eye far from thy Grace,
And may thy whole life be a festival.
Such might as thine the age ne'er saw till now ;
At once Sháh, warrior, and king art thou."

§ 14

How Bahrám slew Lions, went to the House of a Jeweller, and married his Daughter

The Sháh, on urging thence his steed Shabrang,
Came on a forest and beheld before it
Two savage lions, strung and drew his bow.
The arrow, striking on the lion's breast,
Was buried to the plumes. Forthwith Bahrám
Turned to the lioness and, shooting, pinned
Her breast and loins together, but exclaimed :—
"The shaft was featherless, the point was blunt, C. 1522
If point there were."
The escort praised him, saying :—
O famous king of earth ! none ever saw,
Or will see, on the throne of king of kings
A Sháh like thee, who with unfeathered arrows
O'erthrowest lions, and with plumed uprootest
A mount of flint."
The monarch with his meiny
Rode on along the meadow-land and saw
A forest full of sheep, their herds in flight
For fear of harm. The chief herd, ne'er at ease
For terror of wild beasts, perceived Bahrám,
Who said to him : " What man is driving sheep
To this unlikely spot ? "
The head man answered :—
" Great sir ! none cometh to this pasturage
Except myself. They are a jeweller's :
I drove them from the mountains yesterday.
The owner is a wealthy man not troubled
By fear of loss.[1] He owneth gems by ass-loads,
Gold, silver, trinketry. He hath withal
One only daughter, skilful on the harp.
Her tresses cluster on her head in curls.

[1] Reading with P.

He will take wine from her hand only. None
Hath seen an old man like him. How could he
Have kept his property but by the justice
Of Sháh Bahrám? The great king of the world
Is not concerned for gold, and his archmages
Are not unjust; but say who slew these beasts,
For may the Ruler of the world uphold him?"
Bahrám replied: "This pair of lions fell
Beneath the arrows of a valiant man,
Who, having slain these gallant beasts, departed
With seven other gallant cavaliers.
Where is the jeweller's mansion? Point the way,
And hide it not from us."
The chief hind said:—
"Proceed and thou wilt reach a brand-new seat.
The jeweller thence fareth to the city,
To Sháh Bahrám's own palace, but, what time
The sun doth don its Sable Silk, returneth
To banquet. Revelling and sound of lyre
Will reach thine ears if thou wilt bide a while."
Bahrám, on hearing this, called for his steed,
And for apparel suited to a king,
Then parted from his minister and escort.
Good sooth! but he was full of eagerness!
Rúzbih said to the chiefs: "So now the Sháh
Is going to the village, there to knock
Upon the portal of the jeweller!
C. 1523 And, mark my words! will ask of him his daughter,
And crown her doubtless with a crown of gold,
Will take her to his ladies' golden house,
And send that other three back to Barzín![1]
He never hath enough of chambering;
His consort flitteth ere the night is over!
He hath above a hundred ladies' bowers!
'Tis ill to have a king of kings like this.

[1] See previous section.

Just now a eunuch reckoned up nine hundred
And thirty damsels wearing jewelled crowns
Within the palace, all provided for !
The Sháh demandeth tribute from all lands,
And Rúm will be exhausted in a year.
Alack ! for shoulders, breast, and height like his,
And face that brightened all the company !
None will behold his like in strength and stature,
Who pinneth with one shaft two onagers ;
But dalliance with women marreth him,
He soon will be as feeble as a ghost !
His eyes will darken and his looks grow wan,
His body slacken and his cheeks turn blue.
To sniff at women maketh hoary heads,
And hoary heads have naught to hope on earth.
As polo-playing maketh stoop the upright,
So womanizing causeth every ill.
Once in a month is intercourse enough,
While more is waste of blood. A wise youth too
Should husband vigour for his children's sake.
In this excess there is excess of loss,
And slackness is afflictive to a man."

They went back to the palace, talking still,
And one remarked : "The Sun hath lost his way."

Bahrám Gúr, with one slave to mind his horse,
Fared through the gloom of night and, when he neared
The jeweller's abode, heard sounds of harping,
Whereto he urged Gulgún, his steed, forthwith
Toward the merchant's house. He knocked and asked
Admittance, all the while invoking Him
Who made the sun. A kindly handmaid said :—
"Who's there ? Why knock thus at this time of night ? "

Bahrám replied : "This morning as the Sháh
Was coming from the hunting-ground my horse
Went lame, and I perforce got left behind.

Here in this thoroughfare the folk will steal
A steed like this and my gold harness too,
So I need help."
The handmaid went and told
Her lord : " A man requesteth shelter, saying :
' My steed with its gold harness will be stolen,
And I shall go away undone.' "
He answered :—
" Then ope the door. Hast never seen a guest
Come here before ? "
C. 1524 The maid made haste to open,
And said : " Come in, my son ! "
The Sháh on entering,
And seeing such a place and such attendance,
Said to himself : " O just and only God !
Thou art Thy servant's Guide to what is good.
Ne'er may I be but just in conduct, never
Be covetise and arrogance my creed,
Let every act and deed of mine be just,
And let my subjects' hearts rejoice in me :
Then, if my knowledge and my justice wax,
My memory will shine when I am dead.
May all my subjects, like this jeweller,
Enjoy the sound of harp and revelry."
On entering the lofty hall he saw
The jeweller's famed daughter from the door.
The thane, on seeing him, arose and came
With bows profound, and said : " Good ev'n to thee.
May all thy foemen's hearts be rooted out."
The host spread out a mat and laid thereon
A cushion, gazing at his guest with joy.
One brought a sumptuous board with viands hot
And cold thereon. One came—a faithful liege—
And was instructed to secure the steed.
Elsewhere they lodged and fed Bahrám Gúr's servant.
They set a low seat for the host himself,

Who took his place close to his guest the Sháh,
And then began to offer his excuse,
Thus saying to Bahrám : " Brave paladin !
Since thou art entertained within my house
Conform thyself to my rough usages.
When we have eaten we must drink and then
Rest sweetly. 'Tis dark night, the wine is royal ;
When thou hast drunk thy quantum thou shalt sleep,
And, when thou wakest at the break of day,
Must haste back to the service of the Sháh."
Bahrám replied : " Night dark when one alighteth
On cheery host like thee ! We must not prove
Ingrate to God ; the hearts of thankless men
Are full of fear."
The handmaid, who was all
Astonied at the aspect of the guest,
Brought water, bowl, and napkin. Hands were washed.
Then came the wine-cup's turn, and with the wine
Came mirth, contentment, and tranquillity.
The handmaid brought a flagon and strong drink,
Red wine, a cup, and flowers of fenugreek.
The thane first reached out for the cup and drank,
Then washed it out with musk and with rose-water,
And gave the cup that cheereth to Bahrám.
" What," said he, " is my boon-companion's name ?
Now will I make a covenant with thee,
And I will take Bahrám, the Sháh, as surety."
The king laughed heartily thereat and said :— C. 1525
" Gushasp, the cavalier, am I, and hither
Came I attracted by the sound of harp,
And not to drink or while away the time."
" This girl of mine," his host replied, " exalteth
My head to heaven and is at once my harper,
And my cup-bearer, and withal she singeth,
And dissipateth care. My Heart's Delight
Is named Árzú—my heart's delight and server."

He said to that tall Cypress : " Bring thy harp,
Come in thy loveliness before Gushasp."
The harpist, tall as a pomegranate-tree,
Moved stately to the king of kings and said :—
" O chosen cavalier who hast in all
The semblance of a king ! know that this house
Of feasting is thine own, my sire thy host
And treasurer. May thy dark nights be joyous,
And be thy head exalted o'er the rain-clouds."
He said to her : " Sit down, take up thy harp,
And let us have a song immediately.
To-night old Máhiyár shall be a youth,
And pledge his soul as hostage for his guest."
The harpist clasped her harp and first she played
The Magians' chant, and as the silken chords
Rang out an odour as of jasmine filled
The room. She sang to Máhiyár, her sire,
And thou hadst said : " How plaintive is her harp ! "

" Thou art as a cypress
That lippeth a stream,
And white locks encircle
Thy cheeks' rosy gleam.

Thy tongue is warm-spoken,
Thy heart loveth peace,
Oh ! ne'er may thy foemen
Of ill have surcease.

Thy soul's food be wisdom.
Thy bent is as great
As Farídún's. On thee
As handmaid I wait.

Árzú am I titled,
I joy in our guest,
Like monarch whose troops are
With victory blest."

This ditty done, toward the guest she turned,
Turned toward him with a song and plaintive chords :—

" Sincere and brave, high-starred and king-like one !
They that ne'er saw Bahrám, the cavalier,
The well approved, to every bosom dear,
Should look upon thy face, and all is done.

His only semblance in the host thou art,
Tall as a cypress with a reed-like waist,
A cypress with a pheasant's carriage graced,
An elephant in bulk with lion's heart.

Two miles in fight thou flingest forth thy spear,
Thy cheeks as though pomegranate-blossoms shine
(Who was it washed, say'st thou, those blooms in wine ?)
And as a camel's thighs thine arms appear.

Thou tramplest Mount Bístún. Heaven toiled to mould
A man like thee. None see I to compete
In strife with thee. As dust beneath thy feet
Oh ! may Árzú's form be while life shall hold."

C. 1526

The girl's proficiency with song and harp,
Her looks, her stature, and accomplishments,
So wrought the world-lord that thou wouldst have said :—
" His heart hath grown a magazine of woes,"
And at the time when Máhiyár grew drunk
Before him he addressed his host, thus saying :—
" Give me thy daughter as my lawful wife
If thou wouldst be commended for just dealing."
" Wilt thou accept," said Máhiyár to her,
" The presents of this lion-hearted man ?
See if he pleaseth thee, and if 'tis well
For thee to go with him."

Árzú replied :—

" Good, noble father ![1] if thou wouldst bestow me
On any then my partner is Gushasp,
The cavalier. One that doth look upon
A man like this will bid Bahrám ' Avaunt ! ' "
His daughter's words misliked him and he said
Thus to Bahrám : " O horseman of the fray !
Regard her carefully from head to foot,
Her industry, her knowledge, and discretion ;
See if she be approved of thee at heart ;
Report of her is better than assumption.
She is at once accomplished and no beggar ;
I do not specify exact amounts,
But shouldst thou count the gems of Máhiyár
They would exceed those in the royal coffers.
Be not precipitate, take rest to-night,
And, if needs must, another cup of wine,
For great men make no compacts in their cups
Especially about their lady-loves.
Wait therefore till the sun shall rise on high,
And till the nobles' heads have roused from sleep,
Then will we call far-seeing elders in—
Disinterested men and scholarly.
At night 'tis out of order and ignoreth
The precedents of Farídún, the Sháh.
Ill-omened 'tis to marry in one's cups
Or handsel any business."
Said Bahrám :—
" Absurd ! 'Tis ill to draw, or go by, omens.
This harpist pleaseth me to-night, so strive
To deem the matter an auspicious one."
The sire said to his daughter : " O Árzú !
Dost thou approve him as to looks and manners ? "
She said : " Yea, I approved of him when I
Far off beheld him with such head and eyes.

[1] Reading with P.

Complete the work and leave the rest to God :
The sky is not at feud with Máhiyár."
Her father answered : " Thou art now his wife.
Know this that thou art under coverture."
He gave her to Bahrám Gúr who espoused her ; C. 1527
By dawn the matter had been consummate.
The Sháh's attendant hung the royal whip
Upon the door of Máhiyár, Arzú
Went to her chamber while on every side
Folk still were sleeping. Máhiyár departed
To make all ready for the cavalier,
Gushasp, and told a servant : " Shut the doors,
And send off some one to the flock in haste.
They must not serve the board without a lamb,
And one well fattened too. Wait on Gushasp,
And, when he waketh, bring him ice and sherbet,[1]
Take too a bowl of camphor and rose-water
To scent his chamber. As for me, my cups
Have left me just as I was yesterday ;
Old jewellers shirk not their wine."
He spake,
And, drawing up his cloak about his head,
Wooed rest and sleep.
When bright Sol showed its crown,
And earth became like shining ivory,
Troops armed with shields and double-headed darts
Went to seek traces of the royal whip.
The escort gathered round the door as though
The Sháh's own court, and all that recognised
The whip came forward and saluted it.
The porter, seeing that great gathering,
The throng of swordsmen and of javelin-men,
Went, roused his sleeping lord, and sobered him,
Thus saying to him : " Rise, bestir thyself ;
This is no time to sleep or place to sit,

[1] Fakká'. See Vol. i. p. 43 *note*.

Because the world's king is thy guest within
This sorry house of thine ! "
The jeweller's heart
Throbbed wildly at the words. He cried : " What say'st thou ?
How tracest thou the footsteps of the king ? "
Then fully realising what was said
He sprang up from the bed-clothes with a shout,
Enraged against the porter, " These," he cried,
" Are not the words of wisdom and of age."
" Experienced man ! " the slave said, " who on earth
Made thee the monarch of Írán ? So vast
A host is at thy gate that, wouldst thou pass,
There is scant room, and every Jack of them,
On coming up, saluteth our old curtain ![1]
At dawn, before the sun began to shine,
The cavalier's attendant came and hung
A whip all gold and jewels o'er our entry,
Where we pass through it, and round that long whip
C. 1528 There is a world of folk from hill and dale.
So now be up and doing, be not slack,
And let not wine affect thee."
Hearing this,
The shrewd old man was troubled : " Why did I
Get drunk last night before the king of kings,
And let my daughter share the wine with us ? "
Then going to the chamber of Árzú
He said : " My gracious Moon ! it was Bahrám,
The king of kings, that last night visited
The jeweller ! On coming from the chase
He hither turned his rein. Now up and don
Brocade of Rúm and set upon thy head
Thy last night's crown. Make him an offering
Of jewels worthy of a king—three rubies
Of royal worth—and, when thou shalt behold

[1] The felt curtain at the door-way. *Cf.* p. 69.

His sun-like face, enfold thine arms before him,
Keep thine eyes fixed on him and think of him
As thine own soul and body. Answer meekly
When he shall question thee, and let thy words
Be modest and discreet. I shall not come
Unless he calleth me and giveth me
A place among his followers. I sat
At table with him like his peer! Oh! would
That I had no bones in me! Furthermore
I cottoned with the Sháh when in my cups!
Wine maketh old and young to misdemean."

Just then a slave came hurrying and said :—
" The Sháh, that ardent spirit, is awake."

Now when the Sháh woke safe and sound, he went
To bathe him in the garden, went to pray
Before the sun, confiding all to God.
Returning thence to the reception-room
He bade a server bring a cup of wine,
Heard that his retinue had come, dismissed it,
And called Arzú on whom his heart was set.[1]
Arzú appeared with wine and offerings—
A handmaid with her necklace and her earrings—
And with a lowly reverence kissed the ground.
The Sháh smiled on her greatly pleased and said :—
" Whence such behaviour—first to make me drunk,
Then run away? Thy song and harp suffice
For me, a woman's presents are for others.
Come sing to me thy ditties of the chase,
Of spearhead-blows, and royal combatings."

Anon he said : " Where is the jeweller,
For we got drunk together yesternight? "

The daughter, when she heard this, called her father,
Mazed at the Sháh's good-nature. Came her sire C. 1529
With folded arms before the sun-like king

[1] Árzú means " Desire," and there is a double use of the word in the original : " Because he had a desire for Desire."

Of kings, and said : " O Sháh ! O chief ! O wise !
O great ! O mighty one ! O warrior !
O archimage ! may this world ever be
At thy dispose and everywhere thy name
Associate with the crown. The man that quaffeth
The draught of foolishness should hold his tongue.
My fault was due to ignorance. Methinketh
That thou must deem me mad. Vouchsafe to pardon
My fault and make my face and faring bright.
I stand—a foolish slave—before thy door ;
The king of kings will deem me less than man."

Bahrám replied : " The wise man never taketh
The drunkard seriously ; one should not eye
Or savour wine if it make sad the face.
I saw thee not ill-tempered in thy cups.
Now listen to the singing of Árzú,
And proffer as thine own apology
The tulips and the jasmine of her song.
Let her descant what while we quaff, not counting
The ill of days not come."

He kissed the ground,
Did Máhiyár, then brought and spread the board,
And, good man that he was, he fetched withal
The nobles that were stationed at the gate ;
Howbeit Árzú went off to her own bower,
Her visage puckered at those stranger-guests,
And stayed till heaven grew sombre, and the stars
Came out around the moon. The eating done,
Árzú was called and set upon a seat
Of golden work. The Sháh bade her to take
Her harp and sing to him the song that he
Had asked of her already. Thus she sang :—

" O monarch undaunted ! the lion in shame
Will slink from the wood at the bruit of thy name.
Sháh, victor, host-breaker art thou. In thy mien

The tints of the tulip on jasmine are seen.
In stature no ruler on earth is thy peer,
In looks thou transcendest the moon in her sphere.
A host on the war-stead, beholding in fight
Thy helmet, will rive, heart and brain, with affright,
And longer discern not the depth from the height."

When they were blithe with wine and, eating done,
Were quaffing draught on draught, Rúzbih appeared
Before the Sháh. They lodged him in the village.
Rúzbih had brought a litter and withal
Two score of eunuchs, all moon-face and charming.
Those Rúmans' faces seemed brocade of Rúm,
And freshened all the country round. Árzú,
A crown of jewels set upon her head,
Toward the bower of Sháh Bahrám Gúr sped.

§ 15

How Bahrám went to the Chase and passed the Night in the House of Farshídward

The king of kings, attended by Rúzbih, C. 1530
Went from the chief's house with a gladsome heart.
He passed the night and went at dawn to hunt.
Troops fared o'er all the roads and trackless wastes,
And thus abode a month. They pitched the tents
And camp-enclosure, and swept all the field
Of game. None slumbered there, it was all wine,
Game, flesh, and harp, and lyre. They kindled fires
About the plain and burned wood green and dry.
There came a swarm of dealers from the city,
Who tarried at the camp for trafficking:
The crowd made bright the waste. At quarter price
They bought one onager or ten gazelles,
And whosoever was in want of meat,
For cooking for his guests or for his children,

Might carry home ground-game and water-fowl
By ass-loads.
When a month had passed Bahrám
Grew eager for his wives' society,
And led his people from the hunting-ground.
Folk could not see the way, the cavaliers
Raised such a dust ! but swift as dust they sped
Till day's cheeks turned to lapis-lazuli.
The Sháh observed a town in front of him
With groups of houses, roadways, and bázárs,
And ordered that his escort with the baggage
Should push on, leaving not a soul behind.
He asked : " Where is the chief man of the place ? "
And then made thither straightway. He beheld
A shattered entry broad and deep. The owner
Came and saluted him. The Sháh inquired :—
" Whose ruin is this and wherefore in such plight
Amidst the town ? "
The master said : " 'Tis mine,
And ill luck is my guide. I have not here
Kine, raiment, victuals, manhood, understanding,
No feet, no wings. Me thou hast seen, now view
My house—one fitter for a curse than blessing."
The aspiring Sháh alighted, scanned the house,
And hands and feet both failed him, for the place
Was all sheep's droppings though both great and vaulted !
C. 1531 " Bring me," he said, " thou hospitable man !
Somewhat whereon to sit."
The other answered :—
" Why mock thy host so wantonly, O marchlord !
Had I some draperies my guest would praise me,
But I have none, no clothing, food, or carpets.
Pray lodge thee somewhere else ; here all is poor."
The Sháh said : " Fetch a cushion then that I
May sit awhile."
" The place is ill," he answered.

"Good sooth! wouldst thou have bird's milk?"
Said Bahrám:—
"Bring fresh milk and new bread if thou canst get it."
"Imagine," said the other, "that thou hast
Partaken and gone off with 'Fare thee well.'
I should not be so lifeless had I bread,
Though life were better far than bread to me."
Bahrám said: "If thou hast no sheep how come
These droppings here?"
"'Tis night," the other answered.
"My head is all a muddle with thy talk.
Select some mansion with a curtained entrance;
The master of it will commend thy choice.
Why shouldst thou be with an unfortunate,
Who maketh leaves his pillow for the night?
Thou hast a golden sword and stirrups, thou
Shouldst sojourn not where there is fear of thieves,
For thieves and lions haunt old hulks like this."
The Sháh said: "If a thief should rob me now
Thou wouldst not be responsible, but give me
A lodging for the night, 'tis all I need."
"Then need it not," the owner made reply;
"None lodgeth in my house."
"O wise old man!
Why art thou," said the Sháh, "so short with me?
Still thou wilt give me, I presume, cold water,
O noble one!"
"Didst thou not see," rejoined
The householder, "more than two bow-shots long[1]
The pool? There drink and take whate'er thou wilt.
Why seek for aught in this impoverished house?
Good sooth! hast never seen a poor man barred
From working by decrepitude?"
Bahrám
Rejoined: "Thou art not one of the first water,

[1] Or "hence." So Mohl.

Chief though thou be ; so strive not with a soldier.
What is thy name ? ”
He answered : “ Farshídward,
A man without land, raiment, sleep, and food.”
Bahrám asked : “ Why endeavour not for provand
And comfort ? ”
Said the master of the house :—
“ He that bestoweth all may end my days.
C. 1532 If only I can see my desolation
Relieved of thee I will make prayer to Him.
Why cam'st thou to an empty house that never
Saw good condition and a high estate ? ”
When he had spoken thus he wept so sorely
That Sháh Bahrám fled from his cries. He laughed
At that old man and took the road again,
While all his escort followed in his train.

§ 16

How a Bramble-grubber revealed the Case of Farshídward, and how Bahrám bestowed that Householder's Wealth upon the Poor

Bahrám, on quitting that famed township, came
Upon a bramble-brake. A man, who held
A mattock in his hand, was grubbing there.
The monarch left his retinue, drew near him,
And said : “ O enemy of brambles ! whom
Know'st thou of most account in yonder town ? ”
He answered : “ Farshídward—a man of greed
That doth not suffer him to sleep or eat.
He hath, may be, a hundred thousand sheep,
More camels, steeds, and asses. Earth is full
Of his amassed dínárs, but would that he
Had neither skin nor marrow to his body !

A famished paunch and nakedness are his ;
He hath no child, no kin, no friends, no goods.
A captive in the hands of Greed and Need
His person is all misery and wasted
Through eating not, but if he were to sell
For gold his tilth 'twould purchase gems enough
To fill a house ! His shepherds swill down flesh
With milk, but he himself hath millet-bread
Without e'en cheese ! He never saw two coats
At once ; he is a tyrant to himself."
The Sháh said to the grubber : " Thou dost know
The number of his sheep, but knowest thou
Where those flocks are and likewise where his steeds
And camels are at large ? "
The grubber said :—
" O thou ! it is not far from here to where
His camels and his sheep are, but my heart
Is troubled at the ill that he may do me."
Bahrám Gúr gave the grubber some dínárs,
And said : " This day shall gentle thy condition."
He bade one of his escort come to him,
A man that knew his way about, by name
Bihrúz, a horseman brave and popular,
And sent with him a hundred cavaliers,
Selected men well suited to the work.
He chose withal a scribe, an honest man
And skilled accountant. " Go," he told the grubber, C. 1533
" Thou didst grub brambles, now reap gold. One hundredth
Of all that wealth is thine. Show to these men
The way."
The grubber's name was Diláfrúz,
A man of stately mien and stalwart form.
Bahrám bestowed on him a noble steed,
And said : " Thou must companion with the wind."
He was the Light of hearts but he became

The Lustre of the world [1] and carried out
His task triumphantly. He led the troop
O'er hill and plain past countless flocks of sheep.
Upon the mountains were ten caravans
Of camels, each with its own caravaneer.
The scribe wrote down of draught and of milch cattle
Twelve thousand, and the number of the camels
And steeds as twice ten thousand. All the waste
Was dinted with their hoofs. Beside the stream
There were three hundred thousand camel-loads
Of potted butter and curds fresh and dried.[2]
Height, waste, and level were one mighty cache,
But none had heard thereof. Bihrúz, the son
Of Húr, reported to the king of kings,
Bahrám Gúr, praising first almighty God,
The All-victorious and All-nourisher,
And next the king of kings who had released
Men's hands from toil, and then proceeded thus :—
" O monarch of the world ! thou art the joy
Of all folk great and small because thy justice
Surpasseth bounds. Our treasury hath suffered
Through silence as to this man's wealth. 'Tis well
That all things in the world should have their bounds,
Well that the Sháh be boundlessly rejoiced.
A wretch there is named Farshídward, unknown
In feast and fight to great and small alike
Throughout the world, not fearing God or Sháh,
And thankless in respect of what he hath.
While thus he streweth o'er the world his wealth
He is a lack-all, wretched, secretive,
Who is as unjust as the Sháh is just.
Blame not my words and counsel. Let this wealth
Inaugurate a treasury ; 'twill need

[1] He was, *i.e.* his name was, Diláfrúz, but he became Gítiáfrúz.
[2] For winter use.

Three years to order it. I have invoked
To mine assistance certain other scribes,
And settled them upon this fertile mount,
But, though the writers' backs are bent, not yet
Is manifest the sum of this man's treasure ;
Moreover he possesseth, so folk say,
Still greater buried hoards of gold and jewels.
Here in the mountain am I with both eyes
Upon the road to know the Sháh's commands.
My salutation to him. May he live C. 1534
What while his name is all in all to all." [1]

He sent a cameleer post haste to bear
The letter to the Sháh. Whenas Bahrám Gúr
Had read it he was troubled in his heart,
Grew downcast, wept, and bent his warrior-brows.
He called for Rúman pens and silk of Chín,
And bade a scribe approach. He first gave thanks
To God almighty, the omniscient Guide,
" The Lord of knowledge and of Grace, the Lord
Of diadem and kingship," then wrote thus :—
" I should by rights attach this man. He hath not
Amassed these hoards by thievery and bloodshed,
Hath not incited others to do wrong,
But he hath been ungrateful and not had
The fear of God within him, hath kept ward
O'er all this treasure to the detriment,
By such amassing, both of heart and soul.
Wolf is as good as sheep upon yon plain
Since neither yieldeth profit or return.
A buried gem is nothing but a stone,
Affording no one either food or raiment.
We shall not found a treasury on his toils,
Or fix our heart upon this Wayside Inn.
Evanished from the world are Farídún,
Íraj withal, Túr, and, amidst the mighty,

[1] Lit. " is (both) warp and woof."

Sám, Sháh Káús, and Kai Kubád, besides
The other potentates whose names we cherish,
And mine own sire who filled my heart with pain
As being neither just nor generous.
None of these great men is in evidence ;
Herein there is no striving with the Lord.
Collect this treasure and distribute it,
But touch not thou one hair. To every one
That hideth his necessities and looketh
Long vainly for remission from his ills ;
To old men past their work and despicable
In rich men's eyes ; to those that have spent all,
And now in trouble breathe forth chilling sighs ;
To those that have renown but not dínárs ;
To traders reft of friends ; to little ones
Whom thou beholdest orphans, their sires dead,
And they themselves in want of gold and silver ;
To women that have neither spouse nor raiment,
That know no handicraft and no employment,
Give all these treasures and irradiate
The lives of those poor souls. This done, neglect not
The hidden treasures, but bestow the hoards
Of Farshídward upon the mendicants
C. 1535 For their relief. Dínárs and gems are dust
To him since he must needs go bury them.
May turning heaven be thy companion,
All justice mayst thou be and self-restraint."
They set the Sháh's seal on the document,
And thereupon the courier turned and went.

§ 17

How Bahrám went to the Chase and slew Lions

Bahrám bade slaves set up the imperial throne
Within the pleasance, then in spring-tide beauty.

They brought the turquoise throne at his command,
And set it 'neath a blossom-shedding tree,
They brought forth wine and cups, and minstrels went
Toward the pleasance with the chiefs. The king
Said to his counsellors : " This is the time
Of jollity for men. We all must couch ;
Death treadeth under foot the rolls of fame,
The hall and palace. We shall have enough
Of our own company within the charnel,
Men both of mien and stature though we be.
The king and beggar carry when they die
Naught but their good and ill away with them.
What toil soe'er men bear is only loss,
For, when they perish, that will perish too.
That praise of us remaineth is enough,
For crown and girdle are another's share.
Thou needest innocence and uprightness
That thine enjoyments prove not scath to thee.
My years exceed already eight and thirty,
And many a day hath fleeted in delight,
But, after two score years, grief for the day
Of death is instant with us. If one hair
Turn white upon our heads we must forgo
All hope of joy ; when musk becometh camphor
'Tis ruined ; camphor suiteth not the crown.
Two years more will I spend in feast and sport,
Then, when my strength is somewhat broken, go
Before God's presence, don the woollen robe,
And be not thankless for His mercies to me,
For I have passed my days in joy and had
My share of royal crown. Now for the rose,
The apple, the pomegranate, and the quince !
Let not the golden goblet fail of wine ! [1]

[1] The Emperor Bábar (A.D. 1483–1530) in his diary made similar good resolutions, which he did not keep : " As I intend, when forty years old, to abstain from wine ; and as I now want somewhat less than one year of being forty, *I drink wine most copiously.*" EHI, iv. 226.

But when I see the apples amber-cheeked,
The heavens dappled like a leopard's back,
The fragrant camomile producing seed,
And wine as ruddy as the reveller,
When air is pleasant, neither hot nor cold,
Earth fresh and water blue, what time we don
Our autumn furs, I must to Jaz to hunt,
C. 1536 And hold a hunting-bout upon that plain
To make me a memorial in the world.
Meanwhile the onager will grow plump-necked,
And compass lion's heart and tiger's strength.
We must take dogs and cheetahs, hawks and falcons,[1]
For that far faring since it is the spot
For onager and archery, and there
No moment will we rest from chevying.
The plain that I have set mine eyes upon
Is lower Jaz. There tamarisks are tall
As spear-shafts, there too we shall find the lion,
And have a hunting if we bide our time."
He waited till the clouds of Shahrívar
Arose, then all the world was filled with troops.
From every clime an army keen for strife
Set face toward the monarch of Írán,
Who chose among them chiefs of note as hunters,
And carried with him to the chase a force
Of thirty thousand mounted Scimitars.
They took with them pavilions, tent-enclosures,
Tents, beasts, and shielings, while the underlings
Went on before Bahrám Gúr to dig wells,
To furnish them withal with wheel and bucket,
And run the water into troughs. The Sháh
Came later with his meiny to the chase.
He saw the plain well stocked with onager,
The woods alive with lions, and thus said :—

[1] Two sorts of falcons are mentioned in the text—the charkh and the sháhín (falco sacer and falco peregrinator ?).

" Wine is our quarry to-night, for on the sand
Are many lion-tracks, and we must have
A lion-hunt to-morrow. Rest ye then
In health of body and in merry pin,
And let us drink till daybreak, till the sun—
The lustre of the world—is bright again.
Our scimitars shall fell the lions first,
Shall fell those valiant dragons. When the woods
Are cleared of lions then the onager
Shall yield himself a servant to my shafts."
He stayed that night and, when the morning dawned,
Approached the forest with his men, whereat
A lion, lusty-grown with battening
On onagers, rushed forth, and brave Bahrám
Said to his friends : " Though I have bow and arrows,
And mastery therewith, I will assail
Yon lion with the scimitar that none
May call me coward."
Donning a shrunk vest
Of wool he mounted on his battle-steed.
Now when that dragon of a lion saw him
It reared, brought down its claws, and sought to strike
The charger on the head.[1] The warrior heeled
His steed and with his trenchant scimitar,
What while the lioness made off apace,
Struck at the lion's head and clave the beast C. 1537
Down to its middle, filling lions' hearts
With fear ; yet gallantly another one
Came roaring, one whose mate was suckling cubs.
He smote that lion's neck and parted head
From trunk. One said to him : " O sun-faced Sháh !
Hast thou not any mercy on thyself ?
The wood is full of lions and their young—

[1] Blanford describes a lioness attacking his horse much in this way, and remarks that Persian sporting pictures generally represent the lion as leaping, not rearing. EP, ii. 32.

Cubs that are sucklings. Let the lions be,
For in the autumn-time they breed. This forest
Is three leagues deep, and if thou wert to spend
A year in taking lions wouldst not clear it ;
So why impose such labour on thyself ?
The Sháh, when first he sat upon the throne,
Fought lions only as the compact was.[1]
Now thou art Sháh, the world is thine, so why
Fight with them still ? Thou cam'st for onager."
" Old sage," the Sháh said, " let to-morrow dawn,
And heigh for onager and shaft and me !
But cavaliers and nobles now alive
Can rival me in archery, so when
We give its due to manhood we must take
Account of iron mace and scimitar."
The archmage said : " Hadst thou ten horsemen with thee,
And like thee in the fight, then Rúm and Chín
Would have no crown and throne, and men of wisdom
Would ship their goods off. Be the evil eye
Far from thy Grace, and be it thine to feast
Among the roses."
Then with archimages,
And captains of the host, the Sháh departed
Toward his tent-enclosure from the wood
What while the troops acclaimed him, saying thus :—
" Ne'er may the crown and signet-ring lack thee."
That paladin then entered his pavilion,
His escort quitting him, and washed his hands
Of sweat. He had with him a trusty steward,
Who draped a fresh tent for him. There they set
Musk, camphor, and rose-water, and spread musk
Withal upon the sleeping-place. Each tent
Had golden tables laid with services
Of ware of Chín where lamb and other meats

[1] See Vol. vi. p. 405 *seq.*

Were served by the chief server. Sháh Bahrám Gúr,
The eating done, called for a mighty cup
Of crystal, which a fairy-faced cup-bearer
Brought and consigned it to the just king's hands,
Who said: "Ardshír, the great king, he whose fortune
Made old folk young, was founder of our house,
And we are underlings if we be worthy
E'en of that title. Both in fight and feast,
At counsel and at board, give none but him
The title of world's lord. What time Sikandar C. 1538
Came to Írán from Rúm and wrecked the land,
Since he was both ungenerous and harsh,
And slew kings six and thirty, monarchs' lips
Are full of curses, and earth's surface full
Of vengeance, on him.[1] Farídún they praise,
And he is cursed by stirrers up of strife.
Throughout the world may only good proceed
From me to small and great. Bring me a herald,"
He added, "one of goodly voice and leading,
Let him go round the host and thus proclaim
O'er way and waste alike: 'Whoe'er shall lay
Within the region of Barḳúh and Jaz[2]
Unlawful hands on aught, from jewels, gold,
Dínárs, and furs to mean and worthless chaff,
Him will I horse face tail-wards and will have
Two of the soldiery to lead him hence.
His feet shall be made fast beneath his steed,
And to the temple of Ázargashasp
Will I dispatch him there to supplicate
All-holy God and worship in the dust
Before the Fire. I will bestow his goods
On those whom he hath robbed and wronged withal.
If any horse shall injure growing crops,
Or harm fruit-bearing trees, the horse's owner,

[1] The Persian pre-Muhammadan view of Sikandar. *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 15.
[2] Reading with P.

Be he a noble or of no account,
Shall not escape a year's imprisonment.
My work is but to carry from the desert
My portion, then go home again rejoicing.' "
The more part of the traffickers of Jaz,
And of Barkúh, went out upon the plain,
And with their various packs produced a scene
About the host like a bázár in Chín.

§ 18

How Bahrám went to hunt the Onager, showed his Skill before the Princes, and returned to Baghdád and Istakhr

Whenas the sun next day displayed its crown
The world-lord went to hunt the onager ;
The soldiers strung their bows, the Sháh himself
Rode in the rear. He said : " If one should take
His bow to shoot at any beast the arrow
Should strike the buttocks and come through the breast."
A paladin replied : " O king ! consider
Who in this noble host can shoot like that
Among thy friends or foes unless indeed
C. 1539 Thou shoot in person. May thy head and crown
For ever live. When thou tak'st mace and arrow,
And scimitar, thy warriors are awe-struck
At thy commanding height and royal Grace,
While other archers' hands lose all their strength."
The Sháh said : " 'Tis of God. If He withdraw it
What strength hath then Bahrám ? "
He urged Shabdíz,
And, nearing a buck onager, let fly
His arrow, when the moment came, and skewered
Together chest and buttock. As it died

The nobles of the golden belt came up ;
They marvelled at his shot, and all applauded.
They could not see the arrow's point and feathers,
For they were hidden in the onager.
The warlike cavaliers and soldiers bent
With faces to the ground before Bahrám,
What while a paladin exclaimed : " O king !
Ne'er may thine eye behold the ill of fortune.
Thou art a horseman but all we ride asses,
And are but ill at that ! "

The Sháh replied :—

" Not mine the arrow, for the All-conqueror
Assisteth me. None in the world is viler
Than one whose prop and helper God is not."

He urged his charger onward, thou hadst said :—
" Yon courser is an eagle in its flight ! "
A gallant onager appeared. Forthwith
The Lion reached out for his scimitar,
And with a sword-stroke clave the beast asunder
In equal halves. Chiefs, nobles, and attendants
Armed with the scimitar, came up to him,
And, when they saw that stroke, a sage exclaimed :—
" What swordmanship and might are here ! Oh ! may
The evil eye ne'er look upon this Sháh.
He hath no semblance save the moon in heaven,[1]
Beneath him are the heads of this world's chiefs,
While heaven is lower than his scimitar,
And arrow-point."

The troops that followed him
Cleared all the plain of onager. He bade
Make rings of gold and grave his name thereon.
He ringed the creatures' ears and let them go ;
Six hundred too he branded in a batch,
Then freed them for the honour of his name,
And for his will and pleasure, while a man

[1] " il ne laissera peut-être pas la lune dans le ciel." Mohl.

Went round the host proclaiming thus : " Let none
Sell to the merchants any onagers
On this broad plain but give them as a gift."
They brought him from Barkúh and from the chiefs
Of Jaz abundance of brocade and furs.
C. 1540 These he accepted and then bade remit
Those countries' tax and toll though both could pay.
Their poor and those that earned their bread grew rich
By reason of his bounty. Many too
Had thrones and crowns. He went home from the chase,
And passed a week in mirth among his men.
It was his wont to hold an open court
Upon the riding-ground, and thither used
To fare the troops, the men of eloquence,
The wise, the needy, and the suppliants.
" O ye that seek your rights ! " he used to say,
" Take shelter from your enemies with God,
While ye that have not slept through toil for me,
And yet have had no portion of my wealth,
Come to the king upon the riding-ground,
And haply he will make your fortunes new.
If any one is old, past work, and weak,
Or, being young, is crippled by disease ;
If any of the people be in debt,
And worried by the stress of creditors ;
If any children are left fatherless,
And yet ask not of those possessed of wealth ;
Or if the children's mothers are in want
In secret and conceal their poverty ;
Or if, again, a wealthy man hath died,
And left behind young children in this land,
Whom an executor, devoid of fear
And reverence for God, is plundering,
Keep nothing of this kind concealed from me ;
I want not people that conceal their wants.

I will enrich the poor, I will restore
The souls of misbelievers to the Faith ;
I will defray the debts of those who have
No money and whose hearts are sad, and open
My treasury's door to modest indigence.
If wrong befall from officers of mine
Defrauding children that have lost their sires,
Those doers of injustice will I gibbet
Alive for wronging one of noble race."
The Sháh, advanced in wisdom and glad-hearted,
Went from the hunting-field toward Baghdád,[1]
And to his presence came the haughty chiefs,
Both alien and those akin to him.
He bade his retinue disperse and sought
His own delightsome palace. They adorned
The bower of Barzín, the handmaids there
Were clamorous for musk and wine, the Idols
Got ready song and harp, the hall was cleared
Of strangers. What with harp and wine and pipe,
And sound of song, the vaulted heaven seemed
To greet the air. All night from every chamber
They brought forth bands of dancers that the Sháh
Might be not sad of heart. He spent two weeks — C. 1541
In mirth, and oped his treasury day and night,
Gave largess, and departed for Istakhr,
Placed on his head the glorious, royal crown,
Unlocked the bower of Kharrád, and furnished
The Idols there with treasure and with drachms.
If any in that golden women's house
Had not a crown aloft an ivory throne
The monarch of Írán growled mightily,
Bit at Rúzbih his lip in indignation,
And said : " The tribute from Khazar and Rúm
I give, when paid, to these, but for the nonce
Now requisition ass-loads of dínárs,

[1] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 254.

And treasure-loads from Ispahán and Rai.
A women's house when in such case as this
Will grow all desolate and not befit
The fortunes of the monarch of Írán."
They spread brocade upon the floor, and caused
Fresh tribute to be paid in every land.
The world thus passed awhile an easy life—
No war, no toil, no conflict, and no strife.

§ 19

How the Khán of Chín led forth a Host to war with Bahrám, and how the Íránians asked Quarter of the Khán and submitted to him

Anon news came to Hind, Rúm, Turkistán,
Chín, and all parts inhabited : " The heart
Of Sháh Bahrám is given up to sport,
He taketh no account of any one,
He hath no outposts, no men are on guard,
And on the marches are no paladins.
For love of sport he suffereth all to drift,
And knoweth nothing of the world's affairs."
Now when the Khán of Chín heard this he levied
Troops from Khutan and Chín, paid them, and set
His face toward Írán. No one took thought
About Bahrám while Cæsar for his part
Marched forth in force from Rúm. When tidings reached
Írán from Rúm and Hind, from Chín and all
The settled regions : " Cæsar hath assembled
And led an army forth while troops are seen
Advancing from Khutan and Chín," the chieftains,
The warriors old and young within Írán,
All came before Bahrám Gúr, full of wrath,
Of rage, and bitterness, and bluntly said :—

"Thy glorious fortune hath displayed its back.
The heads of kings should be intent on fighting,
But thy heart is intent on sport and feasting;
The crown and throne are worthless in thine eyes,
So are Írán, the treasure, and the host."

The Sháh, the ruler of the world, thus answered C. 1542
Those archimages, his admonishers :—
"My helper is the Master of the world,
One who is wiser than the wisest sages.
I by the conquering virtue of great kings
Will guard Írán against the claws of Wolves;
By fortune, host, wealth, scimitar will I
Avert this pain and travail from the realm."

He toyed on just the same, his nobles' eyes
Were full of blood through him, and all folk said :—
"This Sháh will alienate all good men's hearts."

Yet Sháh Bahrám's heart was awake and full
Of trouble at the tidings. Secretly
He organised the host while folk at large
Knew not his privy purpose. All Írán
Was in dismay at what they saw of him
Their hearts were riven by anxiety;
They all were in despair about the king,
And held his rule and person in contempt.

Now when the Khán was drawing nigh Írán
News of him reached the monarch of the brave,
Who called to him the aspiring Gustaham,
And spake much of the Khán and of his host.
This Gustaham was paladin in chief,
And minister, and fight came as a feast
To him. The Sháh called Mihr Pírúz withal,
Son of Bihzád, he called too Mihr Barzín,
Son of Kharrád, Bahrám, son of Pírúz,
Son of Bahrám, Ruhhám and Kharzarwán,
Which twain were of Sásánian lineage,
One king of Rai, and of Gílán the other,

Who stood up stoutly on the day of battle,
With Rád, son of Barzín, approved in fight,
Who was the ruler of Zábulistán,
Káran too and Burzmihr and Dád the grim,
Son of Barzín, while of the Íránians
He chose him out a hundred thousand men,
Men of discretion, well beseen in war,
Committing to a scion of the race
In power—Narsí, the brother of the Sháh
So pure of Faith—those cavaliers and throne
And crown that he might guard the treasury
And realm. Narsí, that man of noble mien,
Possessed of Grace and Faith and loving looks,
Took up the charge, and thereupon the Sháh
Chose from the host twelve thousand cavaliers
Fit for the day of battle—veterans
With ox-head maces and in coats of mail—
And marched thence to Ázar Ábádagán ;
But, as he took from Párs so small a host,
The mighty and the common folk alike
Thought : " Sháh Bahrám is fleeing from the fight,
And making off toward Ázargashasp."

What time Bahrám set face toward the Fire
From Cæsar came an envoy swift as wind.
C. 1543 Narsí received and lodged him fittingly
Within the palace.

Now the host approached
The high priest to get knowledge of Bahrám,
And said : " Why scattereth he his treasures thus
Instead of heaping them like other Sháhs ?
He squandereth gold everywhere because
He knoweth not its worth. Both citizens
And soldiers are dispersed, and all have sought
Some course of betterment."

At length, when words
Had waxen old, all folk agreed to send

A man of reputation to the Khán
Of Chín, " Because," said they, " ere evils come
With war and pillage we must try all means
To save Írán : the master of the house
Is lost."

Narsí replied : " This is not well ;
The world hath not a bed for such a stream.
Shall I ask quarter of the king of Chín ?
I will clothe earth with men and elephants.
There are arms, treasure, and courageous men,
Whose swords would send dust out of fire itself.
Why this despair concerning Sháh Bahrám
Because he started with a little band ?
Why have your thoughts turned evil thus ? If ye
Think ill then ill will come."

The Íránians heard,
And answered him perversely, saying : " Bahrám,
Departing hence, took not a host with him,
And must we not resign our hearts to grief,
For when the Khán shall come to fight Irán
Our land will lose both scent and hue ? The foe
Will trample on us shamefully, Narsí
And all the host will be o'erthrown. All means
Will we endeavour to maintain our place
And standing here."

There was an archimage,
A skilful, learnéd, single-hearted man,
Humái by name, and him the Íránians chose
To gird his loins and undertake their cause,
Then wrote the Khán upon their own behalf
A cringing letter which began : " Thy slaves
Are we and bow down to thy will and pleasure.
We send thee of the produce of Írán
Together with our homage and excuses,
With gifts too, toll and tribute, for we have
No power to stand against the king in war."

So from Írán the blest Humái arrived
With certain nobles—men of honest counsels—
And gave the Khán the message of the chiefs,
Whereat his heart rejoiced. Humái withal
Spake of the swift remove of Sháh Bahrám,
And of his hasty flight without a host,
C. 1544 Before the noble Khán whose heart and soul
Expanded like a rose. He told the Turkmans :—
" Now we have saddled the revolving sky !
Who ever took Írán without a fight
As we have by our counsel, wit, and patience ? "
He gave great presents to the messenger,
Drachms and no few dínárs, and wrote this answer :—
" May wisdom company the pure of soul.
I do agree to what hath been proposed
By this ambassador of honest men.
When with my host I reach Marv I will make
The clime like pheasant's plumes,[1] and streams run milk [2]
By justice, prudence, and magnificence.
I will await the tribute from Írán—
The Lions' gifts and taxes. I shall come
To Marv, or rather I shall pass it by,
Not wishing to cause damage by my troops."
The messenger returned in haste and told
His converse with the Khán who led his host
To Marv, the world was black with horsemen's dust.
When he had rested he concerned himself
With feasting ; no one thought about Bahrám.
At Marv there was no rest or sleep for sound
Of harp and lyre, the troops were all abroad.
There was no watch, no prospect of a shock,
But all was sport, wine, parties, twang of lyre,
And feeling night and day secure from war.

[1] Because " tadarv," pheasant, rhymes with " Marv."
[2] Reading with P. and T.

The Khán was looking for the Íránians' tribute,
Wroth that it came so late. Bahrám for his part
Slept not but guarded well his host from foes,
Kept his spies busy both by night and day,
And threw in feast and wine no time away.

§ 20

How Bahrám attacked the Host of the Khán and took him

As soon as tidings came to Sháh Bahrám :—
" The Khán and his great host are all at Marv,"
He led his soldiers from Ázargashasp,
Each with two horses but no baggage-train.
With Rúman helmet, morion, and cuirass
He hurried on like wind by day and night,
His soldiers rushing like a mountain-stream,
And reached Ámul by way of Ardabíl.
Departing thence he marched on to Gurgán,
Enduring all the chieftains' toil and pain,
And thence came to the city of Nisá ;
One from Bisá preceded him as guide.
O'er mount and waterless and wayless tracts, C. 1545
At times unwonted, through the night till morn,
He marched and had the watch out night and day.
Thus swifter than a pheasant [1] in its flight
He drew toward Marv. A runner from his scouts
Arrived and told : " The Khán attendeth not
To state-affairs but followeth the chase
At Kashmíhan with wicked Áhriman
As minister."
Bahrám rejoiced to hear it ;
His travail seemed but wind. There for a day
He rested and, when steed and Sháh and troops

[1] See p. 88, *note*.

Were all refreshed, reached Kashmíhan. At dawn,
What time the Lustre of the world arose
Above the hills, all ears were filled with blast
Of trumpet and all eyes with glint of flag-tops,
The din of battle went up from the chase,
And filled the ears of Sháh and troops. The clamour
Split mighty lions' ears. Thou wouldst have said :—
"The clouds are hailing," wouldst have said : "The moon
Is raining blood," so sanguine was the dust
Upon that battlefield ! The Khán, aroused
And dazed, was ta'en by Khazarwán. Withal
Three hundred of the noblemen of Chín
Were captured and fast bound on saddle-back.
The Sháh advanced on Marv from Kashmíhan,
Thin as a reed with riding for so long.
The few of Chín that yet remained at Marv
They slew. He followed up the fugitives
For thirty leagues ; behind him was Káran
Of Párs. Returning to the hunting-ground
He gave the booty to the troops. When thus
He raised his head in triumph over Chín
He recognised in all the power of God,
Who to his other good had given the boon
Of might, and is the Lord of sun and moon.

§ 21

How Bahrám took a Pledge from the Túránians, how he set up a Pillar to delimit the Realm, and placed Shahra upon the Throne of Túrán

Bahrám Gúr stayed to rest at Marv and when
Both Sháh and war-steed were refreshed he chose
Bukhárá for the next attack, for he

Had changed from gentleness to bitterness.
He reached Ámwí [1] in one day and one night,
Intent on conquest not on chase and sport.
He reached it in the night's first watch and crossed C. 1546
The river [2] and the desert of Farab.
Whenas the air was golden with the sun,
And doffed its skirt of lapis-lazuli,
The world was like a falcon's wing with dust
What time the world-lord passed by Mái and Margh.
He smote the Turkman host and set on fire
Their fields and fells, the stars concealed themselves
Behind the moon's skirts while the fathers made
Their way across the bodies of their sons.
All of the Turkmans that were leading men,
Both veteran and youthful swordsmen, came
Afoot in evil case before Bahrám,
With full hearts abjectly, and said : " O Sháh !
O mighty one ! O favourite of the stars !
O chief of all the nobles of the world !
Since now the Khán is captive that broke faith
Shed not the blood of those that did no wrong,
For tyranny becometh not the great.
If thou demandest tribute it is well,
But why behead the guiltless ? All of us,
Both men and women, are thy slaves and are
Thy vanquished in the fight."
The Sháh's heart burned
For them. He sewed up with the hand of wisdom
The eye of his displeasure. In concern
That man of God restrained his warriors' hands
From shedding blood. His favour thus secured,
The man of wrath appeased, the leading chiefs
Agreed to pay a heavy tribute yearly.
The Sháh was well content ; he took the tribute,
And further sums in lieu of pillaging.

[1] Probably the modern Charjui. [2] The Oxus.

He turned and reached the city of Farab,
His cheeks were flushed and smiles were on his lips.
He paused, allowed his troops to rest a week,
And called to him the potentates of Chín.
He reared a column of cement and stone,
Which none, save by the Sháh's command, might pass
Out of Írán, Khalaj, and Turkistán.
He made the line between them the Jíhún.
There was among the troops one Shahra hight,
A man of wisdom, rank, success, and fame.
Bahrám made him the ruler of Túrán,
And made his throne the crown upon the moon.
When Shahra sat upon the silver throne
He girt his loins and opened wide his hands,
Set too the golden crown upon his head,
And through the land joy universal spread.

§ 22

How Bahrám wrote to announce his Victory to his Brother Narsí and returned to Írán

C. 1547 The business of Túrán achieved, and when
The Sháh's heart was released from care, he bade
A scribe attend him, called for pen and ink
And silk of Chín, and wrote Narsí a letter
About the Turkman war and what his troops
Had done. It thus began : "The nobles praise
Through me—a slave—the Maker of the world—
The Lord of victory and mastery,
The Lord of Saturn, Mars, and Moon, the Lord
Of lofty, circling heaven, the Lord of mean
And miserable dust. The great and lowly
Are underneath His governance, and all
That is to be is subject to His word.

I have indited from the coasts of Chín
A letter to my brother in Írán,
And this same letter, writ on painted silk,
Is meant too for our chiefs and folk at large.
Those that were not engaged against the Khán
Must hear the tale from us who fought with him.
His army was so vast that thou hadst said :—
'The dust thereof hath smeared the sky with pitch!'
The coasts became as 'twere a sea of blood,
The unjust's fortune drooped, and he was taken
Because[1] the turning sky was weary of him.
Now have I brought him on a camel bound,
With wounded liver and with blood-filled eyes.
The necks of all the proud are bent, their tongues
Are gentle, and their hearts are hot within them.
Those now pay tribute who were enemies,
And they that erred have come back to the way.
I and my host, as my well-wishers would,
Will follow this dispatch."
The wind-foot camels,
Foam-scattering, parted like a thunder-clap,
And when the letter reached Narsí the heart
Of that prince throbbed with joy. The high priest came
With all the heroes of the royal race
Before Narsí, the palace rang with joy,
And all gave ear to that report. The nobles
Were pricked at heart for shame before the Sháh
By reason of their fault. Among the chiefs
Six score and ten and more went to Narsí
To proffer their excuses, saying thus :—
" Perverse suggestions and the Dív's behest
Have led us to transgress the World-lord's way.
To such a host as that one would presume
That God would ope Heaven's gate. 'Tis marvellous,

[1] Reading with P.

C. 1548 Surpassing thought and all the providence
Of wise and learnéd men ! In thy reply,
'Mongst matters fair and foul, vouchsafe to give
A place to our excuse. Although the chiefs
Have erred the illustrious Sháh may pardon them."
Narsí agreed and said : " So will I do
As to release the Sháh's heart from revenge."
He wrote at once an answer to the letter,
Disclosing matters fair and foul, and said :—
" The Íránians in their pain and misery,
And for the sake of country, children, treasure,
Went for protection to the Khán of Chín,
Despairing of their own illustrious Sháh ;
'Twas not through enmity, offence, or strife ;
No other Sháh had gained their preference.
Now if the conqueror, the king of kings,
Will pardon he will make their dark night day.
Me they selected as the advocate
To urge their cause, and bade me : ' Plead for us.' "
An archimage, by name Burzmihr, agreed
To go upon that embassage, approached
The monarch of the world, and told him all.
The Sháh was well contented by the words,
The fire of his fierce anger ceased to fume.
Then from Chaghán, Khatlán, Balkh, and Bukhárá
The chieftains went with tribute, and the archmages
From the Gharchís with sacred twigs, and pleaded
Before the worshippers of Fire, and thus
From year to year all those that had the means
Went to the court with taxes and with tribute.
When the Fire-fane was ready and the place
To hold the feasts of New Year and of Sada
The Sháh approached Ázar Ábádagán,
He and his nobles and his men of name ;
They went to make their prayers before the Fire,
And all the archmages offered reverence.

The Sháh gave largess to the worshippers,
And passing thence proceeded to Istakhr,
Which was the glory of the king of kings.
From ox-hides and from sheep-skins, borne before him
Upon the backs of elephants, were scattered
A thousand quintals and eight score of largess ;
Part was in drachms, the rest in gold dínárs—
Coin that an archimage of Párs would call
In ancient Persian " paidáwasís." [1] Then
He brought his scented leather bags of coin,
And lavished gold and silver. If he saw
Upon a journey any broken bridge,
Or heard of any hostelry in ruins
From his officials, he would give command
For their repair out of his treasury
Without forced labour. On the poor withal,
And those that toiled to earn their daily bread,
He lavished drachms, for bounty never irked him, C. 1549
While, thirdly, on the honest folk, the widows,
And infant orphelins, he showered silver.
Fourthly, on those too old for work or warfare,
And, fifthly, on all those of noble birth
That were despised by wealthy folk, and sixthly
On folk that coming from a lengthy journey
Paraded not their poverty, he lavished
A treasure, and looked round him to do good.
All booty he made over to his troops,
And had no notion of amassing wealth.
He bade a pious archimage to bring him
The crown worn by the Khán of Chín. They took
The jewels out and used them and the gold
To grace a Fire-fane's walls and decorate
The throne-top of Ázar. Thence he departed
To Taisafún where dwelt Narsí with those
Archmages that advised him. All the chiefs,

[1] The " paidáwasí " was a silver coin = to five dínárs.

The great men of Irán, and governors,
Came forth to meet the Sháh, and when Narsí
Beheld that royal head and crown, the flags
Resplendent, and that mighty host, he lighted,
With all the great men and august archmages,
And did obeisance to Bahrám who bade him
To mount again, and grasped him by the hand,
Then went up to the golden throne and sat
What while the chiefs stood girded in his presence.
He lavished treasure on the indigent,
They opened wide the prison's narrow doors,
The age was filled with jollity and justice,
The hearts of all were strangers to distress.
He banished toil and grief from every clime,
He made a banquet for the great, and all
That hasted to attend the royal board
Received a present worthy of a lord.

§ 23

How Bahrám wrote a Letter of Directions to his Officials

The third day at a feast made for the nobles
A scribe was brought and set before the Sháh,
Who, when his visage was relaxed with wine,
Wrote, joying in his lovingkindliness,
A letter which began with praise of one
That hath with knowledge laved his soul, made wisdom
The jewel of his heart, won opulence
By his own toil and hardihood, acknowledged
That all good is from God, hath sought for wisdom,
C. 1550 Made friends of sages, knoweth that from justice
Naught will proceed but good, and knocketh not
Upon the portal of malignity :—

" If one complaineth of mine officers,
My noble chieftains or my men of war,
They have no prospect but the cell or gibbet,
And, if slain, vile committal to the dust.
Endeavour to make others' travail small,
Give joy and happiness to mourners' hearts,
Because the world hath stayed, will stay, with none ;
Be just and inoffensive, that sufficeth.
I am exemplary of what I say,
And an incentive to all righteousness,
For what a multitude of troops assailed
Me and this noble company, while I
Departed with a little host, and those
Who were mine enemies are now my friends !
One noble personage—the Khán of Chín,
A world-lord having signet, crown, and throne—
I captured, and the Turkmans' fortunes fell.
All-holy God made me victorious,
My foemen's heads have come to dust. Be service
My sole employ, mine every thought be right.
I will impose no tax for seven years
On subject or compeer. I write this letter
In our old tongue to chiefs and to officials
That they may treat my subjects in accord
To righteous precedent and take no thought
Of doing wrong. Dispatch to me the names
Of those that are in want within your towns,
And in their portion have no day of joy,
And well will I content them. Furthermore,
If there be any men of noble birth,
Who can recall to memory better days,
Them also with my treasures set past need,
And magnify the wise. The folk in debt,
And empty-handed, who are everywhere
Looked down upon and scorned, them too relieve
Of debt and write their names upon the roll.

Pray ye to God to keep our heart thus true
To custom and the Faith, joy in this precept,
And well entreat the underlings. Moreover,
Despise not your own slaves, for they, like you,
Are God's. Let one of wealth, and fit therefor,
Entrust to learnéd men his children. Make
Their spirits rich in knowledge and encrown
Their heads with wisdom. Keep your hands afar
From others' wealth, be ye without offence,
And worshippers of God. Be diligent,
Break not our fealty,[1] and eradicate
The stumps, the suckers, and the roots of evil.
C. 1551 Seek not to do your neighbours injury,
Especially the magnates and the rich :
Make God your refuge, keep His ordinance,
And your souls pledges of your love for Him.
Whoever hath grown great from nothingness,
And raised himself to independency,
Call him not great, such greatness dwindleth soon.
Be just, be worshippers of God, and wash
Perverseness and injustice from your hands.
All ye that have ! withhold not from the poor ;
Incline to holiness and act aright ;
Break not the hearts and backs of suppliants ;
Mishap is nigh to all things done amiss.
God's favour be upon the soul of him
To whom humanity is warp and woof."

When they had written thus on lustrous silk
The scribe dipped into musk his pen and wrote
The heading thus : " The monarch of the world,
The heart of justice, knowing good and ill,
The lord of pardon, Grace, and puissance,
Bahrám Gúr, the all-bounteous king of kings,
To his marchlords and those beneath his rule—
The wise and understanding, warlike chiefs."

[1] Reading with P.

Then runners, cavaliers, and cameleers
Went with the letter everywhere with guides,
And when it came to all the provinces,
To every nobleman and chief, all said :—
" Thanks be to God, the world-lord is devout."
Thereat the women, men, and children went
In all lands from their houses to the plain,
And all invoked a blessing silently
Upon that upright monarch of the world,
Then set themselves to feast and called for wine,
And harp and minstrelsy. They feasted half
The day, the other half they toiled.
At springtide
It was proclaimed before the court at dawn :—
" Let those of substance eat and give away.
Let them thank us for that which they enjoy,
And let the poor come to the treasury,
And carry thence five drachms of proper weight,
Together with three mans [1] of bright, old wine
Hued like pomegranate-blossom or like gold."
The world disposed itself to merriment,
The shouts of revellers filled town and hamlet
Until they bought a coronal of roses
For two dínárs and gave without complaint
A drachm for a narcissus-spike. The old
Grew young of heart with joy, the streams ran milk.
The Sháh thanked God on seeing all the world C. 1552
Thus glad.
One day he thus addressed Narsí :—
" Depart hence with the signet and the crown.
I have bestowed upon thee Khurásán ;
Cause it to flourish ; joy our subjects' hearts ;
Be nothing if not just ; stint not thy hand
Within this Place of Passage.[2] If our father

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 290 *note*.
[2] " n'interromps jamais le passage à travers ce pays." Mohl.

Sought ill he quaked therefor like naked men
Beneath an autumn-blast."

He bade prepare
A robe of honour for Narsí, thus voiding
An opulent treasury, and said to him :—
" God shelter thee, and be the sun's throne thine."

The journey took two se'nnights, then Narsí
Assumed in peace the rule of Khurásán.

When he had gone one week the Sháh, whose heart
Was freed from care, bade, and the high priest went
Before him, bringing certain of the nobles.
The Sháh addressed him, saying : " Cæsar's business
Is dragging on, and his ambassador
Is waiting long for his dismission.
What sort of man is he, and from the standpoint
Of wisdom where is he, for wisdom straighteneth
The soul ? "

The high priest answered : " Blest be thou,
Lord of the world, and dowered with Grace divine.
He is advanced in years, discreet, and modest,
A man of goodly speech and gentle voice,
A pupil of the school of Falátún,[1]
A man of wisdom, learned, and nobly born.
He left Rúm, full of energy, but now,
Since he hath been here, he hath grown depressed,
And torpid like a snake in winter-time,[2]
With weak frame and with cheeks of reed-like hue.
His servitors are all like sheep before
A hunting cheetah, but regard not us ;
Such are their manhood and their valiancy
They think none in this land a man at all."

Bahrám Gúr answered thus the high priest : " God
Bestoweth Grace and diadem and might.
If He hath given me victory, and turned
My fortune's night to day, still Cæsar too

[1] Plato. [2] Literally, " in the month of Dai."

Is of imperial race, is great, is sprung
From Salm whose head was crowned by Farídún,
And can recount his lineage sire by sire.
He acteth in a manly, prudent way,
And hath not turned to madness like the Khán.
At audience we will call the envoy in,
To see if what he saith be to the point,
And then I will dismiss him graciously,
For men are useful to me in this world ;
One is for war and bringeth troops, another
For feasting and doth bring a golden crown.
I must maintain the honour of Írán,
The man that treateth with great men is great."
The high priest praised him lovingly and said :— C. 1553
" Live happily so long as heaven revolveth.
He shall not speak save to exalt thy fame :
Mayst thou be chief among the men of name."

§ 24

How Bahrám called before him the Envoy of Cæsar, and how the Envoy questioned and answered the Archmages

The next day when the sun displayed its crown,
And rays proceeded from the vaulted sky,
The monarch of the world sat on his throne,
And called the envoy in before his lords.
That old man sage, experienced, eloquent,
Of understanding and retentive mind,
Approaching with dejected head and arms
Enfolded, kneeled before the monarch's throne.
Bahrám both greeted and made much of him,
Set him upon the turquoise throne and said :—
" Here thou hast sojourned long ; art thou not weary
Of looking on this land ? War with the Khán,

Which closely partnered me, withheld me from thee ;
Now all our case is altered, and thy sojourn
Exceedeth bounds. To that which thou shalt say
We will reply, deriving from thy words
Good rede."

The ancient envoy praised him, saying :—
" May time and earth ne'er lose thee. Every king
Possessed of wisdom joyeth in the words
Of sages ; sages are more nigh to God ;
Those that think evil have the darker day.
Midst this world's chieftains thou art chief, who art
At once Sháh, chief, and best. Thy tongue's a balance,
Thy words are jewels, and who e'er will see
Gems weighed 'gainst gold ? Thou art possessed of knowledge,
Of counsel, sense, and Grace, and all the methods
Of conquering kings ; thou art possessed of wisdom
And holy rede, and master of the wise.
Though Cæsar's envoy I am thy slave's slave.
I carry Cæsar's greeting to the Sháh :—
' May this head, throne, and crown for ever be.'
And furthermore I have it in command
To ask seven questions of thy men of lore."

The Sháh replied : " Proceed ; the highest honours
Await the eloquent."

He bade the high priest
Come to his presence with the famous sages,
But sighs were on his lips the while in view
Of what the man might ask. " What are," he thought,
C. 1554 " The seven mysterious things whereof this Rúman
Would question us ? "

The high priest with the learned,
Men mighty in all lore, came, and the spokesman
Revealed the secret, telling to the high priest
The words of Cæsar : " What is ' the within '
In thy nomenclature, what ' the without,'

O guide, who hast no other name therefor ?
What is ' the above,' my lord, what ' the beneath ' ?
What is ' the infinite ' and what ' the vile ' ?
What hath most names and ruleth everywhere ? "
" Haste not," the high priest answered thus the sage,
" And turn not from the path of understanding."
He then proceeded : " O thou man of wisdom !
Give ear to each reply that I shall make :
There is one answer only to thy words.
As to thy question touching ' the without,'
And ' the within,' it is an easy one :
The heaven is ' the without,' air ' the within ' ;
They are the Glory of the Omnipotent ;
God, touching this world, is ' the infinite,'
For lore to turn thee from Him is ' the vile ' ;
' The above ' is Paradise, Hell ' the beneath,'
And he is wicked that doth fear not God.
Next as to that with many names whose will
Prevaileth everywhere : O ancient ! wisdom
Hath many names, and wisdom compasseth
The will of kings. One man may call it love,
Another faith, but in its absence all
Is pain and tyranny. The eloquent
Term it uprightness and the fortunate
Astuteness ; 'tis at whiles long-suffering,
At whiles trustworthiness, for speech therewith
Is safe. So divers are the names of wisdom
That they exceed accompt. Allow that naught
Surpasseth it ; it is the chief of goods,
And knoweth this world's hoarded mysteries,
Which mortal vision cannot penetrate.
Again, the stars that glitter in the sky
Are what the master can afford to slight
For understanding of the Maker's work.
The eye that gazeth cannot reckon them,
And heaven above is unattainable

As being measureless, so thou mayst scorn
Such reckonings and processes of Fate.
One that can follow not an arrow's course,
Shrewd though he be, will marvel still thereat ;
Then what can be more futile, favoured sir !
Than to compute heaven's stars ? This much I know,
And if another replication be
'Tis that the Maker's mysteries are vast."
C. 1555 When Cæsar's spokesman heard he kissed the ground,
And offered praise. " World-ruling Sháh," he said,
" Ask nothing more of God, for all the world
Is thine to bid, the heads of all the great
Are under thy control, the world hath not
A king like thee in mind, thou praised by all
The high-born nobles ! while thy minister
In knowledge passeth sage and archimage.
All the philosophers are slaves to him,
And at his wisdom hang their heads."
Bahrám,
On hearing, showed his pleasure, his heart brightened.
He bade a robe of honour be made ready
Of things most valued in his treasury,
And gave the archimage withal ten purses
Of drachms with raiment, steed, and much besides,
And then the envoy of illustrious Cæsar
Went from the royal presence to his lodging.
When Sol displayed its hand upon the sky
The king of kings sat on his golden throne,
And Cæsar's envoy came to court, and with him
The high priest wise and worshipful. They went
With joy before the king of kings, conversing
On many matters, and the Sháh's high priest
Said to the envoy : " Matchless, peerless sage !
What thing is so injurious that we
Must weep at its occurrence ? What know'st thou

So useful to the world that men become
Exalted when it chanceth ? "
Said the envoy :—
The wise aye will be great and powerful.
The person of the foolish is more vile
Than clay and undeserving of all good.
Thou spakest of the unwise and of the wise,
And hast received, maybe, the right response."
The high priest said to him : " Consider well,
Reflect, and put not fish upon the dry."
The envoy said : " O man approved by all !
One well may quote the sayings of the wise,
But, if thou knowest another answer, speak,
For knowledge giveth increment to fame."
The high priest answered : " Think, for speech resulteth
From thought and brain, and know thou that the death
Of one least harmful is the greatest loss
Of all, but thou mayst joy when bad men die,
Albeit death is common to us all.
This then is profit and the other loss :
Let wisdom judge the answer of us both."
The Rúman gave assent to what he heard ;
Those words seemed excellent to him ; he smiled,
Did reverence to the Sháh and said to him :—
" How happy is the country of Írán !
For others look not on a king of kings C. 1556
Like thee, or on a high priest such as thine.
Thou art the world's high crown in understanding,
In priests thou art the greatest of the great.
Wouldst thou from Cæsar tribute ? Be it so,
Because thy minister is sovereign
In wisdom," and his words rejoiced the king,
Whose heart grew fresh as roses in the spring.

§ 25

How Bahrám dismissed Cæsar's Envoy and charged his own Officials

The envoy left the presence of the Sháh,
The night came on, the Sable Banner rose,
The men of lore were weary of discourse,
The valiant monarch sought his ladies' bower.
The circling vault of heaven rested not;
But roused the sleepers from their drowsihead,
The fountain of the sun set up its flag,
The world-Sháh's head woke lightly from repose,
The chamberlain unlocked the audience-door,
The king sat down upon the throne of gold.
He bade a robe of honour be made ready,
The envoy summoned. Indian scimitars
With golden scabbards noble steeds betrapped
With gold, dínárs, gems, musk, and spicery,
Beyond that ancient man's imaginings,
The shrewd Sháh gave the envoy, then was busied
With his own folk's affairs. By his command
The high priest, who was counsellor withal,
Approached him with a noble company,
And he apportioned all the land among
Those warlike paladins, gave drachms and steeds
And signet-rings and casques, and, to the greatest,
Thrones, crowns, and provinces. He filled the world
With right, and small and great rejoiced in him.
He banned the unjust with chilling words, unlargessed,
And, after, thus harangued the archimages :—
" Ye sages worshipful and pure of heart !
The world for us hath many memories
Of doings of the Sháhs unjust and just,
Whose hands oft-times were stretched for ill what while
Their persons lurked mid ease and luxury.[1]

[1] Reading with P.

The world was frighted by these evil men,
The hearts of all the good were rent in twain ;
All hands were occupied with evil-doing,
And none was instant in the cause of God ;
The Dív's work everywhere prevailed ; hearts ceased
To fear the Master of the world. The head C. 1557
Of virtues and the hand of ill, the door
Of understanding and the quest of wisdom,
Are laid upon the Sháh's neck, and in him
Especially are seen both right and wrong.
My sire, who stretched his hand out to injustice,
Was not a holy man, wise or devout.
Hold not his actions strange, for rust attacked
The bright steel of his heart. Consider too
The experience of Jamshíd and Sháh Káús
For having sought the guidance of the Dív.
My father in like manner followed them,
And washed not his dark soul in wisdom's stream.
His subjects writhed, and many lost their lives
Through his severity. Now he hath gone,
Hath left behind him but an evil name,
And hath no praise from any, yet let us
Give blessings to his soul, for God forbid
That it should writhe through our vindictiveness ;
And now that I am seated on his throne
His way will doubtless be to Paradise.
I ask the world's Lord to bestow upon me,
Alike in public and in private, strength
To treat my subjects with humanity,
And make pure musk out of the darksome dust,
That when therewith my body shall conjoin
None wronged by me may pluck me by the skirt.
Put ye too on the robe of uprightness,
With hearts washed clean from wrong, for none is born
Unless to die, be he of Persian, Arab,
Or Rúman race ; death's charge is lion-like,

And from its claws none can withdraw the neck ;
It maketh quarry of the rending lion,
The dragon's body 'scapeth not its toils.
Where are the heads and crowns of kings of kings ?
Where are the mighty and the glorious chiefs ?
Where are the cavaliers and haughty ones ?
I see no trace of them within the world.
Where are its fair who joyed those chieftains' souls ?
Know thou that all whose cheeks are 'neath the shroud
Are wedded to the dust. Let all of us
Have hands both clean and good, and not commit
The world to evil ways. I swear by God,
The Lord of all, who gave to me the Grace,
With crown and throne, high birth and quality,
That if an officer of mine shall wrong
The mean or mighty by a pinch of dust
I will consume his body in the fire,
Or hang him to a gibbet by the neck.
If in the watches of the night a thief
Shall steal a poor man's quilt I will make good
His loss from mine own treasury with brocade,
And wash the hearts of mourners from their woe ;
While if a sheep be taken from the flock
In dark night or in snow-storm I will give
C. 1558 Instead thereof a steed of noble race,
And God forbid that I should ask for thanks.
If in a war against mine enemies
A cavalier is wounded in the fight
I will assign him yearly maintenance,
I will not leave his children in distress.
Praise ye the Judge that knoweth what is good
Throughout eternity. Let none lay hand
On water or on fire except the priests
That are fire-worshippers. Slay not draught-oxen,
For they are of avail in husbandry,
Unless past work and worthless to their owner.

Pack-oxen too must not be slain, the land
Else will grow void of grace. Deliberate
In all things with the men of lore and break not
The hearts of children that are fatherless.
Be alien from the promptings of the Div,
In fight ensue not feast. If I require
My subjects to pay taxes I abjure
God, throne, and crown. Since Yazdagird, my father,
Did evil, to redress that wrong have I
Disseminated justice. Let your hearts
All joy to do it and in gratitude
Observe the Cult of Fire. God may forgive him,
And guide him out of Hell to Paradise.
Give pleasure to the young, break not the hearts
Of lieges, keep from drunkenness in age,
For 'tis unseemly in the old to tope ;
Sin ye not therefor, for in age 'tis well
To make your preparations to depart.
If God, the righteous Judge, approveth us
Let not the future trouble you to-day ;
Let there be pleasure in my subjects' hearts,
And let the nobles' heads be free from grief."
The chiefs, on hearing and considering well
His words, all wept that such an one was theirs,
A Sháh so wise and shrewd, acclaimed his worth,
And hailed him as the great king of the earth.

§ 26

How Bahrám went with his own Letter to Shangul, King of Hind

A wise wazír rose to his feet and said :—
" O judge of what is just and right ! the world
Hath ceased to fear malignants, toil and stress
Have left our coasts. Howbeit famed Shangul

Among the folk of Hind is still perverse ;
C. 1559 His bands of plunderers infest the earth
From Hindústán up to the coasts of Chín.
He will lay hands for ill upon Írán,
And thou shouldst apprehend this. Thou art Sháh ;
Shangul but wardeth Hind, so why should he
Take toll of Sind and Chín ? Consider this,
And note his plans, for ill must not ensue."
The Sháh, on hearing this, was full of thought,
The world before him seemed a tangled brake,
And thus he answered : " I will deal herewith
In secret, not consulting any one.
I will myself alone observe his troops,
The conduct of his kingship and his throne,
Approaching him an as ambassador,
And not acquaint the Íránians and the lords.
O holy archimage ! write to Shangul
A firm but courteous letter."
Thereupon
His pious minister went with a scribe,
And others that were indispensable,
And canvassed all the case, brought paper, ink,
And pen, and wrote a letter full of counsel,
Instruction, knowledge, and the praise of God.
It thus began : " From God be praise on those
That seek His praise who is the Lord of all
That is and is not. All things have their peers,
But God is One. Of all that He bestoweth
Upon His slaves, on sovereign and subject,
Naught is more great than wisdom which illumeth
Both. He whom wisdom gladdeneth will walk not
The world for ill, and he that chooseth right
Ne'er will repent thereof ; he cannot savour
Ill from the stream of knowledge. Wisdom looseth
Man from mishap ; may none be wrung therewith.
Wisdom's first token is that one should dread

Ill-doing all one's years and know oneself ;
Then must he search the world with wisdom's eye,
For wisdom is the diadem of kings,
And jewel of the men of name withal.
Thou know'st not thine own measure but dost plunge
Thy soul in blood. Now, seeing that I am
The monarch of the age, both good and ill
Are laid to me. Do thou so reign that right
May be preserved, for ill is manifest
On all sides. 'Tis not kingly to make raids,
And cotton with the ill-disposed. Thy grandsire
Was vassal to us and thy sire a slave
Before our Sháhs, and none of us allowed
Arrears in tribute out of Hindústán.
Now mark the fortune of the Khán of Chín, C. 1560
Who came thence 'gainst Írán. He gave to spoil
All that he brought, and writhed for his ill deeds.
I see thee also thus disposed, the same
Perversity, same Glory, and same Faith.
Now I have arms and treasures for the war,
My soldiers are devoted and arrayed ;
Thou canst not stand against my gallant men,
And there is not a general in Hind.
Thou art conceited of thy might, preferring
Thine own rill to the river. Now behold !
I have dispatched an envoy to thee, one
Of knowledge, eloquence, and high degree.
Send tribute or make war and fortify
The passes. Be our blessing on his soul
Whose warp and woof are equity and wisdom."
Whenas air's breath had made the writing dry
The writer of the letter folded it,
And then the scribe addressed it on this wise :—
" From this world's king, the monarch shrewd of wit,
The lord of government, the lord of might,
The world's possessor, generous Bahrám Gúr,

Who on the day of Ard in month Khurdád
Received from Yazdagird the royal crown,
Chief of the marches, guardian of the realm,
To whom Sakláb and Rúm are tributary,
This to Shangul, who ruleth over Hind
From Sind up to the river of Kannúj." [1]
The monarch sealed the letter with his signet,
And then made ready for the chase, but none
Of all the host knew of his purposes
Except the nobles of his company.
Thus he drew nigh to Hindústán and crossed
The river of magician-land.[2] On nearing
The palace of Shangul he gazed upon
The hall of audience with its gate and curtain.
It rose aloft in air, and at the gate
There was no lack of arms and equipage,
For there stood cavaliers and elephants
Amid a din of gongs and Indian bells.
He stood there all amazed and lost in thought,
Then on this wise addressed the curtain-keepers,
The servants and officials of the gate :—
" An envoy to this court am I, deputed
By conquering Sháh Bahrám."
The chamberlain
Went to the royal presence from the curtain.
They raised it by the king's command and brought
The envoy in with all respect. Bahrám Gúr
Advanced with stately step, and saw a chamber
With crystal roof. On drawing near Shangul
C. 1561 [3] Bahrám beheld him seated on his throne
Of majesty, and crowned. The steps that led
Up to that golden throne were all of crystal.
There sat the king in all his Grace and might,

[1] The Ganges is meant. [2] Hindústán. *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 163.
[3] The first five couplets on this page are read, as in P, in the following order : 4, 5, 1, 2, 3.

Arrayed in silver broidered with gold thread
Beset with many a gem. Bahrám beheld
The monarch's brother on an ante-throne,
And wearing on his head a jewelled crown.
The minister sat by: the monarch's son
Stood there before the throne. The Sháh drew nigh
Thereto, did reverence, and paused awhile,
Then quickly loosed his tongue. "I have," he said,
"A letter written in our tongue on silk,
Sent to the king of Hind by Sháh Bahrám—
The world's lord who possesseth crown and throne."
The king, on hearing what Bahrám said, bade
To bring a golden ante-throne. They set him
Upon that seat of gold, and from the gate
Called in his comrades. Seated thus he said:—
"Exalted king! I will unloose my lips
When thou commandest. May both good and greatness
Be ever thine."
Shangul replied: "Proceed,
For heaven's blessing is on those who speak."
Bahrám rejoined: "That Sháh of royal race,
Whose like no mother in the world hath borne,
The exalted prince, the glory of the state,
Whose justice turneth bane to antidote,
To whom all potentates are tributary,
Whose prey is lions in the chase, and who,
On taking up the scimitar in fight,
Converteth deserts into seas of blood,
In generosity like clouds in spring,
In whose sight treasures and dínárs are vile,
Hath sent the king of Hind an embassy,
And letter writ on silk in Pahlaví."

§ 27

How Shangul received the Letter from Bahrám and made Reply

The king, on hearing this, asked for the letter,
And marvelled at that chief. A noble scribe
Read it, whereat the monarch's face became
Like gall. He said : " O man of eloquence !
Haste not to speak, and act not haughtily.
Thy Sháh displayeth his imperiousness,
Witness thy journey hither. Should one ask
For tribute out of Hindústán the wise
Would disavow him. If thy master speaketh
Of host and treasure, and of giving land
And cities up to woe . . . well, other kings
Are cranes, I am an eagle ; they are dust,
C. 1562 I am a sea. None fighteth with the stars,
Or seeketh fame by warring with the sky.
Worth is much better than the useless talk
That maketh wise men hold thee in contempt.
Ye have not manhood, knowledge, realm or city ;
Your share of sovereignty is only loss.
My whole land is a hidden treasury
Whereon mine ancestors have laid no hand,
Beside my store of mail for man and steed,
Which, if my treasurer should bring it forth,
Would ask for elephants to bear the keys,
If mighty elephants could carry them ;
And should I count my swords and coats of mail
The stars would seem contemptible in sum
To thee. The earth will not sustain my host,
My throne, and mighty elephants. If thou
Shouldst multiply a thousand thousand-fold
'Twould be the sum of those that call me king.
Mine are the jewels of the hills and seas,
I am the present mainstay of the world.

The founts of aloe, musk, and ambergris,
The hoards of undried camphor and the drugs
That cure the suffering, whoe'er shall ail
Throughout the world, are plenteous in my realm,
As well as silver, gold, and jewelry,
While fourscore kings with crowns of gold up-gird
Their loins at my behest. My land is full
Of mountain, stream, and chasm ; not e'en a dív
Would find his way across it. From Kannúj
Up to the marches of Írán and thence
Right to Sakláb and Chín the chiefs are all
My men and cannot choose but homage me.
The watchmen of Khutan, of Hind, and Chín
Use in their challenges no name but mine ;
All speak the praises of my crown and grow
More serviceable. In my women's bower
The daughter of Faghfúr of Chín invoketh
God's blessing on me—me of all the world.
By her I have a lion-hearted son,
Whose scimitar despoileth mountains' hearts.
No one since Kai Káús and Kai Kubád
E'er hath concerned himself about this land.
Three hundred thousand warlike troops withal
Acclaim me. Of allies I have twelve hundred,
Who all are wholly in my confidence ;
All are my kith and kin by long descent,
And stand before me here in Hind. Their war-cry
Would make the lions of the jungle gnaw
Their claws. If there were any precedent
For chiefs to slay an envoy out of wrath
Thy head and body would I part, and let
Thy raiment wail for thee."

Bahrám replied :— C. 1563

" As thou art great, O king ! sow not the seed
Of wrath. My Sháh said : ' Say to him : " If thou
Art wise choose not the pathway of perverseness." '

Produce now from thy court two men of lore,
Of fluent tongue, and happy in discourse,
And if in rede and wisdom they excel
One of these men with me then I have done
With this thy land, for wise men spurn not words ;
Or else choose out among the warriors
That wield in Hindústán the massive mace
A hundred horsemen to fight one of us,
And we, what time thy wit and worth shall stand
Revealed, will ask not tribute from thy land."

§ 28

How Shangul prepared a Feast for Bahrám, and how Bahrám displayed his Prowess

Shangul, on hearing this, said to Bahrám :—
" Thy counsel sorteth not with manliness.
Abide a season and relax thyself,
Why parley to no purpose ? "
They made ready
A splendid hall. Bahrám reposed till noon,
And when the Crown that lighteneth the world
Had reached its height the feast was all prepared
According to the bidding of the king,
And zealous servants were about the hall.
When they had spread the board before Shangul
He bade a servant : " Summon to the feast
The envoy of the Íránian king, the man
Of fluent utterance and novel aims.
Bring his companions too and seat them where
Ambassadors are placed."
Bahrám came quickly,
Sat at the board and oped his hand to bread,
But shut his lips to speech. The eating done,

They set themselves to quaff and called for harpists
And wine. The scent of musk rose from the feast,
The hall was spread with golden carpetings.
Now when the lords were merry in their cups,
And recked not of the future, king Shangul
Bade two strong men attend, men fit to wrestle
Against the Dív. These noble athletes came,
And girt their loin-cloths round them. Those two youths
Contended lustily and strained and writhed
Together. Now Bahrám took up a cup
Of crystal and the wine confused his brain.
He spake thus to Shangul : " O king bid me C. 1564
To gird me for a bout, for when I wrestle
Against the strong I am away from harm
And drunkenness."
Shangul said smiling : " Rise,
And, if thou shalt o'ercome them, shed their blood."
Bahrám, on hearing this, rose to his feet,
And boldly bending down the upright form
Of him whose waist he clutched (a lion so
Might seize upon wild onager) he flung
His foeman down so that his bones were broken,
And all the colour left his cheeks. Shangul
Was in amazement at the victor's mien,
His stature and his shoulders and his strength,
Invoked God in the Indian tongue and deemed
Bahrám to be a match for forty men.
When they were all bemused with pleasant wine
They left the hall of jewelled tracery
And, when the vault of heaven donned musk-hued Silk,
Both young and old slept after banqueting.
Shangul went to his sleeping-place, the wine
Had turned his looks and thoughts from king Bahrám.
Now when the musky-scented Veil was changed
To gold, and in the sky the sun appeared,

The king of Indians mounted on his steed,
And went forth to the Ground with polo-stick
In hand. His servants bore his bow and arrows,
And for a while he rode to please himself,
Then ordered Sháh Bahrám to mount and take
His royal bow in hand. Bahrám replied :—
"I have a number of Íránian horsemen
With me, O king! and they are fain to ply
The arrow and the polo-stick when bidden
By the most noble king."
Shangul replied :—
"The arrows and the bow are doubtlessly
The mainstays of the cavalier. Do thou,
Who hast such limbs and neck and might of hand,
String up thy bow and shoot."
Bahrám Gúr strung
His bow and urged his steed with shouts. He took
And shot an arrow that destroyed the mark.
The sportsmen and the warriors 'gan to call
Their blessings down upon him, one and all.

§ 29

How Shangul suspected Bahrám and kept him from Irán

Shangul, misdoubting of Bahrám, thought thus :—
"This stature, Grace, and skill in archery
Resemble not a mere ambassador's
Of Hindústán, of Turkistán, or Persia,
But, be he of the Sháh's race or a noble,
'Twere well I call him brother," smiled and said
C. 1565 Thus to Bahrám : "Famed, high-born prince! thou art
No doubt the Sháh's own brother, being dowered
With vigour, strength, and skill in archery,

Because the Grace of kings, the might of lions,
Are thine. Art thou then but a gallant chief ? "
Bahrám said : " King of Hind ! discredit not
Ambassadors. I am not of the seed
Of Yazdagird or Sháh. To call him brother
Would be a crime in me. A stranger I,
Come from Irán, no seeker after knowledge,
No sage. Dismiss me for the way is long,
And I must not incur the Sháh's displeasure."
Shangul replied : " Be not importunate,
For I have somewhat still to say to thee.
Thou must not be so eager to depart,
For hasty going prospereth not. Abide
With us and set thy heart at ease. If thou
Wilt have not mellowed wine then take it crude." [1]
He said thereafter to his own adept :—
" I have a secret for thee. If this man
Be not sib to Bahrám, or in degree
Above his paladins, 'twill prove a marvel
To wise men's hearts. We must not trust his words.
Address him courteously and say : ' Abide ;
There is no cause for thee to leave Kannúj.'
Sayst thou : ' He will detect deceit herein ? '
If words of mine may terrify his heart
It will be better far for thee to speak,
And talk to him in convenable terms.
Say thus to him : ' 'Tis well for thee to gain
More estimation with the king of Hind.
Now if thou will abide with him, and further
His subtle policy, thou shalt possess
The goodliest march of Hind because the king
Hath thee in high esteem. 'Twill be a land
Of never ending springtide where the streams
Breathe of the rose. The fortunate ne'er quit
Kannúj where twice a year the fruit-trees bear,

[1] Couplet omitted.

Where there are treasures, gems, dínárs, and drachms,
And where drachms can be had hearts are not sad.
The king is gracious and for love of thee
He smileth when he looketh on thy face.'
What time ye meet speak thou whate'er thou knowest
To this effect and then inquire his name,
For that will joy my heart. Should our land please
him
Our favours would surpass his excellence,
We would appoint him captain of the host
Anon, in favour highest in the land."

C. 1566 The king's experienced minister departed,
Informed Bahrám, and pointed him his way,
Then asked his name because without his name
No answer would suffice. Bahrám changed colour,
On hearing this, perplexed for his reply.
At length he said : " O man of eloquence !
Make me not wan of visage in two realms.
I will quit not the Sháh for any treasure
However much I may be pinched by want.
The teachings of our Faith are otherwise,
As are our estimations, wonts, and ways,
And every one that turneth from his king
Is lost by such revolt. No man of wisdom
Is eager for addition ; bad and good
Are transient with us. Where is Farídún,
The master of the crown, he that restored
The age ? Where are those chiefs of royal race,
The world-lords Kai Khusrau and Kai Kubád ?
Thou hast withal some knowledge of Bahrám,
The young, ambitious, and imperious,
Who, if I cross his purpose, will avail
To bring the world in ruins on my head,
Leave Hindústán not field or fell but bear
Off to Irán the dust of Wizard-land.[1]

[1] *Cf.* p. 112 and *note*.

My better plan is to return to court,
And to the purview of the conquering Sháh.
If thou wouldst have my name it is Barzwí;
My monarch and my parents call me so.
Communicate mine answer to Shangul,
For I have stayed long in an alien realm."
The minister, on hearing this reply,
Told all that he had heard before the king,
Who frowned and said: "He holdeth him aloof,
But I will take such order that this Light
Of hosts shall end his days."
There was a wolf [1]
Within the monarch's coasts of bulk so vast
That it withstood the wind. The lions fled
The woods before it, and the swift-winged vultures
The sky. Thereat all Hind was full of fear:
Its howlings deafened those most keen of ear.

§ 30

How Bahrám fought with the Wolf at the Bidding of Shangul and slew it

Shangul said to Bahrám: "O man approved!
All enterprises prosper in thy hands.
A wood near by my city troubleth me.
There is a wolf there like a crocodile,
And rendeth lions' hearts and leopards' hides.
Let it be thine to go against this wolf, C. 1567
And pierce its hide all over with thine arrows.
The world may find rest then and by thy Grace,
Victorious one! Thenceforth in mine esteem,
And that of all this noble company,

[1] Perhaps for "gurg," wolf, we ought to read "karg," rhinoceros. The word is spelt both with g and k in C. and is made to rhyme with "marg," death, and "tagarg," hail. *Cf.* NIN, p. 55, *note*.

Thy station shall be such that evermore
The folk of Hind and Chín all shall acclaim thee."
Bahrám, the honest, said : " I need a guide ;
Then by God's strength, when I behold the beast,
Thou shalt perceive its garment [1] soaked in blood."
Shangul provided him a guide that knew
The creature's lair and haunt, and then Bahrám
Went with his trusty guide toward the wood
Of that blood-shedding wolf. Much spake the guide
About its lair, its height and breadth and bulk,
Showed where it was and went back while Bahrám
Approached apace. Iránians thronged behind him
With loins girt for the fray, but when they saw
Afar so vast a wood, the monster's bulk,
And lair that it had made, all said : " O Sháh !
Adventure not ; thou wilt surpass the bounds
Of hardihood because, however brave
Thou art in fight, none hath fought rocks and mountains.
Say to Shangul : ' This may not be. I have
No sanction for this combat from the Sháh.
I fight when I am bidden so that he,
On hearing of it, may advance my rank.' "
Bahrám replied : " If holy God hath given
My dust to Hindústán how can I die
Elsewhere ? That is beyond me."
That brave youth
Strung up his bow, and thou hadst said : " He holdeth
His own life cheap ! "
He sped toward the wolf
With head all rage and heart resigned to death.
He grasped his royal bow and, having drawn
Some poplar arrows from his quiver, poured
His shafts like hail till by that token anguish
O'ercame the wolf. On seeing the beast's end nigh,

[1] Garment for skin as in Job xli. 13.

Bahrám, exchanging bow for sword, smote off
Its head, exclaiming : " In the name of God,
Who hath not mate or peer and gave to me
Such Grace and might ! By His command the sun
Is bright in heaven."
He bade bring wain and oxen
To carry that wolf's carcase from the wood.
They bore it. When Shangul saw it afar
He had his banquet-hall decked with brocade,
And when the mighty king sat on his throne
He set Bahrám upon the seat of honour
While all the chiefs of Hind, and cavaliers C. 1568
Of Chín, applauded him. The lords all came
With offerings and spake thus to Bahrám :—
" None ever did a deed to equal thine ;
Its brilliancy is more than eyes can bear."
As for Shangul he was both glad and grieved,
Appearing cheerful and depressed, by turns.
There was a dragon, an amphibious beast,
Which haunted streams and sunned itself ashore ;
It, with its breath, could suck huge elephants
Down,[1] and raise waves upon the dark blue sea.
Shangul spake thus to his companions,
His clever confidants : " By turns this envoy,
This lion-man, doth please and trouble me.
If he remained he would be my support,
The ruler of Kannúj and of my realm,
But if he goeth from me to Írán
Bahrám will devastate Kannúj ; with such
A servitor to such a lord this land
Will lose both hue and odour. All the night
Have I been musing o'er his case and framing
A fresh device—to send him to that dragon,
Which surely he will 'scape not. Then shall I

[1] " il enveloppait avec sa queue un éléphant de guerre " (Mohl). *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 233 and *note*.

Be censured not on his account if he
Will fight with dragons."
So he called Bahrám,
Told stories of the mighty men, and said :—
" God, Author of the soul, hath led thee hither
Out of the country of Írán to purge
The ills of Hindústán as is the way
Of men of name. A matter fraught with pain
And travail is confronting us, of travail
At first but treasure in the end. If thou
Accomplish this depart on thy return
With my good wishes home."
The Sháh replied :—
" I may not leave the way of thy behests,
But will perform thy bidding faithfully
Unless the heaven itself shall turn awry."

§ 31

How Bahrám slew a Dragon

Shangul said to Bahrám : " Within my realm
There is a dragon—an exceeding bale—
Which fareth both by land and stream to hunt
The lashing crocodile. Thou mayst devise
A scheme to rid thereof the realm of Hind,
Whose tribute thou shalt carry to Írán,
For all the country will assent thereto,
C. 1569 And likewise gifts therefrom of aloe-wood,
Of swords, and goods of all kinds, with the tribute."
Bahrám replied : " Great king and sovereign,
Whose word is law in Hind ! by God, the Just
And Holy One's, command I will cut off
The footing of the dragon from the earth,
But must be shown its lair whereof I know not."

Shangul accordingly dispatched a guide
To show it to Bahrám who went his way
With thirty horsemen, nobles of Írán
And swordsmen. Hasting to the stream he saw
The dragon mid the gloom, its form, its writhing,
And furiousness, fire flashing from its eyes.
The nobles of Írán with loud exclaims,
And shrewdly troubled at that dragon, said :—
" Hold not this dragon as thou didst the wolf,
O king ! the other day. By one mishap
Give not Írán up to the wind, rejoice not
Thy foemen here."
The bold Bahrám replied :—
" I must entrust my life to all-just God.
If I am doomed to perish by this dragon
My time will be not lengthened or decreased
By hardihood."
He strung his bow, he chose
Shafts dipped in bane of milk,[1] and 'gan to shower them
Down on the dragon, wheeling all the while,
Like horsemen in the fray, to left and right.
He sewed up with steel points the dragon's mouth,
Whose venom scorched the brambles, then he shot
Four arrows at its head, and blood and poison
Poured down its breast. The dragon's body failed
By reason of those shafts, and all the ground
Ran with its gore and bane. Then lightly drew
Bahrám his sword of watered steel and pierced
The dragon's heart right dourly, hacked its neck
With sword and battle-ax, and flung to earth
Its lifeless form. The dragon overthrown,
He turned in duty to the Lord and said :—
" O Judge who judgest righteously ! 'tis Thou
That slewest this great dragon, for who else

[1] *Corruptio optimi pessima.* We shall have an instance later on, in the reign of Núshírwán, of milk being turned to poisonous uses. See p. 320 *seq.*

Hath might enough ? Thou art Thy servants' refuge
From every ill."

He sought the king of Hind,
The noble chieftain of the Sindian host,
And said : " The king is freed from these attacks
By His decree—the Judge and Nourisher's."

Shangul grieved, hearing this, because Bahrám
Was in the saddle still. He bade that wains
And oxen should convey the dragon's carcase
To plain from forest, while all Hindústán
Invoked upon Írán the All-Just's blessing :—
C. 1570 " For there a cavalier like this was born
To fight with dragons. One who hath such limbs,
Such stature and such bearing cannot be
But equal to the king in his degree."

§ 32

How Shangul became troubled about Bahrám and gave a Daughter to him

All men rejoiced except Shangul whose heart
Was pained, the matter made his visage wan,
And when night came he summoned his wise men,
Both those of his own kin and aliens,
And thus he said : " This man of Sháh Bahrám's,
Who hath such might, such limbs, and mastery,
Do what I may, is worsted by no toil !
Now if he goeth from us to Írán,
And cometh to the monarch of the brave,
He will depreciate my host and say
That here in Hindústán there is no horseman,
And so my foemen may grow insolent.
I will behead the envoy, will destroy him
By stealth. What say ye ? What do ye advise ? "

"Bring not thy heart, O king!" the wise men answered,
"To sorrow by such deeds. For thee to slay
The ambassadors of kings would be an act
Unwise and senseless. No one e'er conceived
A thought on this wise. Compass no such plan.
Thou wilt be execrated by the chiefs,
And people should respect their sovereign.
By putting this man's head within the shears
Thou wilt bring longsome trouble on thy land.
Forthwith will come an army from Írán,
And with a potentate like Sháh Bahrám;
None of us in these regions will survive,
And thou wilt have to wash thy hands of kingship.
This man is our deliverer from the dragon,
And slaying should compensate not his toils;
Here hath he killed the dragon and the wolf;
Give him more life, not death."
On hearing this
Shangul grew gloomy, for the sages' words
Perturbed him. Passing thus the night, at dawn
He sent a messenger to Sháh Bahrám,
And, when they were together privily
Without a minister or counsellor,
Said: "O thou Joy of hearts! thou hast prevailed.
Attempt no greater feat. I will bestow
My daughter on thee as thy wife, for thus
Shall I be profited in word and deed.
This done, abide with me, for thou wilt have C. 1571
No colour to depart. I will appoint thee
The captain of the host and give thee kingship
In Hindústán."
Bahrám was in amaze,
And mused upon his throne, his birth, and glory.
"There is no remedy for one's own acts,"
He thought, "and this thing cannot bring reproach;

Besides by this I may preserve my life,
And look again upon Íránian soil,
For, as the case is, we have tarried long ;
The lion is taken in the fox's net ! "
Thus said he to Shangul : " I will obey
Thy hest and make thy word my rule of life.
However of thy daughters choose me one,
Who, when I see her, may obtain my praise."
The king of Hind, on hearing this, rejoiced,
And decked his halls with painted silk of Chín.
Shangul's three daughters came like jocund spring
In all their bravery, their scents, their colours,
And looks, and then he bade Bahrám Gúr : " Go,
Prepare thy heart to see a novel sight."
Bahrám Gúr went immediately, beheld
The hall, and of those moon-faced maids chose one
Like jocund springtide, Sapínúd by name,
All grace and modesty, all wit and charm ;
On him Shangul bestowed her—one that seemed
A straight-stemmed cypress and a smokeless lamp—
Then chose the richest of his treasuries,
Gave to the moon-faced maid the key thereof,
Called for Bahrám's companions, cavaliers
Of noble rank and masterful, and gave them
Dínárs and drachms and every kind of wealth,
With camphor, aloe-wood, and ambergris,
Steeds, golden trappings, girdles, and for those
Of highest rank, gold crowns, while for Bahrám
He had a turquoise crown and glorious throne
Of ivory prepared, and decked his palace
Of jewelled tracery. All men of name
Within Kannúj resorted to that place
Of feasting, waiting on their king with joy.
They spent a se'nnight thus with wine in hand,
All glad and jocund in the banquet-hall,
With Sapínúd beside Bahrám, the king,
Like wine in crystal goblet glittering.

§ 33

How Faghfúr of Chín wrote to Bahrám and how he replied

Intelligence came to Faghfúr of Chín :—
" A man of Grace and courage from Írán
Hath reached Shangul as an ambassador,
And verily is of heroic race.
Great exploits have been wrought in Hind and by C. 1572
The hand too of this valiant lion-man
Through resolution and the might of fortune.
Naught but the crown and throne befitteth him,
And on him hath Shangul bestowed a daughter,
So that his diadem might reach the moon."

That mighty world-lord wrote to Sháh Bahrám
A letter superscribed : " From him that is
The monarch of the world, the head of nobles,
And crown of chiefs, to that ambassador
Of Persia who with thirty comrades reached
Kannúj," and then proceeded : " I have had
Accounts of thee, thou famed and glorious man !
About thy wisdom, prudence, and advice,
And how thou standest steadfast everywhere,
So that the wolf and that notorious dragon
Could 'scape not from thy shafts and scimitar.
The lady given to thee is my kin,
Her dust is worth the whole of Hindústán,
And thou hast raised thy head on high by thus
Affining with this mighty potentate,
While in Írán 'twill magnify the Sháh,
Whose crown well may bediadem the moon,
Because his envoy took fit comrades, reached
Kannúj, and clasped a Moon upon his breast.
Now bear the toil, come hither, and abide
Within this land so long as thou mayst wish.
I will illume mine eyes with seeing thee,

And make thy rede the breastplate of my soul.
Thou shalt go hence at will. I will not bid thee :—
'Abide awhile.' So with a robe of honour,
And wealth, depart with joy, thou and thy chiefs,
Well furnished. 'Tis no shame for thee to come
To me ; I have no quarrel with the Sháh.
On no wise be remiss in coming hither,
And, when thou wouldst depart, then tarry not."

This letter reached Bahrám Gúr and perturbed him.
He called a scribe, wrote his reply, and planted
A tree within the orchard of revenge.
The letter thus began : "I have received
Thy words. Thou canst have seen no land but Chín,
For thou hast superscribed thy letter thus :—
'From him that is the monarch of the world,
The most exalted of the glorious chiefs.'
It is not so ; new-fangled majesty
Like thine I do not recognise. Bahrám Gúr
Alone is king of kings ; we know none other.
No man remembereth any king like him
In courage, knowledge, Grace, and lineage.
Him I acknowledge, as victorious world-lord,
And know him greater than all other kings.
Again, for what thou saidst about my deeds,
And of my toil endured in Hindústán,
C. 1573 That too was all the star of Sháh Bahrám,
Who hath Grace, throne, and fame. Accomplishment
Is the Íránians' own, they hold fierce lions
Of no account. They all are single-hearted,
They worship God, and in their blest estate
They fear no ill. Again, if king Shangul
Bestowed his daughter on me I achieved
That honour by my courage. He is great,
By his own courage driveth wolf from sheep,
And, thinking good to make affinity
With me, bestowed on me his worthy child.

Again, for what thou saidst : ' Arise and come,
And I will guide thee unto every good,'
The Sháh sent me to Hind, and shall I go
To Chín for painted silk ? If I propose
A course like that he will approve it not.
Thou sayest further : ' I will send thee home
Enriched with treasures.' God hath set me past
The need of clutching after others' goods.
I praise Bahrám for all his bounty to me,
And offer up thanksgiving to my God
Three watches of the day and of the night.
And fourthly, all the praise that thou hast lavished
Upon me in excess of my deserts,
This I accept from thee, O king of Chín !
And will report it to the Sháh. May God
Give thee so many blessings that the sky
May not distinguish 'twixt their warp and woof."
Bahrám dispatched this letter to the king
Of Chín when he had sealed it with his ring.

§ 34

How Bahrám fled from Hindústán to Írán with the Daughter of Shangul

When with the daughter of Shangul Bahrám
Consorted she found out that he was Sháh ;
By night and day she wept for love of him,
And kept her eyes upon his face. Her father
Heard of her love and ceased to doubt Bahrám.
One day the pair sat happily, discussing
Things great and small, and Sháh Bahrám spake thus :—
" I know that thou dost wish me well, so I
Will tell to thee a secret ; keep it close.
I would quit Hindústán. Dost thou consent

Thereto ? I will take thee withal, but none
Among this folk must know. Within Írán
My state surpasseth this and, furthermore,
C. 1574 The Almighty is mine aid. If thou wilt go
Thy wise decision will promote thy weal,
In every place thy title shall be ' queen,'
And thine own sire shall kneel before thy throne."
She said : " Exalted one ! seek what is good,
And turn not from the way of understanding.
The best of womankind is she through whom
A smile is always on her husband's face.
If my pure purposes are not conformed
To thy command I joy not in thy life."
Bahrám replied : " Then frame a scheme but tell it
To none."
She said : " O worthy of the throne !
I will, with fortune's aid. Not much removed
There is a place where festivals are held,
For in the forest there my father feasteth.
It is a place that men deem fortunate,
And thither gather idol-worshippers.
Hence to the forest is a score of leagues,
And one must weep before the idols there.
That is a place for hunting onager,
A place too for the worshippers of God.
Both king and host will set forth to the feast ;
He will not leave a soldier in the city.
Go then if thou art minded to depart :
Let feasts grow old but be thou young for ever.
Wait for five days, then when the world's Light shineth,
And he shall quit the city, get thee ready
To go thyself."
His wife's words pleased Bahrám,
Who slept not till the dawn for thought.
Now when
The sun displayed its hand upon the sky,

And dark night packed, he mounted on his steed,
And rode forth with his weapons to the chase.
He told his wife : " Make ready and tell none ;
Let us prepare and set out on our way."
Bahrám departed, neared the stream,[1] and saw
The baggage of some merchants on the road.
They recognised him, and he bit his lip,
For they were of Írán—bold travellers
O'er sea and land. He bade them offer him
No reverence ; not even had he told
His comrades what he purposed. To the merchants
He said : " Shut fast your lips ; on that depend
Our profit and our loss, for if in Hind
This secret be divulged the Íránian soil
Will be as seas of blood. Enlarged is he
Whose lips are shut, the tongue must be confined,
And both hands open. By a mighty oath
Will I bind fast your tongues till I regain
My throne. Say thus then : ' May we turn away
From God, the Holy and Supreme, and follow
The Dív if ever we desert the counsel C. 1575
Of Sháh Bahrám and contemplate ill-doing.' "
When this oath had been taken and confirmed,
So that the Sháh's heart was relieved from care,
He said : " Guard well my secret, tendering it
Like life itself, if ye desire to turn
My bondage [2] to a crown ; but if the throne
Be void of me armed hosts will come from all sides,
And leave no merchants here, no Sháh, no thane,
No host, no throne, no crown."
When they perceived
The import of his words they came with cheeks
All wet with weeping. " May the nobles' lives
Thy ransom be," they said, " and youth and kingship
Thy habit. If the treasure of thy secret

[1] The Indus, according to Mohl. [2] Reading with P.

Should be revealed our country would resemble
A sea of gore ! Who dareth contemplate
Such things and turn his wisdom to an ax,
His counsel to a hatchet ? "

Hearing this,
The Sháh 'gan praise those honourable men
Of Grace and Faith, and fared home ill at ease,
Committing to God's charge his soul and body.
He tarried till the banquet-hall was decked,
And till the nobles had departed thither,
But when Shangul himself prepared to go
Bahrám's wife said to him : " Barzwí is sick,
Would be excused, and saith : ' Be not concerned
For me, O king ! The banquet-hall to one
That aileth is distasteful, and the king
Must know thus much.' "

" Let none," Shangul replied,
" That aileth think of banqueting."

At dawn
He left Kannúj and hurried to the place
Of feasting. When 'twas night said Sháh Bahrám :—
" 'Tis time to go, good wife ! "

He seated her
Upon her palfrey and invoked God's name
O'er her in ancient Persian, donned his mail,
And mounted too, his lasso in the straps,
And mace in hand. He hurried to the river,
And found the merchants sleeping. Rousing them
He gat a skiff in readiness wherein
He seated Sapínúd. With day begun
They came to land, and brightly shone the sun.

§ 35

How Shangul followed Bahrám, learned who he was, and was reconciled to him

A horseman from Kannúj sped with the tidings C. 1576
Of Sháh Bahrám's departure, and Shangul,
Who heard it from that loyal servant, quitted
The chase as swift as fire. He hurried on
Until he reached the river where he saw
Both Sapínúd and brave Bahrám. He grieved,
Crossed o'er in dudgeon, and upbraided thus
His child : " O wicked wanton ! thou hast passed,
Bold as a lioness, across the river
To go Írán-ward with this lusty knave,
To desert waste from cultured paradise,
Without my knowledge. Now thou shalt behold,
Since thou hast left my pillow secretly,
The impact of my double-headed dart."
Bahrám replied : " O thou of evil mark !
Why didst thou urge thy steed as madmen do ?
Thou hast had testimony that in war
I am as with the cup and boon-companions.
A hundred thousand men of Hindústán
Before me would not equal, as thou knowest,
One horseman like me and my thirty comrades,
Famed, clad in mail, and wielding Persian swords.
I will fulfil the Indians' eyes with blood,
And will not spare a soul."
Shangul was ware
That he had spoken sooth because his prowess
And valiancy could not be overlooked,
But answered him : " I have foregone my children,
My kindred, and allies, have held thee dearer
Than mine own eyes, and as the diadem
Upon my head, and given thee her whom thou
Thyself didst choose. The right is on my side,

The wrong on thine. Instead of good faith thou
Hast chosen outrage. Ever hast thou heard
Of good faith paid thereby ? Shall I tell thee :—
' One of my kin and wise in mine esteem
Hath gone off cavalierly, gone conceiving
Himself a king ? ' What hath a Persian's heart
In common with good faith ? He sayeth ' yea '
And meaneth ' nay ' ! Thou'rt such a lion's whelp,
In good sooth, as would bathe in their hearts' blood
Its nurses and, when fanged and sharp of claw,
Would purpose combat with its fosterer ! "

Bahrám made answer : " When thou knowest me
How shalt thou call me ill in thought and deed ?
I shall be unreproached for having gone,
Thou wilt not term my heart and conduct evil.
C. 1577 The king of kings am I both of Írán
And of Túrán, the leader of the folk,
The mainstay of the brave, and will requite
Hereafter thy deservings and behead
Thy foes, hold thee as father in Írán,
And vex thee not with tribute for thy realm.
Thy child shall be the Lustre of the West,
And Crown of dames."

Astounded at his words
Shangul took off his Indian turban, spurred
His steed, and from the front of that great host
Approached the Sháh to make excuse, embraced
The king of kings with joy, and sought to amend
What had been said. He was rejoiced to see
Bahrám, prepared the board, and brought the cup.
Bahrám revealed the secret to Shangul,
Discoursed of the concernments of Írán,
And said : " Such circumstances and such thoughts
Were those that guided me in this affair."

They both of them arose, the drinking done,
And each asked pardon of the other one.

§ 36

How Shangul went back to Hind and Bahrám to Írán

These two kings—one a worshipper of God,
The other an idolater—joined hands,
And pledged themselves: "Henceforth we will not sever
Out hearts from right, will raze each root of guile,
Keep faith for aye, and listen to the words
From sages' lips."
Shangul too bade farewell
To Sapínúd, he made his breast the warp
And hers the woof. The two kings quickly turned
Their backs on one another and flung down
The rancour of their hearts upon the dust.
One land-ward went, the other river-ward,
Apace and glad.
When tidings reached Írán :—
"The Sháh himself with those escorting him
Hath come back from Kannúj," the people all,
As they were minded, decked the roads and cities,
And everywhere strewed money, musk, and saffron.
When Yazdagird received the news he gathered
The scattered troops. He and Narsí, the high priest,
And all the sages, went to meet the Sháh.
When Yazdagird beheld his sire Bahrám
He lighted down and bent him to the dust.
Narsí, the monarch's brother, and withal
The high priest had cheeks dust-stained but glad hearts.
On such wise Sháh Bahrám came to his palace,
Committing soul and body both to God.
He rested when the world grew dark and while C. 578
The moon was like a silvern shield, but when
Day rent night's raiment, and the world's Light showed,

The king of kings sat on his golden throne,
Gave audience but refrained his lips from speech.
Came all the nobles with the men of lore,
And princes of the empire, then the world-lord
Rose on his throne and spake words just and holy,
First spake of the Creator, then discharged
His debt [1] to wisdom, and thus said : " Revere
The Almighty in whose ken the manifest
And hidden are, Him praise, and unto Him
Address thy supplications midst night's gloom,
For he hath given power and victory,
And is the Lord of shining sun and moon.
All ye that would gain Paradise abstain
From evil and foul deeds. Where there is justice
With bounteousness and righteousness the heart
Will turn from guile and loss. Let none henceforth
Fear me though he possesseth hills of gold,
And mines of silver. From your hearts expel
All fear and seek addition of all good.
The peasant and the thane are one to us
When we are judge. When we gave crown and throne
To any know that 'twas from God and fortune.
I will strive not to fill my treasury,
I would drive not my people from their homes.
One treasure only—justice—will I hoard
That after death my spirit may rejoice.
Thus too, God willing, will my heart grow bright,
And fortune smile. Hereby I shall increase
Our blessings and direct you to fair fortune.
He who hath borne oppression from my troops,
Officials, kin, and cavaliers of war,
And doth acquaint me not, but keepeth hidden
That knavery, is guilty of the crime ;
Will one so futile e'er endeavour greatness ?

[1] Reading with P.

I call to God for justice on the man
That hath concealed the moon behind a cloud ;
But if your will is other, for men's motives
Are diverse, tell me boldly ; haply I
May bring to pass your long-conceived desires.
Attend to me, do what I bid, and find
Your souls' peace in my counsels."
Thus he spake,
Resumed his seat upon the throne, rejoicing,
And set the crown of greatness on his head.
The nobles praised him, saying : " May the crown
And signet ne'er lack thee. Realm, crown, and throne C. 1579
All glory in a Sháh that is both wise,
And of victorious fortune, but with thee
Thy hardihood, thy knowledge, and thy Grace
Are greater than the throne of king of kings.
A Sháh like thee the world remembereth not
For manliness, for treasure, and for justice.
To bless thee is incumbent on us all,
Both young and old, and we will glorify thee
To God and in the presence of our folk.
No Sháh hath sat upon this throne of gold
Like thee in justice, victory, and might.
Thou raisest from the dust the dead by justice,
By goodly speech, and by munificence.
May God almighty be thine aid, and may
The head of fortune's star be in thy lap."
The mighty men and sages prosperous
Went from the monarch's throne with songs of joy.
Then mounting with his troops he drew anear
The precincts of Ázargashasp. He lavished
His gold and jewels on the mendicants,
On those especially that hid their want.
The high priest of the Fire-fane of Zarduhsht
Came muttering prayers with sacred twigs in hand.
The Sháh brought Sapínúd to him, and he

Instructed her in custom, Faith, and rite,
In limpid water and the good religion
Bathed her and banned from her dust, rust, and soil.[1]
The Sháh unlocked the prisons and began
Bestowing gifts of drachms on every man.

§ 37

How Shangul with seven Kings visited Bahrám

Now from his child—the consort of the Sháh—
Shangul heard of the doings of her spouse,
And was desirous to behold Írán—
The dwelling of the noble monarch's daughter.
He sent an Indian eloquent and noble
As envoy to request the Sháh to grant
Another treaty to be stored away
For record, and the world's lord had one drawn
Like shining Sol in jocund Paradise.
The envoy took withal a letter written
In ancient Persian by the Sháh's own hand,
And went his way.[2] Now when he reached Shangul,
And when the monarch of Kannúj had seen
Bahrám Gúr's letter, he prepared to journey
From Hindústán, but hid it from his kindred
In Chín. Seven monarchs followed in his train,
Escorting Rái[3] Shangul upon his way—
The monarch of Kábul, the king of Hind,
The king of Sind with troops, the famous king
C. 1580 Who ruled Sandal, the monarch of Jandal,
A potent prince, the monarch of Kashmír,
A man of mastery, and last of all
The great and glorious monarch of Múltán,

[1] "la débarrassa de la poussière et de la rouille *de l'idolâtrie*" (Mohl).
[2] Reading with P. [3] Rái = Rája.

All coveters of honour, all with crowns,
All wearing torques and earrings, all with escorts
And camp-equipment, all of them renowned,
Of high estate and rank, all exquisite
With silver, gold, and gems ; their parasols
Were all of peacocks' plumes, their elephants
Had housings of brocade, their escorts glittered
O'er miles with offerings for the Sháh and gifts,
Such that dínárs seemed worthless in his eyes.
Thus king Shangul and those seven kings withal
Proceeded stage by stage, and, when they neared
Írán with all their precious equipage,
The Sháh, informed of their approach, arrayed
A host to go to meet them while the chiefs
Of every city went to welcome them.
The king of kings in wisdom old, and wary
Though young in years, advanced to Nahrawán.
The two illustrious and exalted kings
Drew near to one another, both of them
Alighted from their steeds and, as they met,
Both offering greetings and apologies,
Embraced. Both retinues alighted too :
The world was full of babble. Much talk passed
On matters great and small when thus the kings
Of these two kingdoms met. They both remounted,
As did their worshipful and famous troops.
Bahrám Gúr set him up within his halls
A golden throne draped as the custom was,
Set wine upon the board and furnished minstrels.
The whole place rang with song. He spread a board,
An arrow-flight in length, with roasted lambs [1]
And fowls. The eating done, he held a revel
In royal wise—all colour, scent, and beauty.
The handmaids and the slave-boys stood around,
Throne, hall, and palace were like Paradise,

[1] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 238 and *note*.

The wine-cups were all crystal, there were chargers
All golden, musk, and scents. The revellers
Wore jewelled crowns and shoes depict with gems.
Shangul was in amazement at the palace,
And as he drank he pondered : " Is Írán
A paradise or garden where one's friends
Exhale the scent of musk ? "
Thus to the Sháh
Said he in private : " Let me see my daughter."
C. 1581 Bahrám bade eunuchs of the company
Conduct him to that Moon. The noble king
Went with them and beheld another palace
Like spring. When he beheld her on her throne
Of ivory, crowned with an amber crown,
He came and kissed her on the head, and laid
His cheek to hers and wept exceedingly
For love of her as did the Fair o'er him.
He stroked her hand and speaking of that hall,
That palace, and reception-room, he said :—
" Behold a paradise ! Thou hast escaped
A wretched palace and a foul abode."
The gifts that he had brought with him—the purses,
The crowns, and slaves withal, the gems and raiment,
Whose value none knew how to estimate,
He gave to her. He gave great largess too,
And that blithe home was like a garth in spring.
Departing thence he went back to the Sháh,
Disposed for drinking by his happiness.
Now when the lords were merry with the wine
Shangul departed to his couch to sleep,
And, when the Veil of musky hue appeared
With stars to spot it like a leopard's back,
The revellers betook them to sweet slumber,
While all the attendants stood with folded arms.
Thus was it till that golden Cup appeared,

Which thou wouldst call the sun, flung off the cloak
Of lapis-lazuli, and strewed the waste
With topazes ; then valiant Sháh Bahrám
Went forth to hunt and took the Indian kings,
Went to the chase with cheetahs, hawks, and falcons [1]
Imperious. For a while they did not irk
Their hearts, not one of them felt pain and grief
As for a month they hunted on the waste
Gazelle and onager. Then they returned
With instancy to wine and festival.
Thus king Shangul, when hunting and when feasting,
Ne'er was long absent from the world-lord's side,
Or at the riding-ground, at merrymake,
At banquet and at polo, turned his face
For one day from the Sháh. A long while passed,
The Indian king prepared to journey home.
He sought his daughter with a loving heart,
And stayed with her a while. He bade a slave-boy
Bring pen and paper to him, then he sought
For phrases scented with black, pounded musk,
And wrote in Indian a righteous rescript,
As it were ancient Persian. First he praised
Him who had washed the world of its distress,
Had spread abroad integrity and right, C. 1582
And flung black lies and loss upon the Dív :—
" I serve upon the way of use and Faith,
Not that of anger or for vengeance sake.
I have bestowed my daughter Sapínúd
As wife on Sháh Bahrám, that noble prince.
May he live ever as the king of kings,
And be the great ones of the world his slaves.
As soon as I shall quit this Wayside Inn
Let king Bahrám become Rái of Kannúj.[2]
Transgress not the commandment of that king,
And carry my dead body to the fire.

[1] *Cf.* p. 76, *note.* [2] *Cf.* p. 140, *note.*

Give up my treasury to Sháh Bahrám,
And therewithal crown, kingdom, throne, and casque."
This deed of gift in Indian characters
On silk he gave to Sapínúd as hers.

§ 38

How Shangul returned to Hindústán, and how Bahrám remitted the Property-tax to the Landowners.

Shangul abode for two months in Írán,
And then dispatched a noble to the Sháh
To ask permission to depart, both he
And his illustrious counsellors, for home.
The king of kings consented that Shangul
Should start on his return to Hindústán,
And bade an archimage to choose among
The treasures of Írán—dínárs, gems, silver,
Gold, thrones and crowns, swords, girdles and brocade,
And stuffs uncut—unbounded, countless gifts
To give Shangul while for his suite he furnished,
To each in his degree, steeds and brocade
Of Chín, dismissed them happy and content,
And went three stages with Shangul. Besides
The gifts he gave them provand to the coasts
Of Hindústán.
When Sháh Bahrám returned
He sat in peace upon the throne, but mused
Of death and of ill fortune till his heart
Ached and his face grew wan. He bade a scribe—
A noble archmage who was his vizír—
To come to him and bade him to inspect
The treasury and reckon up the gold,
The gems, and raiment, for astrologers
Had told him, and the words had troubled him :—

"Thy life will last three score of years, the fourth score
Will make thee weep at death," and he had said :—
"The first score years will I devote to pleasure, C. 1583
Will set joy as a shoot within my soul,
And in the next will justify the world
By equity and liberality
In public and in private. I will leave
No corner waste and will provide for all.
In the third score I will entreat the Lord ;
Perchance He will direct me on my way."
The astrologer said sixty years and three,
But of the three the reckoning was not clear,
And so the Sháh desired sufficient treasure
To meet the presage of the astrologer,
Else would he have not self-reproach and travail ?
The treasurer went to the treasury,
On hearing this, and laboured at the account.
He toiled exceedingly till he had told
The total to the monarch's minister,
Who thereupon went to the famous Sháh,
And said : "For three and twenty years to come
In sooth thou wilt need naught. I have allowed
For provand, largess, and thy famed troops' pay,
For envoys that arrive from other kings,
And from thine own famed provinces, and thou
Possessest for these years a treasury filled
With silver, gold, and goods."
On hearing this
Bahrám took thought, he was too wise to sorrow
Beforehand, and replied : "My sway is ending.
This world, if thou reflectest, hath three days.
Since yesterday is over, and to-morrow
Not come, to-day I stoop not under care.
As I have means of largess and a throne
Of ivory I will have no more tax."
He bade that no tax should be asked thenceforth.

From small and great. He set up in each city
A man to rouse the drowsy and check strife
Wherefrom proceedeth naught save evil deeds.
He gave those wise archmages what was needful
By way of provand, clothes, and draperies
Out of his treasury, and said to them :—
" Ye must hide nothing good and bad from me.
Be ye the arbitrators of disputes,
Make no demands that make yourselves vexatious,
Report both good and ill, and cut my fears
Concerning evils short."
This thing obtained
Throughout the world, and nothing good and bad
Remained concealed. Those sages ordered all,
But still from every province letters came,
Which said : " Through bounty,[1] idleness,[2] and wealth
The brains of men are ceasing to be wise.
C. 1584 There is such strife and bloodshed in the world
That young men set no value on the great ;
The young men's hearts are filled with many things,
But not with thoughts of Sháh and archimage.
Their faces they have turned from gain to guile,
They have grown troublesome and combative.
The peasants, landowners, and unemployed,
All give themselves to battle and contention."
When letters of this kind arrived the Sháh
Was heart-pierced at the bloodshed. In each province
He chose officials, wise and understanding
As was befitting, and provided them
Out of his treasury with food and raiment,
The means for largess, and its allocation,
And for six months established offices,
Requiring of his subjects drachms in payment,
And stamping " tax " on silver thus received.
The officers wore crowns and had great state.

[1] Or, with Mohl, " les dons *du roi*."
[2] Reading with P.

For six months he received, for six gave back
To wretched mendicant and man of birth.
He strove in this way to keep men of war
From bloodshed and inaugurating ill.
Again his agents wrote : "Munificence
Hath robbed the world of its security,
For they that have the money pay no tax,
But only meditate more bickerings.
Instead of being crass they have grown cruel,
They are all troublesome and quarrelsome."
Now when Bahrám Gúr had perused this letter
His heart was troubled at such deeds. He bade :—
"Treat in accord to God's decree all those
That shed blood or employ deceit, that all
May find the means of livelihood."
He chose
A marchlord full of justice and of knowledge
For every province as was fit. He gave them
A court-allowance for a year, invoking
The Giver of all good. Much time passed by,
And then the monarch had a letter sent
To those truth-speaking men and correspondents,
Whom he had scattered through the world, to ask :—
"What is there in the world unprofitable,
And bringeth injury upon this realm ?"
They wrote in answer : "Through the monarch's gifts
No man observeth rule and precedent.
There is no thought or care for tilth or toil
Wherefrom man's worth deriveth. We behold
Draught-oxen straying and the herbage lush
In tilth and springing crop."
The Sháh rejoined :—
"Till midday, when the world-illuming sun
Is at its height, the tiller of the soil
Must rest not from his work. The other half

Is for repose and sleep. If men are fools
We can but weep for them. If any lacketh
c. 1585 Fruits, seed, and oxen be not stern and harsh
Toward him but kind and aid him from my treasures
That none may be distressed by indigence.
So likewise if the weather causeth loss,
And nobody is sovereign o'er the weather,
Or locusts anywhere conceal the earth,
And eat the herbage to the naked soil,
Give compensation from the treasury.
Proclaim this edict in the provinces.
If there are sterile routes or if the land
Be but a waste and all uncultivate,
And whether it be owned by rich or poor,
From such as I describe demand not aught,
And if a man, one of my servitors,
Or mine own foster-sire, shall take one mite
Him will I bury on the spot alive :
God give him neither home nor dwelling-place."
They sealed the letter with the royal ring,
And sent the camel-posts a-hurrying.

§ 39

How Bahrám summoned Gipsies from Hindústán

Thereafter he sent letters to each archmage,
Gave clothing to the mendicants, and asked :—
" In all the realm what folk are free from toil,
And who are mendicants and destitute ?
Tell me how things are in the world, and lead
My heart upon the pathway toward the light."
An answer came from all the archimages,
From all the nobles, and the men of lore :—
" The face of earth appeareth prosperous,
Continuous blessings are in every part,

Save that the poor complain against the ills
Of fortune and the Sháh. 'The rich,' they say,
'Wear wreaths of roses in their drinking-bouts,
And quaff to minstrelsy, but as for us
They do not reckon us as men at all.
The empty-handed drinketh with no rose
Or harp.' The king of kings should look to it."
The Sháh laughed heartily at this report,
And sent a camel-post to king Shangul
To say thus: "O thou monarch good at need!
Select ten thousand of the Gipsy-tribe,
Both male and female, skilful on the harp,
And send them to me. I may gain mine end
Through that notorious folk."
Now when the letter
Came to Shangul he raised his head in pride
O'er Saturn's orbit and made choice of Gipsies, C. 1586
As bidden by the Sháh who, when they came,
Accorded them an audience and gave each
An ox and ass, for he proposed to make
The Gipsies husbandmen, while his officials
Gave them a thousand asses' loads of wheat,
That they might have the ox and ass for work,
Employ the wheat as seed for raising crops,
And should besides make music for the poor,
And render them the service free of cost.
The Gipsies went and ate the wheat and oxen,
Then at a year's end came with pallid cheeks.
The Sháh said: "Was it not your task to plough,
To sow, and reap? Your asses yet remain,
So load them up, prepare your harps, and stretch
The silken chords."
And so the Gipsies now,
According to Bahrám's just ordinance,
Live by their wits; they have for company
The dog and wolf, and tramp unceasingly.

§ 40

How the Time of Bahrám came to an End

Thus passed he three score years and three, and had
No equal in that age. With New Year came
The scribe—the wise archmage, his minister—
And said to him : "The treasury of the king
Of mighty men is void, and I have come
For thy command. Those that enjoyed this wealth
Expect us not to levy any tax."
The monarch answered : "Take no further pains,
For I have passed beyond the need thereof.
Resign the world to its Creator—Him
Who manifested forth His works. The heavens
Will pass away, but God abideth ever
To guide both thee and me to what is good."
He slept that night, and early in the morn
A countless crowd resorted to his court.
They brought together all that were required,
And young prince Yazdagird approached the Sháh,
Who gave him in the presence of the lords
The crown and bracelets, torque and ivory throne.
Intending to devote himself to God
He cast away the crown, he left his seat,
And hasted to resign the world's affairs.
At night-fall he was eager for repose,
And, when the sun displayed its head above
The deep, fear filled his archimage's heart,
Who thought : "The Sháh ariseth not from sleep
Unless he hath withdrawn him from the lords."
C. 1587 Then Yazdagird drew near his sire and spied
What froze the breath upon his lips—Bahrám
With faded cheeks lay dead on gold brocade !
The day of gloom is as it was of yore,
Sear not thy heart with greed and lust of more.

At death the cores of stones and iron quail,
And here thy strivings are of no avail.
Thou shouldst be inoffensive and humane ;
Why seek addition with its biting bane ?
Woe for that great Sháh and his equity !
Oh ! never derogate his memory.
Of fifty monarchs of seed royal sown,
Who girt their loins upon the Íránian throne,
Bahrám Gúr had no like in eminence,
In justice, puissance, and excellence.
Thou wouldst have called king Rustam but vizír
To him though Rustam sent his arrows sheer
Through mounts of iron, yet was there no delay
When Sháh Bahrám Gúr's term had passed away.
What profit had he from his valour's day ?
For forty days the Sháh bewailed his sire,
The host wore raiment black and blue, and when
The charnel closed o'er that famed warrior Sháh
" He bore off bounty," thou hadst said, " with him."
Sun, moon, and Venus, Saturn, crown, and throne,
A Sháh, like this one, ne'er will look upon.
Woe for that royal mien, that height, and Grace !
Woe for that lofty star, that hand, and mace !
He decked the throne and crown, from Rúm and Chín
Took toll and tax, yet passed as he had been
Some starving mendicant ! When all was done
What profited his halls aloft the sun ?
He and the pauper fare the selfsame path,
And each of grief and pain a scantling hath.
The dear delights of earth, the sovereign sway,
What boot they ? Soon thy rule will pass away.
Blest is the pious mendicant and wise,
Whose ears oft feel the world's rough pleasantries,
For, when he passeth, he will leave behind
A good name and a good conclusion find.
His portion is in heaven, and in God's sight

He will have honour, not be in my plight,
In miserable case, calamitous,
With all that I possess sent Hell-ward thus
Beyond recall! No hope in heaven I see,
My hand is void, both worlds have ruined me!
Now, if I can collect my thoughts again,
The rule of Yazdagird shall be my strain.

XXXVI

YAZDAGIRD SON OF BAHRÁM GÚR

HE REIGNED EIGHTEEN YEARS

NOTE

The length of the reign of this Sháh (Isdigerd II, A.D. 438–457), as given by Firdausí, appears to be about correct. From the point of view of popular tradition he seems wholly to have been overshadowed by his famous father, and his reign consequently is all but a blank in the Sháhnáma. Historically it was full of incident, and Firdausí's statement—

> "He sent out countless hosts on every side,
> And kept the world secure from enemies,"

though it may be only a conventional statement, is correct enough. He began his reign with a war with Rúm. This was soon over, but was followed by long wars with the Huns and the Haitálians. Within the empire there were persecutions of the Jews and Christians, and about A.D. 450 serious trouble in Armenia. Yazdagird, as we have seen,[1] continued his father's minister, Mihr Narsí, in power. According to Mas'údí he fortified the passes in the Caucasus.[2] He was known to his subjects by two titles—"The Clement"[3] and "The soldier's friend."[4]

Of the two sons of Yazdagird it is not certain historically which was the elder, but as Pírúz was successful in the struggle for the throne that followed on the death of his father, he in any case would have been made out to be the elder in order to regularise the succession, and the elder he is according to all the Oriental authorities. In dating his coins he ignored the short reign of his brother Hurmuz.[5]

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[1] See p. 4. [2] MM, ii. 193. *Cf.* Vol. i. pp. 16 and *note*.
[3] ZT, ii. p. 127. [4] RM, I, ii. 363. [5] NT, p. 426.

§ 1

How Yazdagird sat upon the Throne and exhorted the Captains of the Host

C. 1588 When Yazdagird became the world's great king
He gathered unto him the scattered troops.
There was a conclave of the wise and noble,
The great men and the princely archimages.
The atheling sat on the golden throne,
He shut the door of toil, the hand of evil,
And thus began : " He that committeth not
A wrong is not in danger of the avenger,
But when a heart is darkening with envy
The Dív will be called in to medicine it,
For envy causeth greed and grief and want,
And is a cruel and revengeful dív.
Impute not to a foeman's heart and hand
That which displeaseth thee. Humanity
Is wisdom's brother. Wisdom is the crown
Upon the head of knowledge. What time thou
Conferrest benefits on any one
Din it not into him and break his heart.
If thou dost good and art longsuffering
Thou art not worthless in a wise man's eyes.
If now victorious fortune shall assist me
In furthering my wishes in the world
I will prepare a roll of righteousness
Without an entry of deceit or wrong."
He ruled the world in justice for a while ;
The age rejoiced in him and he rejoiced.
He sent forth countless hosts on every side,
And kept the world secure from enemies.
When eighteen years had passed above his head,
He grieved because his fortune was bedimmed,
Convoked to him the magnates and the sages,

Caused them to kneel before the golden throne,
And thus addressed them : "This untoward sky,
Not knowing fosterling and fosterer,
And heeding not the crowns of potentates,
Pursueth every quarry in its path ;
So now my time is drawing to its close,
And all my strength is broken. I bestow
The crown, the signet-ring, the host, and all
The treasures of Írán upon Hurmuz ;
Pay due observance, execute my bidding,
And make my will the music of your souls.
Although Pírúz hath Grace divine and stature,
And is the elder brother of Hurmuz ;
Yet see I in Hurmuz deliberation,
With wisdom, modesty, and aptitude."
He spake and lived a se'nnight afterwards ; C. 1589
Then passed ; the throne wept over him awhile.
Be thy years twenty-five, be they five score,
Soon will this fleeting show be thine no more,
Regard then as a transitory thing
Whatever falleth to thy reckoning.

XXXVII

HURMUZ

HE REIGNED ONE YEAR

NOTE

The earliest coins of Pírúz date from his third year as he reckoned it, counting from his father's death, so the reign of Hurmuz (Hormisdas, A.D. 457–459) lasted about two years.[1] Hurmuz probably had the advantage of being on the spot at the time of Yazdagird's death, but Pírúz may have had the better right to the throne,[2] and seems to have owed much to the services of a leader named Ruhhám—a scion of the great Mihrán clan which was of Arsacid descent.[3] The name is a familiar one to students of the Sháhnáma as that of one of those secondary heroes many of whom—real personages in the Parthian epoch—have been reflected back to the mythical periods of the poem.[4] Ruhhám, as we have seen, was one of the Twelve (eleven) Champions.[5] Whether Pírúz also received formal help from the Haitálians is doubtful, but plenty of nomad tribes would be willing to take service with him for a consideration, and if they happened to be within the Haitálian sphere of influence would be regarded as Haitálians themselves by tradition. For the consideration required in the text Tabarí substitutes Tálikán.[6] This is much more probable. Tirmid is mentioned because it would represent the traditional notion of the Oxus being the boundary between Írán and Túrán. On the other hand settlements in the desert, such as Tálikán, were valuable both for trade and in war.[7] Firdausí's statement that Pírúz pardoned Hurmuz is supported by Dínawarí and Mír Khánd, but two out of the three accounts in Tabarí say that Hurmuz was put to death. The third says that he was imprisoned. In all probability he was executed.[8]

[1] NT, p. 426. [2] See p. 153. [3] NT, pp. 114, 139 and *notes*.
[4] See Vol. iii. p. 9. [5] See Vol. iv. p. 102. [6] NT, p. 116 *seq.* and *notes*.
[7] *Id.* [8] *Id.* 117 *seq.* and *notes*, RM, I, ii. 364.

§ 1

How Hurmuz, Son of Yazdagird, ascended the Throne

Hurmuz succeeded to his father's throne,
And set upon his head the crown of gold,
While, thou hadst said, Pírúz was all one rage
With tears of envy mounting to his eyes.
He went incontinent with troops and treasures,
And many chiefs, to the Haitálian king,
Who was a princeling of Chaghán, a man
Of high ambition and possessed of troops,
Of treasure, and of power, hight Faghánish.
To him Pírúz said : " O good friend of mine !
Two sons were we—the glories of the throne.
Our father gave the younger of us twain
The royal crown and, having acted thus
Unjustly, died. If thou wilt give me troops
I have myself wealth, weapons, majesty,
And might of hand."
The monarch of Chaghán
Replied : " 'Tis well, thy sire was king himself.
I will point out the way to get thy rights,
And furnish thee with troops upon these terms :
That I shall have Tirmid and Wísagird,
To which effect I hold a covenant
From Yazdagird."
Pírúz said : " Yea, 'tis well,
And thou deservest greater sovereignty."
The monarch gave him thirty thousand swordsmen—
A noble army of Haitálians—
Wherewith Pírúz, the Sháh, arrayed a host
That darkened sky and moon with flying dust.
He fought with king Hurmuz who could not long
Endure the stress of war but presently
Was taken, and his father's crown and throne

Grew worthless to him. When Pírúz beheld
His brother's face he yearned for love and union,
Bade him remount and sped to grasp his hand,
Dispatched him to the palace and declared
His own conditions. Said Hurmuz to him :—
"Thank God that those who worship Him are wise.
My brother taketh from me crown and throne ;
Be victory both in name [1] and deed his own."

[1] Pírúz means victorious.

XXXVIII

PÍRÚZ

HE REIGNED ELEVEN YEARS

ARGUMENT

Pírúz becomes undisputed Sháh. His inaugural speech. The land is troubled by a severe drought which Pírúz takes measures to mitigate. The breaking of the drought. Pírúz builds cities and, in violation of the treaty of Sháh Bahrám Gúr, makes war upon the Haitálians, is defeated, and killed.

NOTE

The reign of Pírúz (Perozes, AD. 459–484) lasted much longer than eleven years, and seems to have made a deep impression on the popular mind by reason of its accumulation of mishaps. The expedition against the Haitálians was preceded by a few months by a total eclipse of the sun [1]—a portent of disaster that well may have helped to bring about its own fulfilment. Mír Khánd tells us that this Sháh's sobriquet was "The Valiant." [2]

A relic of Pírúz—a cup engraved with a representation of that Sháh engaged in hunting—is said to be still in existence.[3]

§ 1. Drought is common enough in Írán, and the record shows that this particular one must have been of exceptional severity. According to Tabarí the relief measures adopted by Pírúz to cope with the emergency were so efficient that only one man perished through want.[4] Tabarí of course is merely giving the statements of his authorities without comment.

§§ 2–4. According to the account in Tabarí, Pírúz built three cities—Rám-Pírúz (the Pírúz-Rám of Firdausí) in the territory of

[1] On Saturday, January 14th, A.D. 484. NT, p. 425.
[2] RM, I, i. 368. [3] RSM, p. 329. [4] NT, pp. 119, 122.

Rai, another called Rúshan Pírúz, and a third named Shahrám-Pírúz (Firdausí's Bádán Pírúz) in Ázarbáiján.[1]

The tradition given in the Sháhnáma of the war between Pírúz and the Haitálians is dominated by the memory of the beloved and popular Bahrám Gúr. We have seen how that Sháh, after his triumphant campaign against that people, set up a pillar that was to mark the boundary between them and the Íránians.[2] The presumption in the poem is that the arrangement then made continued in force till Pírúz refused to be bound by it any longer. His refusal brought death upon himself and disaster on his host. Clearly this was a judgment upon him for violating the treaty made by his grandfather. Naturally if Pírúz had been successful a different popular estimate would have been formed upon his conduct, but as matters turned out he was manifestly a wrong-doer for having left his grandsire's way and he merely got his deserts. Consequently on this occasion right was on the side of the enemy, and for a time the tradition becomes almost pro-Haitálian. Between the memory of a great popular Sháh and the occurrence of a great national disaster practically nothing remained, and the two are linked together as cause and effect. Historically, as we know from other sources, the case was very different. Bahrám Gúr's son and successor, Yazdagird, had plenty of trouble with the Haitálians,[3] and so had, it would seem, Pírúz himself before the final disaster overtook him. Once, if not twice, he had been forced to conclude an unfavourable peace with them, had found himself in their power, and his son, Kubád, had on one occasion to remain two years in captivity until a heavy ransom had been paid. If the story of the help given by the Haitálians to Pírúz against his brother, Hurmuz, at the price of the cession of Tálikán be unhistorical it was probably at one of these conclusions of peace that the place was ceded.[4] Popular tradition may have preferred to represent Tálikán as being yielded to secure the throne for the rightful heir rather than as the consideration for a disgraceful treaty later on. Pírúz violated his own compact, not Bahrám's, and perished in consequence. There are three accounts of the disaster in Tabarí. They are in accord in essentials, and two of them attribute the proximate cause of the overthrow of Pírúz to the trench dug by the Haitálian king who in these accounts is called Achshunwar or Akhshunwar approximately, but in the absence of diacritical and vowel points the precise form is uncertain. According to one account it was the evil practices of the

[1] NT, p. 123. [2] p. 92. [3] p. 153.
[4] pp. 156, 157, NT, p. 119, *note*.

Haitálian king that impelled Pírúz to declare war, and four sons and four brothers perished with him.[1] The second, which comes from Ibn Mukaffa,[2] states that there were two campaigns. In the first of them Pírúz was led astray by an Haitálian chief, who had had himself purposely mutilated in order to deceive the Sháh, and forced to sue for peace. Subsequently wounded honour induced him to tear up the treaty and renew the struggle in spite of the advice of his counsellors; he perished, and his baggage, women, money, and papers fell into the hands of the enemy.[3] In the third account mention is made of Bahrám Gúr's pillar, and Pírúz is said to have had it thrown down and dragged in front of him by fifty elephants and three hundred men that he might not be charged with passing it. This account also states that a daughter of Pírúz was among the captives taken by the Haitálians. Their king put her into his haram, and she had a daughter who afterwards married her uncle Kubád.[4] There can be no doubt but that a terrible disaster befell the Íránian arms in this campaign and, as we shall see presently,[5] the memory of it was reflected back upon the mythical past and the story retold in connexion with the overthrow of a Pishdádian Sháh.

§ 1

How Pírúz sat upon the Throne and made an Oration

Pírúz, at ease about Hurmuz and free C. 1590
From care, came, sat upon the royal throne,
As well became a Sháh that worshipped God,
And at the outset thus harangued the chiefs :—
" Ye worshipful and noble lords ! I ask
The Judge that needeth naught to grant to me
Long life, a due regard for great and small
As their conditions are, abundant wisdom,
And happy days. Longsuffering is the crown
Upon humanity ; the hasty man
Is ever in abasement. Wisdom's pillars

[1] NT, p. 120.
[2] For whom see Vol. vi. p. 17 ; NT, p. 121, *note*.
[3] *Id*. p. 123 *seq*.
[4] *Id*. p. 128 *seq*. and *notes*.
[5] p. 171.

Are equity and mercy, its adornment
Is bounty's gate, the tongue of eloquence
Its glory, while its plumes are hardihood
And fortitude. How shall mere high estate,
If wisdom fail, enjoy the throne of greatness ?
E'en sages are but mortal and possess not
More Grace than had Jamshíd who died, what time
His crown had reached the moon, and gave another
His royal seat. None can abide on earth
For aye. Take refuge then with God from ill,
And all is said."

Wise and untouched by evil
He ruled one year with justice and good counsel.
Next year the face of heaven was dry, the water
Shrank in the streams till it became like musk.
The third and fourth year it was even so,
And all men were in misery through the drought ;
The mouth of heaven became as dry as dust,
And river-water was a precious drug ;
There was no room to stand, such multitudes
Of men and beasts lay dead. The king of kings
Beheld that portent, took off tax and toll,
And in each city where he kept his stores
Bestowed them freely on both small and great.
A proclamation issued from the court :—
" Distribute, O ye men of name and might !
Such grain as ye possess and heap instead
Your treasuries with coins struck by Pírúz.
Whoe'er possesseth hoarded stores of grain,
Or sheep or oxen roaming at their will,
Let him dispose thereof at his own price,
For lives are perishing for lack of food."

C. 1591 He sent another letter in all haste
To every officer and potentate :—
" Ope wide your barns to all folk everywhere
That are in need. Should young or old and feeble

Die lacking bread—a victim to the famine—
I will pour out his blood that hath the barn,
For he hath scorned God's work. His waist will I
Cleave with the trenchant scimitar and wreck
His life."

He ordered folk to quit their homes,
And coming plainwards lift their hands in plaint.
A cry of bitter weeping and distress,
Of pain and consternation rose to heaven;
On hill and waste, in desert and in cave,
They called on God for mercy. On this wise
For seven years both small and great beheld
No verdure anywhere. With Farwardín,
The eighth year, rose a glorious cloud which rained
Pearls on the parched up soil. The scent of musk
Rose from the gardens while the hail that fell
Lay in the mud like pears within a bowl;
The rainbow was resplendent in the sky,
The age escaped the ill of evil men,
And everywhere the bow was strung again.

§ 2

How Pírúz built the Cities of Pírúz-Rám and Bádán-Pírúz, and how he went to war with Túrán

Now when Pírúz had 'scaped that day of stress
He sat in peace upon the throne of kingship,[1]
He built himself a city which he bade
Call Pírúz-Rám, the world hath good thereof,
For 'tis the pleasance of the glorious Sháhs.
He built withal Bádán-Pírúz, far-famed,
A place of peace and joy, now Ardabíl,
Where Cæsar hath of right his boundary.

[1] The previous section ends here in C.

Whenas Pírúz had prospered all these parts,
And made thereby the hearts of wise men glad,
He gave a largess to his noble troops,
And gat him ready to attack the Turkmans.
In that campaign Hurmuz was in the van
With troops new-levied ; after Sháh Pírúz
Kubád led [1] on the army like a blast ;
Pírúz' pure son was he, wise, and a bough
That brought forth fruit. Balásh, the younger son,[2]
A man of Grace and justice, sat rejoicing
C. 1592 Upon the throne while one of Párs, a man
Of high renown called by the king Sarkhán,[3]
Was bidden by Pírúz : " Abide thou here
As upright minister before Balásh." [4]
Pírúz set forward with his troops, his treasure,
And gear of war, to fight with Khúshnawáz.
Now brave Bahrám had marked the boundary
By setting up a column on the plain
With this inscription by the king of kings :—
" Let not a Turkman or Íránian
Transgress this boundary on any wise,
Or pass across the river."
When Pírúz,
The lion-queller, reached that spot he saw
The mark set by the monarch of Írán,
And thus addressed his chiefs : " By this same token
Will I erect with scimitar and treasure
A tower against the Turkmans so that none
May suffer from the Haitálians. When 'tis raised
On the Tarak, and when their chiefs shall bring
The former treaty, I will say : ' Bahrám Gúr
Did thus by manhood, wisdom, might, and Grace,
But I will leave no trace of Khúshnawáz,
Haitálian or Turkman, high or low.' "

[1] Reading with P.
[2] *Cf.* p. 170.
[3] Súfarai, for whom see pp. 170, 173 *seq.*, 185.
[4] Couplet omitted.

When Khúshnawáz, son of the Khán, had heard :—
" The Sháh and all his host have crossed Jíhún
Against the treaty that Bahrám Gúr made :
Fresh war and strife have come upon the land,"
A veteran scribe was called by his command.

§ 3

The Letter of Khúshnawáz to Pírúz

He wrote a letter to the king of earth,
With[1] praises of him from the righteous Judge,
Then said : " Since thou departest from the pact
Made by just kings I will not call thee royal.
Thine ancestors had acted never so,
Those rulers of the world elect and pure.
By breaking thus the compact of the Persians,
And flinging to the dust the mark of greatness,[2]
Thou forcest me to break the treaty also,
And draw the scimitar in self-defence."
He wrote at large and sent too many gifts.
A noble cavalier and eloquent
Went with the letter which when Sháh Pírúz
Had read he raged against that famous prince,
And bade the envoy : " Rise and get thee gone,
Return to that base man and say to him :—
' Bahrám concluded terms of peace whereby C. 1593
The country was your own to the Tarak,
But now thou hast the whole to the Jíhún,
Hill, dale, and desert, all alike are thine.
Behold ! I lead a vast, a noble host,
And warriors bent on fight, and I will leave not
For long on earth the shade of Khúshnawáz.' "

[1] Reading with P.
[2] " la marque *de la frontière* établie par les grands " (Mohl).

The envoy came like flying dust and told
What he had heard. When Khúshnawáz had hearkened
Thereto, and read what had been writ to him,
He called his scattered followers to horse,
Led forth the army to the battlefield,
And set upon a lance's point the treaty
Accorded to his grandsire by Bahrám
To this effect: "Our frontier is Jíhún."
He chose a man of mark among the troops—
One who was shrewd of heart and eloquent—
And said: "Approach Pírúz with courteous words,
Hear his reply, and say: 'I will confront thee
Upon the march with thine own grandsire's treaty—
That man of lofty fortune, thine own guide—
Set on a spearhead like a shining sun
Before the host that all possessed of wisdom
May look upon the patent of the just.
I shall be praised while thou wilt be condemned,
And called "The impious Sháh." God and his worshippers,
And subjects everywhere, will not approve
That any one should seek to do injustice,
And break the treaties of the kings of kings.
None like to Sháh Bahrám for equity
And manhood e'er set crown upon his head.
God is my witness, and it is not well
To have to make appeal to Him, that thou
Art with injustice seeking war with me
In falling thus upon me with thy host.
Herein thou wilt be not victorious,
And likewise get no fruitage from good fortune.
Henceforward I shall send no messengers:
God will avail to aid me in this fight.'"
The envoy came dust-swift with this dispatch,[1]
And to Pírúz repeated all these words.

[1] We have not been told that Khúshnawáz wrote one.

When that haught Sháh had read what Khúshnawáz
Had written in the letter he was wroth,
And said thus to the envoy : " One of years
And world-experience would speak not like that ;
But if from Chách thou comest o'er the river
My spearheads are prepared to welcome thee."
The messenger returned to Khúshnawáz,
Spake with him privily at large, and said :—
" I see not in Pírúz a reverence
For God ; he hath not wisdom for his guide ;
He careth only for revenge and strife,
And walketh not according to God's will."
When Khúshnawáz had heard these words he sought C. 1594
To God for shelter, making supplication,
And saying : " O Thou Judge that judgest right,
And art the Master both of wind and dust !
Thou knowest that iniquitous Pírúz
Is not in prowess better than Bahrám.
He speaketh words unjust and fain would win
Addition by the scimitar. Break Thou
His foot-hold from the earth. Oh ! may he have
No strength, no wit, no heart ! "
Around his host [1]
He dug a trench which he made shift to hide ;
'Twas lasso-deep and twenty cubits wide.

§ 4

How Pírúz fought with Khúshnawáz and was slain

This done, he called on God and marched his powers
From Samarkand. On that side Sháh Pírúz,
The frantic, led his troops on like a blast ;
On this side Khúshnawáz with fearful heart

[1] *i.e.* where he intended to make his stand.

Prayed privily before the holy Judge.
The drums and trumpets sounded in both hosts,
The air was ebon with the armies' dust,
And from them both such showers of arrows rained
That blood ran down like water in a stream.
Then, like a dust-cloud, Sháh Pírúz advanced
With mace and Rúman helm, and as he drew
Anear to Khúshnawáz,[1] the Turkmans' chief
Retreated, turned his rein, and showed his back.
The foeman followed fiercely. Sháh Pírúz
Spurred forward with few followers and fell
With others—chiefs and Lions of the day
Of battle—in the fosse, such as Hurmuz
His brother, glorious Kubád and others—
Great men and princes of the royal race—
Till seven had fallen headlong, men of name
With golden casques. Then Khúshnawáz returned
Rejoicing to the fosse and lifted thence
The living while the throne bewailed their fortune.
Now Sháh Pírúz, that chief of chiefs endowed
With Grace and state, had broken head and back,
While of the princes, save Kubád, none lived :
Thus host and empire went adown the wind.
Then Khúshnawáz advanced with heart content,
And head exalted with his warrior-host,
And gave to spoil the baggage and the foe,
For right and left were indistinguishable.
They made some prisoners and what numbers more
Were stretched by arrows on the sombre soil !

C. 1595 'Tis not for world-lords to be covetous,
For hearts that covet are the dark dust's mate ;
The never-resting sky ordaineth thus
Alike for subjects and for king's estate,
And wringeth its own fosterling, be he
A fool or wisdom's pillar. None can stay

[1] The sentence thus far has been translated from P.

Upon this earth of ours eternally.
Make right thy provand : naught is left to say.
When Khúshnawáz had crossed the fosse his troops
Lacked not for wealth. They bound Kubád with fetters
Of iron, heedless of his throne and race.
When tidings reached the people of Írán
About the fosse and how Pírúz had fought,
A wail of anguish went up from the land
For all those princes—men of high degree—
And when the tidings had been certified
Balásh descended from his golden seat,
Plucked out his royal locks and strewed sad dust
Upon the throne. Within Írán the host,
The cities and the women, men, and children,
All wailed, all rent the hair and tore the face
For grief, talked of the Sháh and yearned for him ;
All sat in dole and woe while great and small
Took thought what course to choose and whether they
Should quit Írán and see where fell the fray ?

XXXIX

BALÁSH

HE REIGNED FIVE YEARS AND TWO MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Balásh becomes Sháh. Súfarai leads forth a host against the Haitálians to avenge the death of Pírúz and defeats them. Terms of peace are arranged, Kubád and the other captives are released, and Súfarai returns with them in triumph to Írán. After some years Súfarai dethrones Balásh and makes Kubád Sháh.

NOTE

Balásh (Balas, A.D. 484–488) seems to have been the brother, not the son, of Pírúz and the uncle of Kubád.[1] The name is identical with the more familiar Vologeses. Balásh being on the spot and regent at the time of the death of Pírúz naturally became Sháh. Tabarí says that he had to fight for the throne with his brother (really his nephew), Kubád, who fled to the Haitálians. The real struggle however appears to have been with Kubád's brother, Zirih, who was defeated and slain.[2]

§§ 2 and 3. Pírúz having expiated by his own death his violation of the treaty made by his grandfather, Sháh Bahrám Gúr, with the Haitálians, popular tradition is at liberty to resume a patriotic attitude and set forth how Pírúz was avenged and Íranián honour vindicated. Unfortunately the account does not appear in the oldest authorities and seems to be unhistorical. Írán at that time was much oppressed by, if not actually tributory to, the Haitálians.[3] Súfarai's triumphant campaign seems to have been invented as a salve to the national honour and, incidentally, as a glorification of

[1] NT, p. 133 *note*. [2] *Id.*

[3] *Id.* 119 *note*. That the scene of Súfarai's victory should be laid at Kashmíhan, where Bahrám Gúr had triumphed, is in itself suspicious. See pp. 89, 90.

the great family of Káran to which he belonged. The story of his success appears, as Nöldeke has pointed out, to have been reflected back into mythical times and told in connexion with Naudar, the Pishdádian Sháh. Certainly the parallel is very complete. In both cases the Íránian host is overthrown by a Northern foe; in both the Sháh perishes; in both the scene is laid in the same neighbourhood; in both the defeat is avenged by a Káran, and in both cases the prisoners are rescued.[1] In Tabarí's account Súfarai appears as Súkhrá.[2] As a leading Íránian of the time he may have been instrumental in bringing about a peace with the Haitálians after the death of Pirúz, and this perhaps may be regarded as the historical measure of his achievement.[3]

Balásh appears to have been somewhat after the type of Yazdagird, son of Shápúr, in character,[4] mild and tolerant, approved by the Christians and hated by the Magi who, it is said, were scandalised at his attempt to introduce the Roman fashion of public baths, which of course involved a profanation of the sacred element. As his treasury was exhausted he was unable to look to the army for support, and after a reign of four years was dethroned and blinded. According to other accounts he died a natural death.[5] Mír Khánd says that he was known as "the beloved."[6]

§ 1

How Balásh ascended the Throne and harangued the Íránians

Whenas Balásh had mourned one month, with dust
Upon his head and lacerated cheeks,
The people and the high priest came to him
With valiant warriors and famous sages.
They spake with him at large by way of counsel
In profitable words, then seated him
Upon the throne of kingship, showering gold
And jewels over him abundantly.
When seated on the throne he said: "O chiefs!
Acquire the secrets of the sages' hearts,

[1] See Vol. i. p. 345 *seq.*, and NIN, p. 9.
[2] NT, p. 120 *note*.
[3] *Id.*, and RSM, p. 332.
[4] See Vol. vi. p. 371.
[5] NT, pp. 133 *seq.* and *notes*; RSM, p. 336 and *note*.
[6] RM, Pt. I, Vol. ii. p. 371.

And ye shall have advancement at my hands
When my dark counsels brighten. Frustrate not
The purpose of well-doers in the world.
As for the wicked and malicious man,
He shall not partner me, but first will I
Enrich him with advice and, if that faileth,
C. 1596 Crown him with blood. When any subject plaineth
To us 'gainst some one of this loyal host
The heart of the unjust one will I break,
And rase him utterly, both root and branch.
See that ye take no freedoms with your Sháh,
And in especial one that is devout,
For he by turns is bane and antidote ;
So choose the antidote and leave the bane.
Of all things seek to please the Sháh and never
Approach his throne unless with joyful looks.
When he is wroth excuse thyself and bless him,
Just or unjust. Whene'er thou sayest : 'I
Am wise, and I am mighty in all knowledge,'
Know that thou never wast more ignorant,
So be not thine own enemy. If now
Ye shall obey the counsel that I give
By hearkening to my profitable words,
Ye shall receive the treasures of wise Sháhs :
I never yet saw knowledge injure any."

The chieftains marvelled at his understanding,
And called down praises on him, while the troops
Spake thus to one another : "From this Sháh
Will fall a lustre on the throne and crown.
God grant that he escape the evil eye,
And ill befall the persons of his foes."

They went forth from his palace well content,
Committing to God's care his soul and body.
Their hearts were full of love, their tongues of praise :—
"May such a Sháh have endless length of days."

§ 2

How Súfarai had Tidings of the Slaying of Pírúz, how he wrote a Letter to Khúshnawáz, and how Khúshnawáz replied

What time Pírúz was going to the war
He sought a paladin—a man of counsel
And weight—to watch o'er crown and throne, and be
A friend to young Balásh. Now Súfarai—
A man of great estate and good withal—
Was fitted for that task, experienced,
A native of Shíráz, a general,
A man exalted both in heart and head,
And likewise marchlord in Zábulistán,
Kábulistán, Ghaznín, and Bust. When tidings
About Pírúz, uncounselled and unguided,
Came his eye-lashes drenched his cheeks with tears,
He rent his raiment of a paladin,
The warriors doffed their helmets and sat mourning
Through sorrow for the Sháh, while Súfarai
Exclaimed : " How shall Balásh, youth that he is,
Seek vengeance for Pírúz ? " for well he knew
That that would naught avail and that the throne C. 1597
Of kingship was in evil case. He gathered
His scattered soldiers, beat the kettledrums,
And dust rose from the plain. There came to him
A hundred thousand warlike, vengeful swordsmen.
He paid, equipped the host, and joyed the hearts
Of all that sought for vengeance. Then he called
A sweet-tongued envoy watchful, wise, and shrewd,
And, seared and sorry, wan and weeping, wrote
A letter of wise counsels, instancing
Jamshíd and Kai Khusrau and Kai Kubád,
Dispatched it to Balásh, and said : " O Sháh !
Be not aggrieved at death ; it is a grief
That all must taste ; choose patience and choose fame.

What came from wind returneth with the breath :
Some call it justice and some tyranny.
Now with the approbation of the king
Will I make ready for revenge and strife
Because the sun and moon cry out in heaven
For vengeance for the blood of Sháh Pírúz."
With that the envoy went upon his way,
And Súfarai, all wreakful, for his part
Arrayed his army like a pheasant's plumes,[1]
And from Zábulistán advanced toward Marv.
He chose him out a wary messenger,
Who by his words could mollify the heart,
And spake on this wise to a scribe : " Arise,
Because thy pen hath stirring work to do,
Indite to Khúshnawáz and say : ' O fool,
And knavish doer of the work of dívs !
Thou art in God's sight guilty, and thy shirt
Shall wail for thee. Whoe'er did deed like thine,
Thou faithless one ? Thou shalt behold anon
The sword of tribulation. Thou hast slain
A man without offence—the king of kings,
The grandson of the world-lord Sháh Bahrám—
And hast set up a new feud in the world,
A feud to be forgotten nevermore.
Why, when the din of tymbals rose, didst thou
Not come and fawn upon him like a dog ?
Thy grandsire was a poor man of thy tribe,
Thy sire was like a slave before Bahrám.
Lo ! I have come to Marv to seek revenge,
And I will waste the Haitálians utterly.
The captives and whatever booty came
Within thy grasp upon that battlefield,
I will exact all with the sword of vengeance,
And bear to Marv Túrán's dust, suffer not
The world to be thy son's, burn all thy kith

[1] *Cf.* p. 88, *note.*

And kin, cut off thy head by God's command,
And make thy kingdom like a sea of blood.
But this is not revenge ; why talk I long ? C. 1598
When Khúshnawáz, in that he slew Pírúz,
Shall rot in darksome dust his soul shall plead
His cause from Hell.' "

The envoy with the letter
Of Súfarai went like a mighty lion,
Came in an angry mood to Khúshnawáz,
Appeared before his throne, did reverence,
And gave the letter, while the captains present
Withdrew. The monarch gave it to a scribe,
And said : " Read out to me in confidence
Both good and ill."

The scribe thus answered him :—
" This letter is all arrow, mace, and sword,"
And sorely grieved was valiant Khúshnawáz
At that long letter writ by Súfarai,
Then set himself without delay to answer
The good and ill there written and began :—
" I live in fear of God and fortune's changes.
A worshipper of His would not have broken
The compact of the Sháhs. I sent Pírúz
A letter of advice besides the treaty
Of that great king,[1] but he despised my words,
And spurned the old king's pact. When he assailed me,
And put me to a shift, and when the hosts
Met face to face, the stars raged at Pírúz,
And by no will of ours thy Sháh was slain.
Or e'er he broke the pact of righteous Sháhs
His youth had not another day of joy ;
He found [2] no favour in the Maker's eyes ;
Thou wouldst have said : 'Earth took him by the heel.' [3]

[1] Bahrám Gúr. See p. 166.
[2] Reading with P.
[3] " Foot " in the original.

The man that breaketh his forefather's treaty,
And flingeth underfoot the head of right,
Is like Pírúz upon the battlefield,
Pashed in a dusty ditch. So shalt thou be
If thou shalt come ; my wealth and warriors fail not."
Departing with the letter and apace
The envoy in a week reached Súfarai,
Who read and loosed his tongue in malisons.
Then from the plain the people heard the blare
Of trumpets and the clash of brazen cymbals,
And Súfarai led forth to Kashmíhan
A host so great that Sol was lost in heaven.
'Twas thus they crossed the stream—an armament
That made itself at home where'er it went.

§ 3

How Súfarai fought with Khúshnawáz, and how Kubád was released from his Bondage

C. 1599 When tidings came to Khúshnawáz he marched
Out to the desert and prepared for war.
He reached Baigand and chose a battlefield
That hid the wilderness from circling heaven
With troops.
On his side vengeful Súfarai
Came onward like a blast. When it was night
That leader of the army occupied
All the approaches with fresh elephants.
The outposts went their rounds in both the hosts,
The world resounded with the warriors' shouts,
The challenge of the sentries and the clang
Of bells rose from both armies, front and rear,
Till Sol rose o'er the peaks and made the dales
And deserts like white crystal. Both arrays
Prepared for strife ; each raised the flag of greatness.

Then dragons' livers sundered at the shouting
Of valiant warriors while feathered shafts
Made air all vultures' plumes, and earth became
A bath of chieftains' blood. Where'er one gazed
Lay heaps of warriors slain. Tnen Súfarai
Charged from the centre with his troops amain,
While Khúshnawáz on his side with his sword
Of vengeance spurred down from his vantage-ground ;
But when he saw that fortune proved unkind
He turned his rein and showed his back, pursued
By Súfarai as 'twere a raging blast,
Who followed with a head-transfixing spear.
He captured many nobles ; many more
Were slain by arrow and by scimitar.
He sped till he reached Kuhandizh and saw
No lack of slain and wounded on the way.
Then from the ramparts Khúshnawáz beheld
His troops spread o'er the desert's hills and dales ;
The way was strewn with dead and things of price
So that the plain was decked out like a garden.
The soldiers carried off to Súfarai
The harness, lances, coronets of state,
The battle-gear, the girdles, steeds, and slaves,
And made a heap as high as Mount Alburz.
He paid no heed to all that Turkman spoil,
But gave the whole in largess to his troops,
And thus harangued the host : "To-day's affair
Hath prospered for us to our hearts' content
Through fortune's favour, but what time the sun
Shall lift its hand in heaven we must not bide
Inactive on the plain but march like lions C. 1600
Upon yon hold to avenge the king of kings."
His troops agreed and each man spake his mind.
Thus fared it with them till in arching heaven
The sun's resplendent diadem appeared,
Whereat the tymbals sounded in the camp,

And Súfarai bestrode his steed. An envoy
Reached that proud chief from Khúshnawáz to say :—
" From battle, strife, and bloodshed naught resulteth
But travail and contention. Shall we then,
Who are two men of wisdom, young, and brave,
Send both our souls to Hell ? If thou wilt seek
Again the way of wisdom thou shalt learn
That all that happened was the work of God.
It was not through the blast that Sháh Pírúz
Was slain but rather that the stars foreclosed
For him his years and months. He was to blame
For breach of pact, for choosing colocynth,
And spurning honey. Now what was to be
Hath come upon our heads. Blest is the man
That walketh not the round of violence.
The captives and whatever spoil there was,
The gold, the silver, and the uncut gems,
The steeds, the weapons, and the crowns and thrones,
Left by Pírúz when fortune quitted him,
Both his own treasures and his troops' as well,
Will I send to the general of the Sháh
That thou mayst go victorious to Írán,
Mayst go back to the monarch of the brave.
I will not trespass on Írán ; do you,
For your part, keep the treaty of Bahrám.
The king of kings apportioned earth aright :
Túrán and Chín are ours, Írán is thine."

When Súfarai had heard the embassage
He called the soldiers to his tent-enclosure,
And in their presence bade the messenger :—
" Repeat before the host the foeman's words."

He came and gave them, keeping nothing back.
Then Súfarai addressed his army thus :—
" What in your view should be our policy
Herein ? "

The troops replied : " 'Tis thine to bid,

And thine to stipulate the terms of peace.
None knoweth better in Írán than thou :
Thou art our king, our leader, and our lord."
Thus to his noble chiefs spake Súfarai :—
"The only policy for us to-day
Is this—to seek no more to fight with them.
I will lead back the army to Írán
With speed, because Kubád,[1] son of Pírúz,
One of the royal race, is in their hands
With the high priest Ardshír and army-leaders,
Both young and old. If we fight Khúshnawáz
The matter will be long and profitless,
And they will slaughter their Íránian captives, C. 1601
Kubád, the world's heir, and Ardshír. Howbeit,
Unless Kubád had been in jeopardy,
Ne'er had my heart and brain recalled to mind
The high priest ; but if evil from the Turkmans
Befall Kubád Írán will be all outcry,
And this shame current with our warriors
Until the Resurrection. We will give
A courteous answer to the messenger,
And take fair counsels in the cause of peace.
We then perchance may see Kubád again,
(God grant that no one else be king of kings !)
Ardshír the high priest and the other captives,
Both young and old."
His soldiers blessed him, saying :—
"That is the treaty, precedent, and Faith
For us."
The paladin then called the envoy,
And thus addressed him with a dulcet tongue :—
"It was the act of God—enough ! This world
Designeth evil and appriseth none.
The great men of Írán that have been taken
Are these—Kubád and the high priest Ardshír.[2]

[1] Kaikubád in the original. [2] Reading with P.

These with the rest that have their feet in fetters
Dispatch to me in honourable fashion.
Moreover all the booty in your hands—
Dínárs and crowns and wealth of every kind—
Dispatch in full to me, and let it come
In presence of the chieftains of this host.
We will not stretch our hands to spoil and slay
Because we have no need and worship God.
Within ten days we will recross Jíhún,
And take no warlike step thenceforth. Give ear
To that which I have said and tell it all,
On thy return, to Khúshnawáz."
The envoy
Returned forthwith to Khúshnawáz in triumph,
And gave the message. Khúshnawáz rejoiced,
And instantly released Kubád from bonds
With the high priest Ardshír and all the other
Íránian prisoners, collected all
The booty found upon the day of battle,
Besides the throne and crown of Sháh Pírúz,
And what was scattered 'mongst his troops, and sent
All by a trusty man to Súfarai.

Now when the soldiers looked upon Kubád
They joyed to see him, the high priest Ardshír,
And all the other captives young and old.
The mighty men came from their tents and all
Stretched out their hands to heaven in gratitude
That they beheld the king of kings' own son
Unhurt with all the rest that most they prized.
Forthwith the chief broke up the camp, took horse,
C. 1602 And glad and triumphing repassed Jíhún
With that renowned high priest and with Kubád.[1]

When tidings reached the country of Írán
About that fortunate and glorious chief,
About his war and strife with Khúshnawáz,

[1] See p. 179, *note*.

And all his wonder-working policy :—
"He hath returned glad and victorious
From war, Kubád hath been released from fetters,
And Súfarai hath brought withal Ardshír,
The high priest, and the Íránian prisoners ;
Just now he crossed o'er the Jíhún, his host
Is on the plains and mountains of Írán,"
Such shouts ascended that thou wouldst have said :—
"They deafened those that heard." The prudent magnates
Arose and gat themselves in readiness
To go forth with their welcome while Balásh
Prepared a golden throne to seat Kubád,
And that chief paladin. When Súfarai
Arrived within the realm the great men all
Met, while the Sháh prepared the welcoming,
Set forward with such forces as he had,
And when he saw Kubád released from bonds,
Glad and victorious, embraced him quickly
With joy and cursed the people of Haitál
And Chín. They passed within the royal palace
With hearts still sore and eager for revenge.
Balásh commanded and they spread the board,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy ;
But there was little gladness at that feast
Through sorrow for magnanimous Pírúz.
The singers lauded Súfarai and sang
Upon the harp the war against Túrán.
He was the Cynosure of all the chieftains,
Who entertained high hopes and joyed in him.
The country rallied to him, those at least
That longed to take revenge on Khúshnawáz.
The hearts of all the paladins rejoiced
In Súfarai ; they freed their souls from care.
Thus was it till four years had passed away,
And he had not his equal in the world.

Naught happened but according to his will,
And what he would he did. Now when his word
Prevailed throughout the world he had Balásh
Removed, albeit gently, from the throne,
And said to him : "Thou rulest not the realm ;
Thou knowest not the good men from the bad ;
Thou turnest all the empire to a jest
Through thy perversity and carelessness.
Kubád is wiser far than thou and hath
Much more authority within the realm."

Balásh withdrew to his own house, for he
Dared not make answer : "Get thee gone," but said:—
"This throne will vex not when I sit thereon ;
'Tis free from travail, pain, and malison."

XL

KUBÁD SON OF PÍRÚZ

HE REIGNED FORTY-THREE YEARS

ARGUMENT

Kubád ascends the throne and harangues the chiefs. Súfarai continues for a time at the head of affairs and then is disgraced and executed. The Íránians revolt in consequence, hand Kubád over to Súfarai's son, Rizmihr, and make Kubád's brother, Jámásp, Sháh. Rizmihr acts with extreme loyalty, protects Kubád, and escapes with him to the Haitálians. On the way thither Kubád marries a thane's daughter who becomes the mother of Kisrá. Provided with an army by the king of the Haitálians Kubád regains the throne. He wars against Rúm, builds cities, and becomes a convert to the teaching of Mazdak who, however, is worsted in a public disputation by Kisrá and put to death with his followers. Kubád appoints Kisrá, to whom the folk give the name of Núshírwán, his successor and dies.

NOTE

According to Mír Khánd, Kubád (Kobad, A.D. 488–531) was known as "the well-intentioned."[1] Historically the events of his

[1] RM, Pt. I., Vol. ii. p. 371. The nickname may be illustrated by the following story from the Persian Tabarí. Kubád was engaged once in hunting at vintage-time and reached a village where he saw a very beautiful vine. Near by was a woman, engaged in baking bread, who had with her a child some three years old. Suddenly the child entered the garden where the vine was, picked a bunch of grapes, and was about to eat them. The woman slapped the child, took away the bunch, and refastened it to the vine. Kubád, astounded at her parsimony, approached the vine and asked the woman whose it was. She answered that it belonged to her. He then inquired whose the child was, and she told him that it was hers. Then he said: "Why have

reign, as set forth in the Sháhnáma, may be revised as follows. Súfarai remained at the head of affairs until the revolt occurred that drove the Sháh to take refuge with the Haitálians. This revolt was brought about by the conversion of Kubád to the doctrines of the heresiarch Mazdak, who had a large and increasing following. Kubád seems to have been sincere in his adoption of Mazdakism, but at the same time used its subversive principles as a means of reducing the power of, and of humbling, the great nobles. The official hierarchy, however, took alarm, Kubád was dethroned and shut up in the "Castle of Oblivion" in Susiana, and Jámásp, his brother, reigned in his stead. Kubád, however, by the help of his sister, wife, or both, or of Súfarai himself, managed to make good his escape to the Haitálians with whom he had stayed for some two years as a hostage during the lifetime of his father.[1] During his second sojourn among them he married his own niece—the offspring, by the Haitálian king, of the captive daughter of Pírúz.[2] Helped by his royal father-in-law Kubád managed to recover his throne and placed Súfarai again at the head of affairs, but at length, finding him too powerful, called in the aid of his rival—Shápúr of Rai, the captain of the host—and had him put to death. Kubád never seems to have abandoned his personal regard for Mazdakism, in spite of the fact that it had cost him the temporary loss of his crown, until nearly the end of his long reign. Probably after his restoration he was content to hold it as a pious opinion only, no longer as a weapon to be used against the nobility or in a manner provocative of the Magi. The Mazdakites, however, not unnaturally became concerned about the future—what would happen on Kubád's death? Accordingly they

you taken the bunch of grapes away from it, beaten it, and refused to your own child a paltry bunch." She replied: "We are not free to dispose of our own, for the Sháh has a share, and before some one comes on his behalf to deduct his portion we dare not put hand to it." Kubâd said: "Do you only or do all folk act thus?" She answered: "Not I alone, but all in the realm of Kubád." The Shâh was full of pity for his subjects, narrated the story to his ministers, and bade them find a less oppressive way of raising revenue. They recommended that the whole realm should be surveyed and taxed in proportion to its fertility, remoteness, and distance from water. Then the revenue would be in money which could be demanded at any time. The Sháh gave orders accordingly, and the work was begun, but finding that it could not be completed in his own lifetime he charged his son and destined successor, Núshírwán, to see that it was carried through, which he did (p. 224 *seq.*). —ZT, ii. 152 *seq.*

[1] See p. 160. [2] *Id.* p. 161.

attempted to secure the succession for one of Kubád's sons whom they knew that they could trust. Kubád, however, had made up his mind already in favour of another heir, and a great massacre of Mazdakites ensued. This seems to have taken place at the end of A.D. 528 or the beginning of A.D. 529. Kisrá in consequence of the share that he took in exterminating the Communists received the name of Núshírwán.[1]

This account, from which all irrevelant history has been omitted, differs widely, as will be seen, from that given in the Sháhnáma: Mazdak and his evangel have been replaced in their proper historical context, the story of the birth of Kisrá has been omitted, and so has all reference to Rizmihr, Súfarai's son.

§§ 2 and 3. Tabarí tells us that when, at the instance of Kubád, Shápúr of Rai overthrew Súkhrá (Súfarai), a saying, which became a proverb, grew current and ran thus: "Súkhrá's wind is gone; now a wind has risen for Mihrán." Mihrán was the name of one of the great Arsacid families that played an important rôle, and held high office, in Sásánian times, and its employment in the above proverb has led Nöldeke to suspect that "Súkhrá" also must be the title of a family, not the name of an individual, as otherwise the two halves of the proverb would not have balanced properly. He is inclined therefore to the opinion that Súkhrá and Zarmihr—the Rizmihr of Firdausí—were not two individuals standing in the relation of father and son to each other, but one and the same person—Zarmihr of the family of Súkhrá of the house of Káran.[2] This house, like that of Mihrán, was probably of Arsacid descent, but in Íránian tradition, as we learn from the Sháhnáma, claimed a much older origin and looked upon Káwa, the smith, who raised the standard of revolt against the tyranny of Zahhák, as the founder of its fortunes.[3] However this may be, the rivalry between two great families, and the employment by the Sháh of one of them to deliver himself from the overgrown authority of the other would be natural enough. It is to be noted that Shápúr of Rai is described in the poem as being descended from Mihrak—the mortal enemy of Ardshír Pápakán and evidently for some reason or other a very important personage in Íránian legend. He is said to have been of Jahram in Párs, while Rai, with which his descendant Shápúr is associated, was the centre of Arsacid power in popular tradition.[4] Not very long ago we had a Mihrán as treasurer to Yazdagird son

[1] MM, ii. 196. *Cf.* p. 211 and *note*.

[2] NT, pp. 120 *note*, 140 and *note*.

[3] See Vol. i. p. 154 *seq.*

[4] Vol. vi. pp. 201, 237, 241, 256, 266 *seq.*

of Shápúr,[1] quite lately we found another—Ruhhám—helping Pírúz in his struggle against his brother Hurmuz,[2] presently we shall come upon a third as the opponent of Belisarius,[3] a fourth as a general in Núshírwán's host,[4] while a fifth—Mihrán Sitád—goes on a mission to the Khán.[5]

In Kubád's plans for escape to the Haitálians he associates himself with six others. Seven is a favourite number in Persian story. We have the Seven Climes, the Seven Courses or Stages of Rustam and Asfandiyár, the Fight of the Seven Warriors, the Seven Feasts of Núshírwán, and other instances.[6]

§ 4. According to Tabarí, Kubád fled twice to the Haitálians, once on the occasion of his unhistorical contention with Balásh[7] and again, historically, here. On both occasions he is said to have contracted a marriage on his journey and to have been accompanied by Zarmihr (Rizmihr). This is stated by Tabarí with regard to the first flight and by Dínawarí and Firdausí as to the second.[8]

§ 5. In the above accounts the birth of Kisrá is chronicled in connection with both flights. This duplication does not make the story any the more probable, and, as a matter of fact, Kisrá appears to have been the son of the sister of one of Kubád's generals who served in the Roman war, A.D. 502–506.[9] In view of the subsequent importance of Kisrá it was incumbent that Kubád should ask and receive satisfactory assurances as to the descent of the mother of his son. The name Kisrá is the Arabic form of the Persian Khusrau which, with the exception of twelve years, was the name of the Sháhs from A.D. 531 to A.D. 627, if we leave out of account the usurper Bahrám Chubína.

Jámásp who, according to Mír Khánd, was known as "the proud,"[10] appears to have reigned for two years, A.D. 496–498, and it is to be feared that his brother's treatment of him after his deposition was not so amiable as Firdausí would have us believe. The same remark would apply to Jámásp's adherents, whom also the poet tells us were pardoned. One account at all events states that Kubád "killed the Great" when he regained the throne.[11]

According to Tabarí, Zarmihr (Rizmihr) was put to death by Kubád some time after his restoration.[12] The story of the Sháh's ingratitude to the father is duplicated in the case of the son, which

[1] *Id.* p. 387. [2] p. 156. [3] p. 187.
[4] p. 251. *Cf.* NT, p. 139 *note*. [5] p. 350.
[6] See Vol. vi. p. 207. [7] p. 170.
[8] NT, pp. 135, 145 and *note*. [9] *Id.* and *cf.* p. 187.
[10] RM, Pt. I, vol. ii. p. 371. [11] NT., p. 461 and *note*.
[12] *Id.* p. 142.

in itself is suspicious, as is the almost superhuman loyalty displayed by the latter in § 3. It may be laid to the account of the legitimist view that obtains in this part of the poem.[1] If Súfarai be the Persian commander-in-chief called Seoses in Procopius he was not put to death till about A.D. 519.[2]

Until war broke out in A.D. 502 there had been, with one slight exception in the reign of Yazdagird son of Bahrám Gúr,[3] a period of peace for eighty years between the Persian and Eastern Roman Empires. To both the defence of the passes in the Caucasus against the incursions of northern Barbarians was equally important, and the understanding was that both should contribute equally to that end. This arrangement formed one of the terms of the peace concluded by Yazdagird with the younger Theodosius after the brief war, above mentioned, in A.D. 442. The Romans, however, were very remiss in carrying out their part of the undertaking, and their money contribution was in arrear. Both parties seem to have been inclined to look upon the money as tribute to be exacted or refused according to circumstances, and this added to the difficulty of an agreement which probably is responsible for the notion often found in Íránian legend that Rúm was tributary to Írán. Kubád, after his restoration, found himself in want of money to pay his Haitálian allies and applied to the Emperor Anastasius for the arrears due for the defence of the passes. Anastasius refused, his motive being, it is said, the hope of embroiling Kubád with his northern mercenaries, and the Sháh declared war. At first he was very successful, taking Theodosiopolis in Roman Armenia and Amida in northern Mesopotamia, but the generals whom he left to carry on the war, when he himself was called off to resist an Haitálian invasion, were less successful, and Kubád commissioned his brother-in-law, the uncle of Kisrá, to negotiate a peace.[4] The Persians received a lump sum and gave up the captured cities. Towards the end of Kubád's reign war again broke out, A.D. 526, and lasted till his death. It was in this war that Belisarius rose to fame and fought twice with one of the Mihráns named Pírúz.[5] Procopius, who had become secretary to Belisarius in A.D. 527, gives a correspondence purporting to have passed between the two generals.[6]

Hulwán was situated north-west of Kirmánsháh at Sar-i-pul-i-Zohab.[7] Kubád merely renamed it as he also renamed a town

[1] See Vol. vi. p. 251. [2] NT, p. 145 *note*.
[3] See p. 153. [4] NT, p. 145 *note*; RSM, p. 360 and *note*.
[5] *Cf.* p. 186. [6] RSM, p. 368 *seq.* and *note*.
[7] *Id.* 564 *note*; NT, p. 138 and *note*.

called Aragán on the borders of Ahwáz and Párs not far from the present Bihbihán. He changed Aragán to Rámkubád.[1]

§§ 6 and 7. In the Vendídád there is a reference to "the ungodly fasting Ashemaogha" (heretic), to which the Pahlaví commentary on the Zandavasta adds: "like Mazdak, son of Bámdát."[2] In the late Pahlaví Text known as the Bahman Yasht the names are given of six priests whom Núshírwán summoned to his aid in his disputation with Mazdak.[3] Two of them are recognisable in Firdausí's Hurmuzd and Mihr-Ázar. Mazdak's place of birth is quite uncertain, and his historical importance began and ended with the reign of Kubád. The poet omits to mention two of Mazdak's principles —the prohibition of bloodshed and of flesh-eating—but in other respects his account of that heresiarch's doctrines seems to be substantially correct—Zoroastrianism with private property and the family abolished. To this anarchical Faith doubtlessly he did his best to win over Kubád's recognised heir, failing in which he schemed to alter the succession and perished in the attempt. This seems to be the obvious explanation of the catastrophe. Máni and his followers in their time fared no better.[4] Núshírwán was far too able and practical to be led away by Mazdak, and on coming to the throne tried his best to repair the mischief that had been done.[5]

§ 1

How Kubád sat upon the Throne and made an Oration to the Íránians

C. 1603 When glorious Kubád sat on the throne,
And donned the crown of majesty, he went
To Taisafún, departing from Istakhr—
The glory of the great. Now when he sat
Upon Pírúz's [6] seat he said: "Conceal
Naught from me. By bright day and darksome night

[1] *Id.* 13 and *note*, 146. [2] DZA, i. 48 and *note*.
[3] WPT, i. 194. [4] See Vol. vi. p. 359; NT, 465.
[5] NT, p. 163. For Mazdak and the Mazdakites generally see *id.* p. 455 *seq.*
[6] Or "victorious" or, with a slight change of reading (P), "turquoise," but the translation given is most in accord to the legitimist tendency in this part of the Sháhnáma. *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 251.

The way to me is open unto you.
The man is great who ordereth his tongue
To right discourse and seeketh not deceit,
While since he will be merciful in wrath
The best of men will welcome him as guide.
He setteth up the throne of acceptation
Within the world, receiving from the great
Just commendation. If thou keep'st thy heart
Far from revenge both great and small will praise thee,
But when the great king is a double-dealer
His double-dealing is a call to strife.
First hear a matter through for thus apprised
Thou wilt reply aright. When any sage
Is covetous his knowledge will not fruit ;
When he is headstrong it will be to him
Like water in a salt marsh. Furthermore
'Tis well to get a soldier's heart and bear
Reproach submissively.[1] The rich, hard man
Is lower even than a mendicant ;
But when a foolish mendicant hath sway
His rule is simple madness. He that knoweth
His own defects will not be eloquent
On those of others. Patience is the pillar
Of wisdom : to be wroth is but to make
Oneself despised. Submission to God's justice
Will make thee rich, sincere, and honourable,
For thou art freed from care. The body of him
That hath no greed is better than a treasure,
While that man whose viaticum is knowledge
Will die in person but in name live ever ;
So put ye all your hands to good alone,
And walk not on this whirling world for ill."

[1] Mohl, with a very slight change of reading, translates : "Celui qui recherche l'affection de l'armée prend un ton modeste, même en blâmant." *Cf.* p. 44.

The nobles all called blessings down on him,
And showered emeralds upon his crown.
He was a youth of sixteen years, and bore
As yet but little part in government,
C. 1604 While Súfarai took order for the world.
Kubád ruled in the palace; all affairs
Were managed wholly by the paladin.
He suffered no one to approach the Sháh,
Who had no archmage and gave no command
Or counsel. Súfarai ruled all the land.

§ 2

How Súfarai went to Shíráz, how the Íránians slandered him to Kubád, and how Kubád slew him

Thus in the cup the wine was tulip-like
Until Kubád was twenty-one [1] years old;
Then Súfarai came in before the king
For licence to go home and thereupon
He gat him ready with his retinue,
Struck up the drums, and started for Shíráz,
Returning to his country, full of joy,
As one that had obtained his whole desire.
All Párs was as it were a slave before him,
And, save the throne of empire, all was his.
His thoughts were these: "I have set up the Sháh,
And done him homage as my sovereign,
So now if any man shall slander me
He will rebuke that man and banish him."
He levied tribute on the provinces,
On all the men of name and all the chiefs.
When tidings of his just and unjust deeds
Came from Shíráz to glorious Kubád,

[1] Reading with P.

The people said : " The Sháh hath but the crown,
And not the troops and treasure in Írán,
Hath no authority, is not consulted ;
The world is all the slave of Súfarai."
All those that shared the secrets of Kubád
Repeated to him what the people said,
And added : " Why, exalted king ! art thou
Contented merely to be king in name ?
His treasury is better filled than thine :
Thou shouldst release the world from his oppression.
All Párs hath grown as 'twere a slave to him,
The great men have become his thralls."
These words
Seduced Kubád's [1] heart, which became forgetful
Of all the services of Súfarai ;
He said : " If I shall send an army forth
He will revolt and seek to be avenged,
I shall but use my wealth to make a foe,
While he will cause much trouble and much toil.
The people all are talking of his deeds,
Unwitting of his secret purposes.
I know not any warrior of Írán
To march against him with a host to battle."
A wise man answered thus : " Think not that he
E'er will be recognised as king. Thou hast
Both lieges and a leader of the host C. 1605
That can lay hand upon the circling sky ;
So when Shápúr of Rai is on the march
The heart of wicked Súfarai will rive."
The Sháh took courage when he heard these words,
Forgot the merit and presumed the guilt ;
Then bade a veteran mount as swift as wind,
And, on the plea of faring forth to hawk,
Go to Shápúr of Rai, cause him to mount
Forthwith upon his steed, and summon him

[1] See p. 179, *note*.

From Rai to court. The messenger, who took
A spare steed, went swift as an autumn-blast
To Rai as he was bidden by the king.
The chamberlain there saw and questioned him,
Took the king's letter, went before Shápúr,
Gave it, and introduced that noble horseman.
Shápúr, who was descended from Mihrak,
Smiled when he read the letter of Kubád,[1]
For Súfarai had not a foe like him
In public and in private. Thus apprised
Shápúr convoked his lieges and led forth
His army in all haste to Taisafún.
When he had brought his army to the Sháh
They gave him audience instantly. The world-lord,
On seeing him, received him graciously,
Caused him to sit upon the turquoise throne,
And said : " I have no portion in this crown,
Am noted 'mongst the foolish in the world.
All power is with Súfarai ; I see
But sovereignty in name. Late in the day
My body shrinketh from the weights that press
With justice or injustice on my neck.
E'en were my brother master of Irán
'Twere better than this unjust Súfarai."
Shápúr replied : " O king ! be not aggrieved
At heart on this account. Thou shouldest write
A letter in harsh terms to him, for thou
Hast Grace and fame, high lineage and support.
Say : ' Of the crown of king of kings my share
Is travail and an empty treasure-house.
Thou takest tribute, and I bear the blame.
I will not have thee call me Sháh henceforth.
Lo ! I have sent to thee a paladin
In that thy conduct causeth me to wail.'
When he shall get a letter thus conceived,

[1] *Id.*

And I am there with troops prepared for fight,
I will not leave him time to wink an eye,
Or speak a word to him unless in wrath."
They called to them a scribe and seated him
Before Shápúr, who said again the words
As spoken in the presence of the Sháh :
The writer wrote them, grieving secretly.
Shápúr, whenas the Sháh had sealed the letter,
Led forth his host, then added famous chiefs, C. 1606
Disbanded from the armies of the king,
And with those nobles eager for the fray
Set face toward the city of Shíráz.
When Súfarai had tidings of the matter
He marched at once, and with a mighty host—
Picked cavaliers in mail—went out to meet
Shápúr. They met, and those two haughty chiefs
Alighted from their steeds. Now when Shápúr
Sat down with Súfarai they talked at large
Of projects good and ill. Shápúr then gave
The letter of the king, and matters reached
A cruel, shameful pass ; the paladin,
When he had read the letter, changed his favour,
Was stunned and dark of soul. Then said Shápúr,
The letter being read : " I must be plain :
The world-lord ordered that thou shouldst be bound,
Complaining much of thee before the nobles,
And thou wilt gather, having read his letter,
That he is resolute."
The paladin
Replied : " The monarch of the world is ware
What toil and hardship I have borne for him,
That marching from Zábulistán with troops
I set him free from bondage by my valour,
And suffered no calamity to come
Upon him. I had influence with the Sháh,

And with the chieftains of the Íránian host,
But since bonds are to be my recompense,
And my resistance will be troublesome
To thee, I ask no respite. Bind my feet :
The fetters of Kubád will profit me.
Doth he not shame before God and the host,
For I shed freely my warm blood for him ?
What time the Sháh was in captivity
I swore by God a mighty oath, and said :—
' My hand shall look but on my falchion's hilt,
And I will cloud the sun in fight, till I
Shall give my head or bring down from the throne
The head of Khúshnawáz between the shears.'
And now he biddeth me be bound ! Is't right ?
Receive I but derogatory words ?
Still turn not aught from his commands, for know
That bonds but ornament a hero's feet."

Shápúr, on hearing this, made fast the fetters,
Then bade the trumpet sound and gat to horse.
From Párs he carried Súfarai before
Kubád, who thought not of past services,
But bade men bear him to the prison-house,
Near where the madmen were, and gave command
To carry from Shíráz to Taisafún
What wealth soever he possessed—his folk,
His treasures, and the produce of his fields—
By those appointed to the treasurer.

C. 1607 Now when a week had passed Kubád consulted
The archmages how to deal with Súfarai,
And thus a counsellor addressed the Sháh :—
" The whole of Taisafún is on his side—
Troops, courtiers, thanes, and populace alike.
If he abideth in Írán unscathed
Thou mayest wash thy hands of sovereignty.
The foeman of the Sháh is best when killed,
His hater's fortune best when overturned."

Now when the Sháh had heard the archmage's counsel
He took a new course and despised the old,
Gave his command that Súfarai be slain,
The hearts of all his kindred wrung with pain.

§ 3

How the Íránians put Kubád in Bonds and committed him to Rizmihr, the Son of Súfarai, and how Jámásp, the Brother of Kubád, was set upon the Throne

Now when these tidings reached the Íránians :—
" He of the elephantine form is dead,"
A cry of anguish went up from Írán,
Men, women, children, all alike bewailed ;
The tongue of every one was steeped in curses,
And secret thoughts found public utterance.
Írán was all convulsed, the dust went up,
While all folk made them ready for the fight,
And thus they said : " Since Súfarai is gone
Let not Kubád's throne be within Írán."
The soldiers and the citizens agreed,
They would not bear the mention of Kubád,
But marched upon the palace of the Sháh,
Vexed at his ill advisers, for redress.
These men—all malice and intent on evil—
They took, dragged from the palace, and then sought
With diligence for traces of Jámásp,
His younger brother and a noble youth,
One whom Kubád had cherished tenderly.
They chose him, seated him upon the throne,
And called down blessings on him as their Sháh ;
But made Kubád's feet fast in iron fetters,
Unheedful of his Grace and noble birth.

Now Súfarai had one son well beloved,
A wise man, holy and illustrious,
A youth without offence, Rizmihr by name,
Whose fame had made his father well content.
To him the people gave Kubád in bonds,
As unto some malicious enemy,
And thought : " Through grief the loving son will take
Revenge upon the king for Súfarai."
The good Rizmihr, the worshipper of God,
Laid not his hand for ill upon the world-lord,[1]
C. 1608 But did obeisance to Kubád and spake
No words to him about his evil deeds,
Whereat the world-lord marvelled much, began
To bless Rizmihr, and thus excused himself :—
" My foes have troubled much my star and moon,
But, if I find deliverance from bond,
I will reward thee for all ills endured,
For I will banish anguish from thy heart,
And cause the eyes that look on thee to shine."
Rizmihr made answer to him thus : " O king !
Let not thy soul be grieved on this account,
For when a father acted not aright
His son should bear the sorrow of his death.
As touching mine own self, I am thy slave ;
I stand before thee as a servitor,
And at thy bidding I will swear that never
Will I break off my fealty to thee."
So spake Rizmihr and as the monarch heard
His heart began to throb for very joy,
His soul regained its confidence and grew
Right joyful at the words of that wise man.
He made Rizmihr his confidant and said :—
" I will not hide my thoughts from thee. Five men
Are sharers in my secrets. None besides
Hath listened to my voice. Now we will summon

[1] *Cf.* p. 187.

These five and ope to them our secret plan
If it appears that we have need of them,
While if from fetters thou shalt set me free
Know this—my policy shall profit thee."

§ 4

How Kubád escaped from Ward with Rizmihr, how he wedded the Daughter of a Thane, and how he took Refuge with the Haitálians

The good Rizmihr, on hearing this, anon
Released Kubád from fetters. From the city
They fared forth to the plain by night, unseen
By foes, and made toward the Haitálians,
Wrung with anxiety and hurrying.
On this wise sped the seven like flying dust
Until with dizzy heads they reached Ahwáz,
And entered on their steeds that wealthy town—
A town wherein a famous chieftain dwelt.
Dismounting at the dwelling of the thane
They tarried there and breathed themselves awhile.
He had a daughter moonlike, crowned with musk,
And, when Kubád beheld her face, all wisdom
Fled from his youthful brain. He went forthwith,
And told Rizmihr: "I have a privy word
For thee. Haste to the thane. Tell him from me :— C. 1609
'This moon-faced damsel—could she be my wife?'"
Rizmihr went instantly, informed the thane,
And said: "If thy fair daughter is unmated
I will provide her with a noble spouse,
And thou shalt be the master of Ahwáz."
The illustrious thane made answer to Rizmihr :—
"My pretty daughter hath no husband yet,
And, if she please thee, she is thine to give :
Give her to him that longeth after her."

The wise Rizmihr came to Kubád and said :—
" May this Moon bring good fortune to the Sháh.
Thou sawest her unawares and didst approve,
Thou didst approve of her just as she was."
Kubád then called to him that fairy-faced ;
The gallant warrior set her on his knee,
And having with him one, and but one, ring—
A signet-ring whose worth was known to none—
He gave it to her, saying : " Keep this signet ;
The day will come when I shall ask for it."
He stayed a se'nnight for that fair Moon's sake,
And parted on the eighth day with the dawn,
Went to the king of the Haitálians,
Told what had chanced, the Íránians' deeds, and how
They all had girded up their loins for ill.
The king replied : " The wrongs of Khúshnawáz
Have surely brought thee to this strait to-day.
On these conditions will I give thee troops,
Who are crown-wearers, every one of them,
That if thou shalt recover crown and treasure,
Chaghán, its wealth and state, its march and rule,
Shall be all mine, and thou shalt keep my terms
And stipulations."
Said Kubád while smiling
At him who thus dictated terms : " I never
Will give that land a thought and, when thou wishest,
Will send thee troops in numbers numberless.
What is Chaghán that I should look that way ? "
When they had made their pact the Haitálian king
Unlocked his treasury and gave Kubád
Dínárs and arms, and two score thousand swordsmen,
All famed as warriors and cavaliers.
Thus to Ahwáz from the Haitálians went
Kubád ; the whole world rang with that event.

§ 5

How Kubád returned from Haitál to Írán, how he had Tidings of the Birth of his Son, Núshírwán, and reascended the Throne

Kubád approached the thane's abode and saw
In every street a scattered populace,
Who all apprised him of the joyful news :—
" Thy spouse brought forth a son to thee last night C. 1610
But little less resplendent than the moon,
And may he bring good fortune to the Sháh."
Kubád, on hearing, went within the house
In great content. They named the boy Kisrá.
Now afterwards Kubád asked of the thane :—
" From whom art thou descended, noble sir ? "
He said : " From valiant Farídún who took
The kingship from the kindred of Zahhák :
Thus said my father and my mother too :—
' We give our reverence to Farídún.' "
Kubád was pleasured yet more at the words,
And instantly resumed the royal crown.
He had a litter brought and, when his spouse
Was seated there, departed on his march ;
He led the army on to Taisafún
In high displeasure with the Íránians.
Now in Írán the while the ancient chiefs
Sat with the sages and the notables.
They said : " Between these two—both Sháhs and proud—
The matter will prove wearisome for us.
Hosts are upon their way from Rúm and Chín,
And they will cause much bloodshed in the land."
Then one of that assembly said : " Ye chiefs,
Exalted and heroic warriors !
'Tis needful that we go out to Kubád,

Who, it may be, will not recall the past,
And bring to him Jámásp, the ten years' child,
To turn the hailstones of his wrath to pearls;
So haply we may swerve aside and 'scape
From pillaging, from bloodshed, and from war."
All went to meet Kubád and said to him :—
" O Sháh of royal race! if thou hast hurt
Men's hearts, and they have washed their hearts and eyes
In petulance, now act as pleaseth thee
Because the world-lord ruleth o'er the world."
They all drew near to him in haste, afoot,
Dust-covered, and with gloomy souls. The Sháh
Forgave the evil doings of his lords,
Accepting their excuse in lieu of bloodshed;
He pardoned too Jámásp: the nobles blessed him.
He came and sat upon the royal throne:
Jámásp became his liege. Kubád bestowed
The conduct of the realm upon Rizmihr,
And gave him great advancement. By his means
The kingship was well ordered, and the world
Fulfilled with justice and prosperity.
Thus matters fared until Kisrá grew tall—
A stripling bold and lusty. Then Kubád
Entrusted to wise governors his son,
That fresh and fruitful Bough. Kubád directed
All matters in Írán and in Túrán,
And raised his crown of greatness to the sky.
Thereafter he led forth his host to Rúm,
Which proved as 'twere a lump of wax to him:
C. 1611 He made a thorn-brake of those fields and fells.
Two cities asked for quarter at his hands,
One Hindíyá, the other Fárikín.
He taught the Zandavasta there, established
The Faith, and instituted Fanes of Fire,
His power, the feasts of New Year's Day and Sada.

He fixed his royal seat at Madá'in,
And wrought much good and ill. He built a city
Betwixt Ahwáz and Párs, and founded too
A hospital. He called the city's name
Arash ; the Arabs call it now Hulwán.
They opened everywhere canals that flowed
A-brim, and peace and rest on earth abode.

§ 6

The Story of Kubád and Mazdak, and how Kubád adopted the Faith of Mazdak

Then there arose a man by name Mazdak,
Learned, eloquent, judicious, and commanding,
Of noble birth, a trafficker in knowledge,
And brave Kubád gave ear to him. This man
Became the king of kings' chief minister,
The treasurer and the guardian of the treasure.
Then famine visited the world through drought,
A famine that afflicted great and small ;
No sign of snow appeared upon the sky,
And none saw snow or rain-fall in Írán.
At length the nobles of the world begged bread
And water at the portal of Kubád.
Mazdak returned them this reply : " The Sháh
Will manifest to you a way of hope,"
Then came himself in haste before the king,
And said to him : " O upright Sháh ! I fain
Would question thee upon a point if thou
Wilt condescend to answer."
Eloquent
Kubád replied : " Say on and make my lustre
Fresh in the world."
" A man," Mazdak rejoined,
" Is bitten by a snake ; his life is passing ;

Another man hath got the antidote
Whereof the bitten can obtain no share.
What then should be the guerdon of the man
That hath it ? Money will not purchase it."
The Sháh replied : " He is a murderer,
And should be slain to avenge the other's blood
Before my gate whenever the pursuer
Shall take him."
Hearing this Mazdak went forth
To those petitioners and told them thus :—
" I have discussed the matter with the Sháh.
Wait till the dawn, and I will show you how
To right yourselves."
C. 1612 They went away, returning
At dawn with stricken hearts in deep affliction.
Mazdak, when he beheld those chiefs from far,
Ran from the portal to the Sháh and said :—
" O thou victorious Sháh and eloquent,
Unsleeping, and the glory of the throne !
Thou gavest me an answer, when I spake,
And by that answer oped my bolted door,
So now with thy permission I will speak
A word to guide thee."
" Speak," the Sháh replied,
" Lock not thy lips because thy words will help me."
Mazdak said : " Noble king ! suppose a man,
Whom thou hast bound, but they withhold from him
All food until he dieth, thus perforce
Surrendering sweet life. Now how should one
Be punished who had bread yet left that captive
In destitution ? Will the great king say :—
' This man was wise and holy ? ' "
Said the Sháh :—
" Rend such to pieces, for through his neglect
He is a murderer."
On hearing this

Mazdak, when he had kissed the ground, went forth.
And from the portal thus harangued the crowd :—
" Go to the magazines where grain is stored,
And help yourselves while if the owners ask
Its value give them gold."
His own possessions
Within that city he gave up to pillage
In order that all folk might have their share.
Then all the hungry rabble fared in haste
To plunder every magazine of corn,
Owned by the citizens or by Kubád,
Who had none left to bless themselves withal.
The officers, when they perceived this, went
Before the watchful world-lord and thus said :—
" The mob have sacked the Sháh's own granaries,
But all the fault recoileth on Mazdak."
Kubád bade call that man of eloquence,
And talked with him about the pillaging.
Mazdak replied : " Mayst thou be fortunate,
And may thy words be wisdom's daily food.
I only told the wretched market-folk
The words which I had heard the monarch speak.
I asked the Sháh about the snake and poison,
And of the man who had the antidote.
The Sháh returned this answer to his servant
Concerning him that had and him that sought it :—
' If any die of snake-bite in the city,
Unhelped by one who hath the remedy,
For such they shall require that niggard's blood.'
The Sháh's authority must not be slighted.
Bread is the antidote for hungry men—
An antidote not wanted by the full.
If thou art one that judgest right, O Sháh !
Shall not the corn in store be put to use ?
To hunger have a multitude succumbed, C. 1613
Whose deaths are due to idle granaries."

Kubád was much affected by the words :
These righteous words aroused his brain to action.
Then, questioning Mazdak and hearing him,
The Sháh perceived him learned in heart and brain
In all things that the prophets, the archmages—
Those righteous dealers—and the great had spoken.
The teaching of Mazdak perverted him,
And exercised unbounded influence.
The multitude came thronging to Mazdak—
The many that had wandered from the way :
He said to them : " The man of empty hand
Is equal to the man possessed of wealth.
No one should have a superfluity,
The wealthy is the warp, the poor the woof ;
To right the world all men must have sufficient ;
The rich man's plenty is abominable ;
The women, goods, and houses are for all ;
The empty-handed and the rich are one.
I will take order that the holy Faith
Be manifest, the lofty from the low.
Whoever is of other Faith than this,
The malison of God is on that dív."
He treated mendicants, both old and young,
As though they were the equals of himself,
He took from this man and bestowed on that ;
The archmages were astonied at his doings.
Kubád himself gave ear and was converted,
And of all things was joyful in his words.
He set Mazdak at his right hand although
An archimage unknown to all the host,
And unto him the mendicants resorted
With those that earned a living by their toil ;
His Faith began to flourish in the world,
And no one dared to seek revenge on him,
The rich renounced the things that made them glad,
And gave to mendicants what wealth they had.

§ 7

How Núshírwán rejected the Faith of Mazdak and slew him and his Followers

It happened that Mazdak at dawn one day
Went from his house and came before the Sháh,
And thus he said : " Of those that hold our Faith,
As well as of our lieges pure of heart,
A crowd of chiefs are at the door ; shall I
Admit them or shall they depart ? "
Kubád,
On hearing, bade the chamberlain admit them,
Whereat Mazdak said to the noble Sháh :—
" This house is narrow and the crowd is great,
In sooth the audience-hall will hold them not ; C. 1614
Let the Sháh go and see them on the plain."
Kubád commanded that his throne be brought,
Brought from the royal palace to the waste,
And there a hundred thousand Mazdakís
Proceeded joyfully before the Sháh,
And thus Mazdak addressed the king of earth :—
" O thou above all knowledge and acclaim !
Know that Kisrá accepteth not our Faith,
But is it fit that he should turn therefrom ?
We must obtain from him an undertaking
In writing to give up his evil course.
There are five things that turn men from the right,
And e'en the sage can add no sixth. Now these
Are anger, vengeance, jealousy, and need ;
The fifth is greed, which is predominant,
And if thou conquer these five dívs the way
Of God will be made manifest to thee.
From these five things it cometh that our women
And wealth work havoc with the good religion,
But will not meddle more if thou wilt keep it

Intact. The twain cause jealousy, greed, need,
While anger and revenge conspire with them,
And thus the Dív perverteth wise men's heads :
The twain should be a common property."

This spoken, by the hand he grasped Kisrá,
What while the Sháh looked on in wonderment.
The noble prince in wrath withdrew his hand,
And turned his eyes in anger from Mazdak,
To whom Kubád said smiling : " Why art thou
Concerned for the religion of Kisrá ? "

Mazdak rejoined : " The way of righteousness
Is not in him. He is not of our Faith."

The Sháh then questioned of Kisrá and said :—
" What way is there except the good religion ? "

Kisrá replied : " If I shall have the time
Allowed me I will prove this theory false.
When both the fraud and falsehood shall appear
My truth will show out more conspicuously."

Mazdak rejoined : " Thou askest of the Sháh—
The lustre of the world—how many days ? "

He said : " I ask a period of five months.
The Sháh shall have his answer in the sixth
On all points."

They agreed and so departed.
The exalted Sháh returned to his own palace.
Kisrá dispatched a man to every quarter
To look for sages and auxiliaries.
An envoy went to Khurra-i-Ardshír
To cause the old Hurmuzd to come to court,
While from Istakhr came Mihr-Ázar of Párs
With thirty friends. These seekers after knowledge
Held session and discussed the case at large,
And then these men of lore and ancient sages
Presented their conclusions to Kisrá,
C. 1615 While he, when he had heard, went to Kubád,
Discoursed with him about Mazdak, and said :—

"The time now hath arrived when I would make
Investigation of the good religion.
If then Mazdak be right, and if the Faith
Delivered by Zarduhsht shall prove in fault,
I will accept the true Faith of Mazdak,
And make my soul's choice his,[1] for when the way
Of Farídún, of Esdras, and of Christ,
And all the Zandavasta, shall prove wrong,
And when the doctrine of Mazdak shall stand,
The world must take him for its only guide.
If, on the other hand, his words are false,
And he ensueth not God's holy way,
Then turn thee from the pathway of his Faith,
Put far from thee this sorry Creed of his,
And give him with his followers to me;
God grant that none of them keep brain and skin."
He took as witnesses Rizmihr, Kharrád,
Bihzád, Bandwí, and Farà'in, and thence
Departed to his palace and observed
The righteous covenant that he had made.
At dawn, what time the sun displayed its crown,
And earth was like a sea of ivory,
The world-king's son, that man of eloquence,
Set forth with chieftains and with archimages.
They went together to the royal palace.
Their speech was fluent and their quest the Way.
That youth—the Joy of hearts—came to Kubád,
And oped the case, whereon an archimage
Addressed Mazdak before the throng and said:—
"O seeker after wisdom! thou hast framed
A new religion in the world and made
Community of women and of goods.
How will a father recognise his son,
The son in like wise recognise his father?
When every man is equal in the world,

[1] "j'arracherai de mon âme cette ortie" (Mohl).

And great and little are no more discerned,
Who then will serve, and how can any rule ? [1]
Who then will labour for us, thee and me,
And how shall good men be discerned from bad ?
When one shall die to whom will appertain
His house and goods when toiling slave and Sháh
Are equal ? This will desolate the world ;
Such evil must not come upon Írán.
When all are masters who will be the servant ?
When all have treasure who be treasurer ?
None of the leaders of the Faith spake thus,
And thou art mad although thou hidest it.
Thou leadest all mankind to Hell, and thou
Accountest not all evil-doing wrong."

Kubád, when he had heard the archmage's words,
Was wroth and then gave sentence on the case.
The illustrious Kisrá supported him,
The impious one grew full of fear at heart,
C. 1616 While all the people there assembled cried :—
" Let not Mazdak remain before the Sháh ;
He hath made havoc of the Faith of God ;
Let him not tarry at this famous court."

The Sháh became abhorrent from that Faith,
The heads of all its chiefs grew full of care.
He gave up to Kisrá Mazdak forthwith
With all that held that doctrine and that way—
As many as three thousand men of name.
The king at that time thus addressed his son :—
" Do with those chiefs as seemeth good to thee,
And henceforth mention not Mazdak."

Kisrá
Had at his court a pleasure-ground whose wall
Was higher than a crow could fly. Around
The circuit of that wall he dug a trench
Wherein he set those men at intervals.

[1] For an exemplification of this see p. 26 *seq.*

They planted them like trees and firmly fixed
Their feet aloft, their heads below. Kisrá
Addressed Mazdak on this wise : " Visit thou
The entrance of my noble garth. The seed
That thou hast scattered all this while hath brought
Fruit forth to thee, O thou insensate one !
Thou shalt see trees such as none e'er beheld,
Or heard described by shrewd men heretofore."
Mazdak went, oped the portal of the garden,
And thought maybe to see fruit-bearing trees,
But seeing what he did he gave a cry,
And then all consciousness abandoned him.
Kisrá gave orders for a lofty gibbet
To be set up and at the top to fasten
A twisted lasso. Thereupon he hung
That impious wretch head-downwards and alive,
And after slew him with a shower of arrows.
If thou art prudent follow not Mazdak.!
The chiefs felt reassured about their wealth,
Their women, children, and their pleasances.
Kubád remained ashamed for many days,
And cursed Mazdak, gave mendicants much largess,
And offered gifts before the Fane of Fire.
He gladdened at Kisrá exceedingly
Because that Bough of his bare fruit of gems.
From that time forth the father sought alway
The son's advice and heard what he would say.

§ 8

How Kubád nominated Kisrá as Successor, and how the Great gave him the Name of Núshírwán[1]

Now when Kubád had reigned for forty years
The grief of death's day came upon his heart.

[1] Reading with P.

He had a writing fairly drawn on silk
In that befitting and engaging script,[1]
C. 1617 And first he offered praise to that just Judge,
"Who gave us Faith, accomplishment, and wisdom,
Whose word is certain, whatsoe'er He saith,
Alike in secret things and manifest.
None hath beheld His height of sovereignty,
And His elect ne'er are contemptible.
All ye that see the writing of Kubád!
Give heed but to the counsel of the wise.
I have bestowed the honourable throne
Upon Kisrá. Fair fortune will be his
When I am dead. May God accept my son,
And may his foes' hearts be fulfilled with smoke.
By this our signet-ring we do require
Of archimages, chiefs, and other subjects
That ye in no wise shall transgress his bidding,
But joy in him and fill your treasuries."
He set his golden signet on that writing,
And placed it with the archmage Rám Barzín.
Kubád had come to four-score years and yet,
Old as he was, he did not wish for death.
Is any in the world content to die
Since no man knoweth what will come thereby?
He died and left the world as his bequest;
His travail, ease, and pleasures passed away.
Who profiteth by what he hath amast
Since empty-handed go he must at last?
They draped the body with brocade and called
For rose and musk, for camphor and for wine.
They made for him a royal charnel-house,
A golden throne and crown of majesty.
They set the Sháh upon the throne of gold,
Barred up the way thereto for evermore,
And thenceforth looked not on him. Thus he passed

[1] Pahlaví.

O'er this world, as thou mightst have said, like wind !
How canst thou trust then in this ancient sky
Since it will end thee irremediably ?
The mourning being o'er, the high priest spread
The royal document upon the throne,
The magnates and archmages of Írán,
And all the famous sages, met in conclave,
The document was read before them all,
And with rejoicing they enthroned the heir.[1]
Now when Kisrá ascended his new throne
The people hailed him as their new-made Sháh,
Called praises down on him as sovereign,
And time and earth submitted to his sway.
His throne revived the world, and at the stream C. 1618
The sheep drank water with the wolf.[2] Folk said :—
" May this Sháh live for ever. May his Grace
Surpass Jamshíd's."
His goodness and his justice,
His institutions, Faith, and far-famed knowledge
Were such that people called him Núshírwán,[3]
For love and signet were both young with him.
The story of Kubád is at an end,
And henceforth to Kisrá my thoughts I bend.

[1] In the text the reign of Núshírwán begins here, and there is no division before § 3.

[2] Reading with P.

[3] *i.e.* " Of immortal soul." *Cf.* p. 185.

XLI

NÚSHÍRWÁN

HE REIGNED FORTY-EIGHT YEARS

ARGUMENT

The poet tells of the accession of Núshírwán, his internal administration, his repression of marauding tribes, his first war with Rúm, the revolt and death of his son Núshzád, of the rise to power and wisdom of Búzurjmihr, the fall of Mahbúd, the Sháh's marriage with the daughter of the Khán, Búzurjmihr's discourse on good words and deeds, the introduction into Persia of the game of chess and the Fables of Bidpai, the legend of the invention of the former and that of the game of nard, the fall and the restoration to favour of Búzurjmihr, the wisdom of Núshírwán, his last war with Rúm, his appointment of his successor, and death.

NOTE

Kisrá, surnamed Núshírwán (Chosroës I, A.D. 531–578), ruled contemporaneously with three Eastern Roman Emperors—Justinian (A.D. 527–565), Justin II (A.D. 565–574), and Tiberius II (A.D. 574–582). Justin resigned the rule to Tiberius, the captain of the guards, in A.D. 574, but did not die till A.D. 578, the year of Núshírwán's death. Núshírwán was perhaps the greatest of the twenty-nine Sásánian Sháhs, at least it is not easy to assign that title to any other unless we reserve it for the founder of the dynasty, Ardshír Pápakán, who has to his credit the overthrow of a long-standing foreign domination, the re-establishment of a national dynasty, and all the toil of political reconstruction that his successful revolt against the last Arsacid involved.

It will be seen that the poet had plenty of material for this portion of his undertaking. The subject-matter falls naturally into certain well-defined divisions; accordingly we have broken

up the reign, as in the case of that of Gushtásp,[1] into Parts, but there is no such arrangement in the original.

Kisrá will be referred to throughout by his popular title of Núshírwán.

The principal historical events recorded by Firdausí in his account of the reign may be placed in approximate chronological order as follows :—

The fall of Mahbúd.
The reorganisation of the kingdom, finances, and army.
The chastisement of barbarous frontier-tribes.
The fortification of Darband.
The first war with Rúm (A.D. 540–562).
The revolt of Núshzád (A.D. 551).
Núshírwán's marriage with the daughter of the Khán.
The introduction into Persia of the Fables of Bidpai (about A.D. 570).
The birth of Muhammad (about A.D. 571).
The second war with Rúm (A.D. 572).

The first eight of these are included in the present volume.

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[1] Vol. v. p. 9.

PART I

NÚSHÍRWÁN'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE REALM, HIS WARS WITH FRONTIER-TRIBES AND WITH RÚM, AND THE REVOLT OF NÚSHZÁD

ARGUMENT

Núshírwán ascends the throne and makes an oration to the people. He divides the realm into four provinces, and takes order for all matter civil and military. He builds a wall in the Caucasus and represses the Aláns and the men of Balúch and Gílán. He espouses the cause of Munzir, the Arab, against Cæsar, invades Rúm, takes cities, and compels Cæsar to sue for peace and to pay tribute. On a false report of the Sháh's death his son, Núshzád, a Christian, attempts to seize the crown. Núshírwán writes to his general, Rám Barzín, instructing him how to proceed, and Núshzád is defeated and slain.

NOTE

§ 2. Núshírwán's accession to the throne was not universally popular and gave rise to a formidable conspiracy in favour of one of his nephews.[1]

§ 3. Núshírwán's division of his empire into four satrapies differs in details in the different authorities, but seems to have been suggested by the names of the four winds. According to Dínawarí the East included Khurásán, Sístán, and Kirmán; the North Ispahán, Kum, Media Magna, and Ázarbáiján; the South Párs and Ahwáz; the West 'Irák to the Roman frontier.[2] Firdausí includes the Khazars in the South division—a mistake. They lived beyond the Caucasus.[3] He includes too Rúm in the West division on the assumption, for which there was certainly some justification at this time, that Rúm was tributary to Írán. A peace or truce concluded between Justinian and Núshírwán involved almost as a matter of course a money-payment from the former to the latter. It did not follow that Justinian always got the worst of the bargain. For instance, in the definite treaty of peace between the two

[1] See p. 316. [2] NT, p. 155, *note*. [3] See Vol. iv. p. 316.

empires in A.D. 562, Núshírwán's renunciation of Lazica (Mingrelia and Imeritia), and consequently of his dream of a fleet and of assailing Rúm by sea, was well worth the thirty thousand pieces of gold to be paid annually by Justinian though it did lay the Emperor open to the imputation of being tributary to the Sháh. Traditional instances of such payments crop up in the Sháhnáma as far back as the days of Dáráb and Failakús.[1]

The popular version of the origin of Kubád's resolve to alter the system of taxation has been given already.[2] It was left to Núshírwán to carry it out. According to Tabarí the taxes imposed were as follows:—On every garíb of corn-land, *i.e.* sown with wheat or barley, a ground-tax of one drachm was imposed, on every garíb of vineyard eight, and of lucerne seven; on four Persian date-palms, six common date-palms, provided that they grew in plantations or in numbers, and on six olives, one drachm. Single, scattered trees were not taxed. On all men between the ages of twenty and fifty a poll-tax varying, according to the fortune of a man, was imposed. The people were arranged in classes and paid twelve, eight, six, or four drachms according to their means. The taxes were paid yearly in three instalments at intervals of four months. Schedules of the taxes were drawn up, one of which was kept at the royal chancery, one sent to each collector, and one to each district-judge. The judges were priests and were charged particularly with the duty of seeing that the collectors did not exceed the tariff, and also, in cases where the crops had been damaged, with the duty of remitting taxation to a proportionate amount. The nobility, soldiers, priests, scribes, and others in the royal service, were exempt from the poll-tax.[3] They were supposed to render their due to the State in other ways.

§ 6. Faridún had his capital in Mázandarán. See Vol. i. pp. 177, 230. For the vegetation of that region, which is very luxuriant, see Vol. ii. pp. 27, 31.

For the fortifications at Darband, see p. 187 and Vol. i. p. 16. Mas'údí's two accounts of Núshírwán's wall, as given in the French translation, are as follows:—"Appelé dans le pays d'El-Bab et dans le Caucase par les incursions des rois du voisinage, il bâtit sur le mer (Caspienne), à l'aide d'outres de cuir gonflées, une muraille de rochers, qu'il consolida avec le fer et le plomb. Ces outres s'enfonçaient dans l'eau, à mesure que le construction s'elevait; lorsqu'elles s'arrêtèrent sur le fond et que la muraille

[1] See vol. vi. p. 24.

[2] p. 183, *note*.

[3] NT, p. 244. A garíb is said to have been equal to 3600 square ells and a drachm to 88 centimes. *Id.* pp. 242, 245, *notes*.

dépassa le niveau de l'eau, des plongeurs, armés de poignards et de coutelas, crevèrent les outres ; la muraille, entrant profondément dans le sol sous-marin, atteignit alors la hauteur du rivage. Elle existe encore aujourd'hui, en 332,[1] et toute la partie de cette muraille dont les assises plongent dans la mer est nomée *el-kaïd* (la chaîne), parce qu'elle arrête les bâtiments ennemis qui tenteraient d'aborder sur cette côte. On continua le même travail le long du rivage, entre le Caucase et le mer; on pratiqua des portes donnant sur le territoire infidèle, et l'on prolongea la muraille sur le mont Caucase, ainsi que nous l'avons dit ci-dessus, en décrivant cette montagne et la ville d'El-Bab."[2]

The other account referred to is this:—"Le Kabkh est une grande chaîne de montagnes qui renferme, dans sa vaste étendue, un nombre considérable de royaumes et de tribus: en effet, on n'y compte pas moins de soixante et douze peuplades, qui ont chacune leur chef et parlent une langue qui leur est propre. Ces montagnes sont sillonnées de gorges et de vallées ; c'est à la tête de l'un de ces défilés que se trouve la ville de Bab-el-Abwab, bâtie par Kosroës Enouchirwân, sur un point intermédiaire entre le pays montueux et la mer des Khazars. Le même souverain construisit cette célèbre muraille qui, d'une part, s'avance dans la mer, jusqu'à une distance d'environ un mille des côtes, et, d'autre part, s'élève sur les sommets abruptes des montagnes et descend dans leur gorges profondes, sur une longueur de quarante parasanges, jusqu'à ce qu'elle aboutisse à une place forte nommée Tabarestân. De trois milles en trois milles à peu pres, suivant l'importance de la route sur laquelle elle s'ouvrait, il plaça une porte de fer, près de laquelle il installa, dans l'intérieur de l'enceinte, une peuplade chargée de veiller à sa garde et à celle de la muraille. Ce rempart devait opposer une barrière infranchisable aux attaques des tribus voisines du Kabkh, telles que les Khazars, les Alains, les Turcs, les Serirs et les autres peuplades infidèles."[3]

One of the terms of peace made between Núshírwán and Justinian, after the death of Kubád, was that Persia should be paid the sum of eleven thousand pounds of gold towards the maintenance of the defences in the Caucasus and should undertake the actual defence herself.[4]

For Sikandar's wall, built, according to the legend, with a similar purpose, see Vol. vi. p. 163.

§ 7. Núshírwán's dealings with the Aláns and the folk of Gílán

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[1] A.D. 943.
[2] MM, ii. 196.
[3] *Id.*, p. 1.
[4] RSM, p. 382.

are historical, but Firdausí substitutes the Balúchís, who made themselves very troublesome in his time, for another tribe, mentioned in his authorities but unknown to him, which dwelt north of the Caucasus.[1] It is very unlikely that any of the Sásánian Sháhs ever got as far East as Hindústán.

§§ 8–10. The accession of Núshírwán found Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire at war, but a year or two later he concluded what was known as the "the endless peace" with Justinian. The title was somewhat unfortunate, as in A.D. 540 war again broke out owing, according to Firdausí and Tabarí, to the treatment of Munzir, prince of Híra (A.D. 505–554), by the Romans. He was Núshírwán's protégé and had a dispute with Hárith bin Jabala, the Ghassánian and Justinian's protégé, about a pasturage for sheep south of Palmyra. Hárith, as Tabarí states, attacked Munzir, made a great slaughter of his people, and carried off much booty. Munzir appealed to Núshírwán, who could get no accommodation from Justinian, and war ensued between the two empires.[2] Historically of course there were other reasons, one of the chief being that Justinian, secured on his Persian frontier by the "endless peace," had availed himself of the opportunity and the services of Belisarius to extend and almost double his possessions by conquests in the West. "Both his friends and his enemies said, with hate or admiration, 'The whole earth cannot contain him; he is already scrutinising the æther and the retreats beyond the ocean, if he may win some new world.'"[3] Justinian's success threatened to upset the balance of power. Probably, too, there were always "pin-pricks" going on between the two empires.

§ 11. The Fire-temple visited by Núshírwán before beginning his campaign was probably not one at Tabríz but the more famous one at what is now Takht-i-Sulaimán, about one hundred miles to the South. It was to this latter that the Sásánian Sháhs were wont to resort at important epochs in their lives.[4]

It will be noticed that a Mihrán commands the centre of Núshírwán's host—another instance of the prominent part played by this family of Arsacid descent in Sásánian times. *Cf.* p. 185.

§ 12. Crossing the Euphrates Núshírwán marched along its western bank till he reached Sura, the Greek *τὰ Σοῦρα* and the Shúráb of Firdausí, which was taken without difficulty, sacked, and burnt. The Sháh then advanced to Hierapolis, the Áráyish-i-Rúm of the Sháhnáma, which was allowed to ransom itself for two

[1] NT, p. 157, *note*.
[2] *Id.* p. 238; BLRE, i. 418.
[3] *Id.*
[4] *Cf.* pp. 5, 86, 94.

thousand pounds of silver.[1] Hierapolis sounds somewhat like Áráyish, which means "ornament," so it would seem that the poet converted the name of that city into Áráyish-i-Rúm or "Ornament of Rúm."

§ 13. On leaving this city Núshírwán, according to Firdausí, encountered and defeated a Rúman army led by Farfúriyús. Historically, the Persians in their advance on Antioch, in the course of which they held Chalybon-Beroea (Aleppo) to ransom, appear to have been unopposed. The occupation of Kálíniyús (Callinicus) did not take place till the third campaign (A.D. 543) when the city made no resistance, and the inhabitants were led away captive. It was situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. In A.D. 531, however, Belisarius, after foiling an attempt of a combined force of Persians and Arabs to raid Antioch, was worsted in a battle at Callinicus; so the two campaigns may have become confused in tradition. Germanus, Justinian's nephew, had been at Antioch before the Persians reached and stormed it in A.D. 540, but had withdrawn as he considered the existing fortifications could not be held with success. The taking of Antákiya (Antioch) was Núshírwán's crowning achievement in this his first campaign against Rúm, and he returned home by another route, compelling various cities to ransom themselves on his way. Farfúriyús is probably Firdausí's rendering of a Byzantine title. Belisarius took no part in the campaign of A.D. 540; he only returned from Italy in that year.

§ 14. That Núshírwán built a new Antioch on the Tigris, not far from Ctesiphon, as a residence for his Roman captives is no doubt historical, though we need not commit ourselves to Tabarí's statement that the new town was so exactly a reproduction of the original that the captives, on arriving, went to their own houses as naturally as if they never had left home.[2] The cordwainer from Callinicus would be a later arrival.[3] The new Antioch was also known as Rúmiya or "The Rúman" and by other names.

§ 15. Negotiations for peace had been going on even during the first year of the war, though they came to nothing, but five years later a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon for five years. Justinian had to give Núshírwán two thousand pounds of gold.[4] Firdausí does not carry the story of the war further. Peace was made, after the resumption of the war which was followed by another five years' truce, definitively in A.D. 562.

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[1] RSM, p. 387.
[2] NT, p. 165.
[3] See above.
[4] RSM, pp. 391 *seq.*, 404.

§§ 16–19. The revolt of Núshzád, "Immortal-born," is historical, and the circumstances attending it may be stated fairly correctly perhaps as follows. He seems to have been Núshírwán's eldest son, and to have been brought up as a Christian by his mother, who was in that Sháh's seraglio and of course a Christian herself. On account of his religion, or for some other reason, he was interned by his father at Gund-i-Shápúr,[1] which contained a strong Christian element and was the seat of the Nestorian Metropolitan—the next in rank to the Patriarch.[2] When the news, false as it turned out, of his father's death reached him he had every reason to bestir himself. In the circumstances there was a likelihood of his being passed over in the matter of the succession. His father's known disapproval, the rivalry of his brothers, and his own religion, were obstacles which had to be faced promptly if at all, while as the eldest-born it was only natural that he should aspire to the vacant throne. At the time when his rising occurred (A.D. 551) there was a five years' truce in force between Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire, so it is not likely that he got much help from that quarter. Probably Justinian never heard of the affair till it was all over. The Christian inhabitants of Gund-i-Shápúr naturally would support Núshzád, and it is interesting to find that the leader of his troops is Shammás—a word meaning a Christian priest or deacon. The general Persian opinion of Christians is shown by the word "tarsá," which means a Christian because its primary meaning is "cowardly," but it does not appear that Firdausí shared that view; on the contrary, when obviously putting his own words into the mouths of his characters, he treats the Church militant, especially the episcopacy, with much respect.[3] It is very unlikely therefore that the derogatory words concerning Christianity in the utterances of Núshírwán and Pírúz were the poet's own. Neither are they characteristically Muhammadan. Firdausí found them in his authorities translated from the Pahlaví. Historically, Núshzád does not appear to have fallen in the fight: he fell into his father's hands, was blinded probably, imprisoned, and disappeared from history. The concluding scene of the story may be regarded therefore as the poet's own contribution to it. There is nothing polemical there, but all is characterised by dignity and good feeling.[4]

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[1] See Vol. vi. p. 295. [2] NT, p. 41.

[3] *e.g.* Vol. i. p. 378. *Cf.*, too, the parable of the kerchiefs where Christianity is meant by the "Faith of Yúnán," which is described as being "good." Vol. vi. p. 95.

[4] For Núshzád generally see NT, p. 467.

§ 1

The Prelude

" O lofty Cypress, thou that ravishest
The heart ! oh ! wherefore art thou thus opprest ?
With pleasure, Grace, and luxury anear
Why is thine ardent heart fulfilled with fear ? "
Said to the questioner the Cypress-tree :—
" I was in joy ere age o'ermastered me.
I yield me to the puissance of three-score,
Forbear then and contend therewith no more,
For it hath dragon's breath and lion's claw,
And whomsoe'er it flingeth it will gnaw.
It hath the might of wolf, and thunder-breath,
In one hand care and in the other death.
It maketh stoop the Cypress that subdued
All hearts, it maketh jasmine amber-hued ;
It giveth saffron's tint to cercis-bloom,
And, after saffron's tint, a toilful doom.
The runner's foot is bound though fetterless,
The precious body turned to wretchedness ;
The lustrous pearls begin to fail with me,
And stoopeth too the noble cypress-tree ;
My melancholy eyes bewail and run
Through their debility and travail done ;
My blithe, glad heart is full of pain, and thus
These days of mine have grown ungenerous.
Or ever man is weaned his death is nigh,
And people call him old ! The sovereignty
Of Núshírwán was forty years and eight ;
To look for youth at sixty is too late
For thee, so seek an end to thine affairs,
And wound thy heart no more by gainful cares." [1]

[1] There is no break here in the original.

§ 2

How Núshírwán ascended the Throne and made an Oration to the Íránians

When Núshírwán [1] assumed the ivory throne,
And donned the crown—the lustre of the heart—
The great men of the world were gathered there
What time the Sháh sat with his counsellors.
That chief of famous men then loosed his tongue,
Invoked the righteous Giver of all good,
And said : " Be our hearts filled with praise and love
Toward the almighty Ruler of the sky,
From whom are good and ill, fame and desire,
By whom I am made sorrowful and glad,
Of whom are Grace and strength. By His command
The sun is bright in heaven. We will not quit
His counsels and His covenant, or reckon
Our breaths but at His bidding. He that doth
That which is just upon the throne of power
Will have fruition of good fortune here ;
But he that harboureth an ill intent C. 1619
Will bring disaster on himself at last.
Whate'er ye ask of us we will reply,
And in our answer will advise you well.
None wotteth of the secrets of the heart ;
That is a way too strait for me to find ;
But still if justice be the Sháh's employ
It surely will rejoice the hearts of all.
Delay not till the morrow this day's work ;
How know'st thou what to-morrow will bring forth ?
The rosary in bloom to-day will have
But worthless flowers for thee to cull to-morrow.
In days when thou art hale be not unmindful
Of malady, of suffering, and of loss ;

[1] Kisrá in the original, but henceforth we write Núshírwán.

Think of the day of death which closeth life,
And how with death we are as leaves with wind.
When thou art slack to act thou makest all
Thy policy unsound. When envy swayeth
The heart of man no leech can cure that ache.
When passion mastereth wisdom is't not proof
Of madness ? Furthermore none honoureth
The quarrelsome and talkative. The path
That leadeth thee to guile is gloomier,
To right is straiter. Skilful as thou art,
If thou art lazy and perfunctory
Thy work will turn out ill. Whene'er the tongue
Is wedded to deceit it hath no lustre
From heavenly fortune. Feckless folk resort
To lying, and we can but weep for such.
Whenas the Sháh is first to rise from slumber
He will be safe from foes and hale of body.
Be wise and have withal enough to eat,
But more than this is anguish, toil, and greed.
Whenas a Sháh is just and liberal
The world is full of goodness and of peace,
But if he thwarteth justice in its course
He eateth colocynth and drinketh blood.
All ye in this assembly ! hear what I
Proclaim to you, learn it, observe it well,
And all your years fare side by side with fortune :
Full many a crownéd monarch have we scanned,
And our choice is the path of right and wisdom ;
Yet must ye listen to my minister,
For good and ill appear not save through him.[1]
Whoever cometh to this court of mine
With just cause whether in or out of season,
No minister of mine will I approve
That keepeth such a matter hid from me.
As for the officers about my court,

[1] Reading with P.

And valiant cavaliers among my troops,
As we stint not the stipend due to them
So must they tender mine own name and fame.
Let all be done humanely and uprightly C. 1620
Without defect of justice. Every one,
That, being an Íránian, girdeth him
To do his service in this court of ours,
Shall have both treasure and kind words from us
If he shall prove a shrewd and modest servant ;
But if his underlings shall be oppressed,
And he shall be unwise and fear not God,
He shall be punished for his wickedness,
And we should grieve not o'er the fall of one
So despicable. Keep within your hearts
The laws of holy God and fear not us,
For He is King of kings, Lord of the world,
Victorious, and One whose word is law,
The Illuminer of crown and sun and moon,
Who showeth us the way of righteousness.
Lord of the world is He, the Judge of judges,
And higher than the thoughts of every man.
He hath created heaven, space, and time,
And hath adorned our souls and hearts with love.
He is the Guard of crown and lofty throne,
And when thou seekest help will succour thee.
'Tis He hath fired your hearts with love of us,
His will hath blinded, heart and eye, our foes.
Well-being is all subject to His hest,
All goodness underneath His providence.
All from the stubble to the seventh heaven—
Air, fire, and water, and our gloomy earth—
Bear witness to His being and afford
Thereof a clear assurance to thy soul.
Whate'er we praise is under His command,
And all our worship dedicate to Him."

When Núshírwán had spoken all the world
Was lost in wonder at him. To their feet
All rose with praise anew the Sháh to greet.

§ 3

How Núshírwán divided his Realm into four Parts and wrote a Decree to his Officers on the Administration of Justice

The king of kings called unto him the wise,
And settled the affairs of all the world.
The world itself he parted into four,
Assigning that which was inhabited.
He first of all for Khurásán took thought,
And filled thereby the nobles' hearts with joy.
The second part was Kum and Ispahán—
The seat of magnates and the place of chiefs—
Wherewith Ázar Ábádagán, whereon
The Íránians lavished offerings, was comprised.
That Sháh of wary heart [1] included too
Armenia up to Ardabíl and Gíl.
C. 1621 The third from east to west was formed of Párs,
Ahwáz, and of the marches of Khazar.
'Irák together with the land of Rúm
Came fourth—a splendid realm and populous—
And in these marches to the indigent,
Who had to toil to satisfy their needs,
The Sháh made largess of his hoarded treasures,
And all folk blessed him.
Now of former Sháhs—
Sháhs greater or inferior to himself—
All had required a portion of the crops,
And no man thitherto had 'scaped the tax.
The royal portion was a third or fourth

[1] Reading with P.

Until Kubád came and required a tenth.
He meant to have reduced it further still,
And strove to make the lowly like the lord,
But fortune gave him not the time.[1] Whilst thou
Art in the stream ne'er trust the crocodile.
The crown of worship came to Núshírwán,
And he remitted all the tenth forthwith.
The sages, chiefs, great men, and archimages,
The shrewd of heart, assembled—all the rulers.
They had the land partitioned and surveyed,
And laid thereon a land-tax of one drachm
So that the owners might not be distressed.
All that lacked seed or beast, when they should be
Preparing for the crops, were subsidised
Out of the treasure of the king of kings
So that they might not let the ground lie fallow.
Land, if untilled, was left out of account ;
The previous usages were done away.
On each six fruiting vines a drachm was levied,
Date-palm plantations paid an equal tax,
While each ten stems of olives and of walnuts,
And other trees that bear their fruit in autumn,
Brought one drachm to the treasury, and this
Was made the only burden of the year.
To fruits that ripened in the month Khúrdád
No heed was paid in taxing. From the men
Of means who neither owned nor tilled the soil
The tax-collector every year received
A payment varying from ten drachms to four ;
But no one was oppressed because the money
Was paid in three instalments annually,
And thus a third part of the tax was paid
Each four months to the exchequer of the Sháh.
The royal scribes and officers employed
Within the taxing-office passed all count.

[1] *Cf.* p. 183, *note.*

The Sháh had these above-named tolls and imposts
Recorded by the archmages in three ledgers,
Whereof he gave one to the treasurer,
And made that minister account for it ;
The second was for sending through the realm
To all officials and the men in power ;
C. 1622 The third was handed to the archimages
To keep account of all the revenue.
All that concerned tax, toll, and husbandry
Was done by order of the Sháh himself,
And he had agents scattered everywhere
To keep him cognisant of good and ill.
He filled with justice all the face of earth,
And cultivated all the barren lands ;
Both great and small slept safely on the waste,
And sheep and wolf came to one trough. He bade
To draw up in the olden tongue a letter—
One that will pleasure thee to hear from me.
It thus began : " From Núshírwán, the chief—
The king of kings, the worshipper of God,
A Bough fruit-bearing from the Tree Kubád—
Who hath assumed the crown of majesty,
And in especial prospered all the land,
For God, the just Judge, gave him Grace divine,
To all the officers of revenue—
Thralls of the shadow of our Grace and throne—
Our well weighed greetings unto you whose birth
Hath been exceeded by your own deserts.
Here at the outset of our task we first
Give praises to the Maker of the world.
Know that the man is wise and shrewd of heart,
Whose praise is of the righteous Judge of earth,
Well knowing that He hath no need of us,
And that all secrets are revealed to Him,
Who when He willeth to exalt a man
First maketh him superior to all want.

He bade me judge, but He is Judge Himself,
And higher than all height eternally.
In God's sight king and subject are as one,
And saving service none hath aught to do ;
From the abyss of earth to heaven above,
And from the sun to dark and sorry dust,
The ant's foot beareth witness that He is,
That we are bondslaves and that He is king.
All His commands to us are righteousness ;
It is the Dív that causeth lies and loss.
Now if my portion of the spacious world
Had been a garden only, park, and palace,
My heart had chosen naught but love and justice,
And kept a smiling face for everything ;
But now the expanse of all the world throughout
From east to west hath God, the Holy One,
Bestowed upon me as my sovereignty—
All from the bright sun to the darksome dust—
And I must practise naught save love and justice
Although I furrow mine own face thereby.
If careless be the shepherd and the waste
Thus vast the sheep will 'scape not from the wolf.
As for my subjects, whether country-folk
Or those devoted to the Cult of Fire,
Be they in drouthy dust or ship at sea
By day or night alike, or be they merchants,
Engaged in voyaging over wet and dry C. 1623
With monies and with lustrous pearls and musk,
The sun must shine not from the arch of heaven
Upon them save in justice and in love.
Now this hath been the custom of our race
That son should have his father's crown and this
The world hath recognised as just and right
With one consent in public and in private.
We have imposed a land-tax and a tree-tax
For sustentation of the throne and crown.

Now when they bring this letter to you may
Urmuzd prove fortunate to you. Whoever
Herein transgresseth by a single drachm,
Or doth injustice for a single breath,
I swear by God, who hath bestowed upon me
The diadem of Grace, that I will saw
That man in twain ; such is God's chastisement
On those whose evil seed hath come to fruit.
Observe this letter and this ordinance,
And turn not from the glorious Way and Faith.
Demand with justice and with courtesy
The instalment of the tax due each four months ;
But where the locusts have been ravaging,
Or sunbeams beaten on the parched-up earth,
Or where the blast or lightning of high heaven
Hath brought disaster on the cultured fields,
Or if rain falleth not at the New Year,
So that the jocund crops are vexed with drought,
Demand no tax upon those fields and crops,
Because the spring-clouds have not watered them,
And pay the seed sown and the labourers' hire
Back to the farmers from the treasury.
The lands whose owner is deceased and hath
No kith and kin must lie not waste, for they
Are underneath the shadow of the Sháh ;
Else will the foe make scorn of my resources
With such a pretext ready to his hand.
Give what is needed from the treasury,
For God hath set me out of reach of need.
If lands within my power lie desolate,
Unsheltered by the shadow of my wing,
Whoe'er he be that is responsible,
And doth neglect the task, hard though it be,
Him, whether lord or underling, will I
Hang from the gibbet on the spot. The great—
The Sháhs of yore—had other usages,

With their officials rested right and wrong,
The world lay open to the cavaliers,
Who wantonly mocked wisdom and ne'er rested
From adding to their wealth. My wealth is justice ;
The people of the land compose my host ;
I will not cast a glance upon dínárs.
To win by equity the world's regard,
And to respect the worth of men of birth,
Are dearer to me than the wealth of foes C. 1624
That seek to win my kingdom and my throne.
The general that selleth men for gold
Shall get no entry to my court whereat
They are esteemed that follow justice, love,
Law and the Way. When my shrewd officers
Assemble at the office of the archmage,
And falsehood showeth in the words of any,
He shall receive no grace from us henceforth.
I do not love the man that is unjust ;
The leopard and the oppressor are as one.
All they that have ensued the way of God,
And bathed their dark souls in the stream of wisdom,
Shall have a lofty station at our court,
High estimation with the archimages,
And from their God for that which they have sown
The recompense of jocund Paradise.
We are ourselves exempt from need of wealth
Whereby the soul is minished and accursed.
He that doth eat the flesh of mendicants
Will find, no doubt, some nurture in their skins.
A pard is better than a king like that,
Who hath no modesty, no rule, no Faith.
The way of right is open to us. Why
Knock we in folly on the door of loss ?
To do ill closely, justice openly,
So that the fame thereof may come to us,
Will have not God's approval, or be held

In high consideration at our court ;
But he hath God's approval and our own
Whose love and justice are as warp and woof."
If thou art just, O monarch ! thou wilt give
The world a record of thee that will live,
For every one will praise eternally
The Sháh that brought the world prosperity.

§ 4

How Núshírwán required Bábak to muster the Host

Of all the Sháhs that erst had throne and crown,
And had been great in treasure and in troops,
There was not one more just than Núshírwán,
And may his soul be young for evermore.
None was more worshipful for manhood, throne,
For diadem and knowledge. He possessed
An archimage, Bábak by name, a man
Of wisdom, shrewd of heart, and fortunate,
Made him the muster-master of the host,
And bade him to prepare himself an office
Of ample size before the palace-gate,
And higher than its top, and furnish it
C. 1625 With carpets that were worthy of a king
To seat the clerks engaged upon the work.
A proclamation issued from his office,
And all the folk gave ear : " Famed warriors !
Mount and attend the portal of the Sháh,
All ye that would have guerdon at his hands !
With iron helmets set upon your heads,
Arrayed in mail and bearing ox-head maces."
The troops came to the office of Bábak,
The air was darkened by the horsemen's dust.
Now when Bábak reviewed the host he missed [1]

[1] Reading with P.

The standard and the chief of all the noble.
He left the office, mounted on his steed,
And bade the soldiers go back to their quarters.
The turning sky continued on its course,
And when the radiant sun displayed its face
It was proclaimed before the palace-gate :—
" Ye mace-men of the army of Írán !
Go all in full array with arms and bows
And lassos to the office of Bábak."

They went with lances, helms, and coats of mail ;
The army's dust ascended to the clouds.
Bábak looked round upon the host but, since
The Sháh appeared not in his Grace and state,
Thus spake : " Return glad and victorious
In love and duty, each man to his quarters."

Again the third day rose the proclamation :—
" Ye men of name, of Grace divine and wisdom !
Let there not be one horseman of this host
Without his helmet and cuirass of war,
And let him come and pass before this gate,
And see his name upon the muster-roll.
Let those that are distinguished by a crown,
By Grace, by majesty, and lofty fortunes,
Know that this muster is without respect
Of persons, reticence, and modesty."

The king of kings gave ear thereto and heeded
The proclamation from Bábak's díván,
Then smiling called for coat of mail and helm,
And held erect the flag of majesty.
The Sháh, with iron helmet on his head,
Proceeded to the office of Bábak.
The chain-mail hung down from his Rúman helm,
And was secured by many a fastening.
Within his hand he had an ox-head mace,
Within his belt four shafts of poplar-wood,
A bow on arm and lasso on the saddle.

While round his loins he had a golden girdle.
He urged his charger, gripping with his thighs,
And laid the massive mace upon his shoulder ;
Then, lightly wheeling both to left and right,
Displayed both steed and rider to Bábak,
Who when he had inspected them approved,
And, having come up to the king of kings,
C. 1626 Said thus to him : " O Sháh ! mayst thou be blessed !
May wisdom be the provand of thy soul !
Thou hast adorned the kingdom's face with justice,
Such that with us 'tis thy memorial.
What I have said was boldness from a slave,
But never must thou turn from what is just ;
So now, I prithee, wheel thee to the right
With all the skill whereof thou art the master."
Then Núshírwán again urged on his steed
To right and left as 'twere Ázargashasp.
Bábak looked on amazed and oft invoked
The Maker of the world. A horseman's pay
Ran from a thousand to two thousand drachms ;
Four thousand were the most that any had.
Bábak paid to the Sháh just one drachm more.
Then from the office-door 'twas cried : " Exhibit
The charger of the first of warriors—
The horseman of the world, the famous Sháh,"
While Núshírwán laughed heartily, for fortune
Was young with him and he a youthful king.
Now when Bábak had left the royal office
He came before the noble Sháh and said :—
" Great Sháh ! if I, thy slave, made bold to-day
The purpose of my heart was right and just :
Let not the Sháh take notice of my harshness ;
It is not harshness to discharge one's duty,
And blest is he who meant not to be harsh."
" O man of wisdom ! " said the Sháh to him,
" Keep thyself ever in the path of right,

Whereof thou break'st the heart by self-regard.
Know that thou art the dearer in mine eyes ;
But mine anxiety is for myself—
How, when the army is engaged in fight,
I shall comport myself upon the field."

Bábak made answer to the noble Sháh :—
" No crown and signet will behold thy like,
While painter hath observed not limned in hall
A hand and rein like thine, O king ! Oh ! may
High heaven accord to thee thy full desire,
Oh ! may thy heart be glad, thyself unscathed ! "

Thus to the archimage said Núshírwán :—
" Our justice shall make old folk young again.
The king must leave as his memorial
Within the world but righteousness alone.
What need have we for such a treasury,
Such toil and greed, and to confine our soul
Within this Wayside Inn ? The need, since here
Is no abiding, is to eat and drink.
I have been troubled with the world's affairs,
Although I kept these matters to myself,
Because my royal crown hath enemies,
And Áhriman doth compass me about.
Methought : ' I will bring troops from every side,
And summon warriors from every province,
But for the levy I have need of treasure, C. 1627
Which I have but to labour to amass ;
Still if this bringeth evil on the poor
I must refrain my heart from this desire.'
So I revolved this matter in my heart,
And, having come upon a wise resolve,
I wrote a letter to the paladins,
The mighty men, and prudent archimages,
To all the nobles and the potentates
In all the provinces, and thus it ran :—
' All ye possessed of wisdom and of sense !

Bring up your sons for military service,
Dispatch them to the field equipped for war,
And look to me for honour and reward.
They must be able to distinguish hand
And rein from stirrup on the hills and dales,
And learn to battle with the enemy
With mace and scimitar, with bow and arrow,
Because a youth unskilled availeth naught
Although he be descended from Árish.' [1]
The muster-master went forth from the court,
With money for the chiefs, to every province,
And now in sooth I have adorned the face
Of earth with men prepared to take the field.
I have more knowledge, policy, and method
Than former Sháhs, and greater armaments."

The archmage, when he heard the Sháh speak thus,
Called praises down upon the crown and throne.

The payment was delayed for forty days,
And then the athelings, equipped for war,
Went to the office and received their pay
While joyance was the order of the day.

§ 5

How Núshírwán harangued the Íránians, and how the Kings acknowledged his Supremacy

Now when the sun displayed its shining face,
When circling heaven unlocked the garden-gate,
And when the Mound of Fenugreek appeared
While dark night's tresses vanished, Núshírwán,
All smiles, glad-hearted, and of youthful fortune,
Sat on his throne, while all that sought redress
Flocked to his court. The king harangued them thus :—

[1] For whom see Vol. v. p. 12.

"Acknowledge that ye have not any helper
Save holy God, the Lord of all, our Guide,
Who leadeth us in both worlds by the hand.
Fear not the throne and crown, the court is open
To all, and ye soe'er that come thereto
By day and night keep not your lips from speech.
If we are quaffing wine in company,
Or busied with advisers, or at polo,
Or on the hunting-field, the way is open C. 1628
For you to us. Let access be withheld
From none because I am asleep, awake,
At work or play. Let none of you withdraw
From us to sleep with wants unsatisfied.
My heart will be rejoiced and bright whenever
I break the travail of the oppressed. Please God,
No officer of mine, no man at arms,
No servitor, shall sleep with heart aggrieved,
For from his grievance harm will come on me.
However trifling or obscure the matter
The Maker will require it at my hands.
For tolls and imposts, other than the archmages
Are now concerned with in mine offices,
No gold or silver shall be asked of you,
So sleep all unafraid of me henceforth."

Then sunward from the face of earth applause
Rose from the hall: "May Núshírwán have Grace,
And all his years the crown of king of kings!
Ne'er may the throne, the state, and famous crown
Of sovereignty be void of him!"

They went
Their ways, glad and rejoicing, and earth's face
Grew like the garden of Iram.[1] Thou hadst not
Seen any one despondent in the world,
While from the clouds came seasonable rain,
The world resembled jocund Paradise,

[1] See Vol. i. p. 100.

The clouds sowed tulips in the pleasances,
The dales, the plains, and orchards shone like lamps,
The uplands were like garths, garths like the sun.
Thereafter tidings came to Rúm and Hind :—
" Írán is like fine painted silk of Rúm ;
The Sháh hath decked with armaments and justice
The earth till it is like the shining moon.
No one in all the world doth know the sum
Of all his forces save the Sháh himself.
They all are blithe of heart and dight for war,
Have fame and glory and illume the world."
The kings of all the realms were sore amazed
At heart ; their souls were dark through Núshírwán.
Ambassadors arrived from Hind and Chín,
And all kings called down praises on the Sháh ;
They saw that they could counter not his might,
And hasted to pay tribute with good will,
Bare them as underlords to Núshírwán,
And gathered slaves and purses for his service.
With golden maces and with golden crowns
The envoys went upon their way. They reached
The court-gate of the monarch of the world,
And brought the toll and tribute of their lords.
The court appeared adorned like Paradise
Through all those purses, slaves, and audience-seekers.
Thus for a while the heavens turned above,
Consorting with the Íránian king in love.

§ 6

How Núshírwán went round his Empire and built a Wall in the Pass between Irán and Túrán

C. 1629 Then Núshírwán, the wise, made this resolve—
That he would sojourn for a while abroad

To make the circuit of the jocund world,
And bring whate'er was hidden to the light.
He beat the kettledrums, marched forth the host,
And sun and moon were both astound at him.
What with the troops and jewels, gold and silver,
The golden girdles and the golden shields,
Thou wouldst have said : " No gold is left within
The mines, no gems or lustrous pearls remain ! "
He led his host toward Khurásán at leisure,
All heedful of Sásánian precedent.
Whenever he passed settlements he pitched
His camp and camp-enclosure on the waste,
And when the blare of clarions rose there went
A herald first afoot who thus proclaimed :—
" Ye subjects of the monarch of the world !
Is any privily aggrieved at us ?
Sleep not despairing of the Sháh, allow not
Your souls to fail with care."
He led the host
Thus to Gurgán and bare with him the crown
And throne of chiefs. Know, justice is no loss :
Sháhs should have prowess, rede, and noble birth.
Now when the nightingales were full of song
They went thence toward Sarí and toward Ámul,
Where hill and plain were clothed with forest-trees,
Which filled the Íránian monarch's heart with thought.
He left the plain and mounting to the heights,
Still seated on his Arab bay looked out
O'er mountain and o'er forest, and observed
Rose, hyacinth and game, and water there,
And thus he said : " O Thou almighty Judge,
The World-lord, Conqueror, and Fosterer !
Thou art the Maker of the sun and moon,
The Guide and the Revealer of the way.
Thou mad'st the world of such delightsomeness
That we distinguish not 'twixt earth and Heaven.

Whoe'er shall worship any save Thyself
Will send his soul to Hell. It was for this
That pious Farídún forwent Írán,
And made his dwelling here, so passing fair
Is this place and delightsome to the heart,
Where water is rose-water and the soil
Is spicery."
One said: "O righteous judge!
If this were not a highway for the Turkmans
Our hearts would be not empty of delight,
Such are the wealth and glory of this place;
But as it is we cannot raise our necks
For constant murders, sack, and harryings.
C. 1630 There are not many left or even few
Of fowl or men or cattle on this spot.
This is the only route between the realms,
And causeth loss to the Iránian folk.
There came much toil and strife in former times,
But then the Turkmans' route was through Kházm.
Now for the merchant or the thane to raise
His head would be in vain. However, now
That thou hast led an army to these parts,
Avert this ill from us and bar the way.
Thy treasures will be more, not less, thereby:
Now is the time to render us a service."
The Sháh, whenas he heard the suppliant,
Showered tear-drops from his eyes and thereupon
Addressed his minister and said to him:—
"A very grievous toil confronteth us.
Henceforth 'tis not for us to fare and feast,
Or even tender our own crown, for God
Will sanction not the wrong in us that we
Shall be in happiness while thanes are grieving.
Such mountains as these are, such spacious plains,
All fit for gardens, grounds, and palaces,
And filled with cattle, game, and running water,

So that the soul is freshened by the sight—
We must not let the Turkmans lay them waste,
And desolate the country of Írán.
My kingly office, prudence, policy,
Humanity itself, will brook it not.
Men will invoke not blessings on our heads
What time Írán is lying desolate."

He bade his minister: "From Hind and Rúm
Select men famous in those cultured lands
From all the provinces, foreseeing men,
Such masters in their craft as thou canst find,
And build me from the sea a lofty wall,
On broad foundations and ten lassos high,
Of stone and mortar, starting from the deep,
And rising to the fountain of the sun.
In this way surely we shall form a bar,
And loss from foes will come not on Írán.
Use no forced labour, ope our treasury,
And pay to every one what he demandeth.
The labourer, the thane, and man of birth
Must not be incommoded by the blast."

He made an old archmage the overseer,
And shut out all the desert by the wall,
Wherein they set a mighty iron door,
And all the flock grew fearless of the wolf.
Of frontier-guards he stationed many a post,
And, having made all safe, led on the host.

§ 7

How Núshírwán chastised[1] *the Aláns and the Men of Balúch and Gílán*

Thence from the sea he went toward the Aláns, C. 1631
And finding there a ravaged, barren march

[1] Literally, "rubbed the ears of."

He thus addressed his chiefs : " It is a shame
For regions in Írán to lie thus waste,
And we must suffer not our foes to say so."
He chose an envoy from among the troops,
One, as was fitting, wise and eloquent,
To whom he said : " Depart hence with the dawn,
And say thus to the marchlords of yon folk :—
' From mine intelligencers have I heard
All that hath passed in public and in private,
And that ye say : " Why fear we Núshírwán ?
As for Írán it is a pinch of dust."
Now have we come anigh you and set up
Our camp, our camp-enclosures, and our court.
Your wastes are spacious and your mountains high,
Your troops are armed with arrow, mace, and lasso.
Your gorges are the place for ambuscades,
Land, mountain, field and fell, are all your own.
We—general and soldiers—challenge you,
We who are strangers in a foreign land.' "
The envoy went his way and spake the words
Dictated by the monarch of Írán.
The host of the Aláns assembled—all
The great, the sages, and the counsellors—
A host that found employ in pillaging,
And recked but little for the Íránians.
Írán was wont to stand in awe of them ;
Folk had no raiment, gold, or silver left,
And men and women with their babes and beasts
Were wont to quit their homes and seek the plains.
The envoy told the Aláns, withholding naught,
The message of the monarch of the world,
Whereat the faces of the chiefs grew black ;
The words of Núshírwán amazed their hearts.
The great men and the chieftains of that march
Went forth with contributions and much tribute,
With slaves and raiment, and with gold and silver,

And many a noble steed, while of the folk
All that were men of years and eloquence,
And wisdom-seekers, came to Núshírwán,
Bewailing their past doings. When they reached
The tent-enclosure of the Sháh with presents,
And gifts, they cried and wallowed in the dust,
Their eyes fulfilled with tears, their hearts with blood.
For shame and self-excusing is no need C. 1632
When wisdom and the valiant are agreed.
The prudent Sháh was gracious unto them,
And pardoned all that they had done amiss ;
Then ordered that upon the wasted lands—
The lurking-place of lion and of leopard—
They should erect a city with all speed,
With room for sowing and for harvesting,
The whole surrounded by a lofty wall
That ill might not befall from enemies.
The Aláns made answer to the noble king,
And said : "With earrings on as slaves of thine,
And, as the Sháh hath bidden, we will raise
The ramparts of a noble seat."

The Sháh
Marched thence to Hindústán and sojourned there.
At his commandment all folk came to him,
Came seeking to ingratiate themselves,
And for two miles beside the Indus-bank
Were horses, elephants, brocade, and coin.
The great men all with honesty of heart
And loyalty appeared before the Sháh,
Who questioned them and well entreated them,
And placed them in accordance to their rank.
With jocund heart the Sháh departed thence :
Troops, steeds, and elephants fulfilled the world.
He went his way, and tidings came to him :—
"The world is wasted by the Balúchís,
Till from exceeding slaughter, pillaging,

And harrying, the earth is overwhelmed,
But greater ruin cometh from Gílán,
And curses banish blessings."
Then the heart
Of Núshírwán, the Sháh, was sorrowful,
And grief commingled with his joy. He said
To the Íránians: "The Aláns and Hind
Were, in their terror of our scimitars,
Like silk. Now our own realm is turned against us:
Shall we hunt lions and forgo the sheep?"
One said to him: "The garden hath no rose
Without a thorn, O king! So too these marches
Are ever troublesome and treasure-wasting.
As for Balúch the glorious Ardshír
Tried it with all his veteran officers,
But all his stratagems and artifices,
His feints, his labours, arms, and fighting failed,
And though the enterprise succeeded ill
He cloaked the failure even to himself."
This story of the thane enraged the Sháh,
Who went upon his way toward Balúch.
Now when he drew anear those lofty mountains
He went around them with his retinue,
And all his host encircled them about,
And barred the passage e'en to wind and ant.
The troops, like ants and locusts, occupied
The mountain-outskirts to the sandy desert.
C. 1633 A herald went his rounds about the host,
Proclaiming from the mountains, caves, and plains:—
"Whene'er the Balúchís are seeking food,
If they be warriors and carry arms,
However many or however few,
Let not a single one of them escape."
The troops, ware of the anger of the Sháh,
Stopped every outlet with their horse and foot;
Few of the Balúchís or none survived,

No women, children, warriors, were left.
All of them perished by the scimitar,
And all their evil doings had an end,
The world had quiet from their ravaging :
No Balúchí, seen or unseen, remained,
While on their mountains, so it came to pass,
The herds thenceforward strayed without a guard ;
Alike on waste and lofty mountain-top
The sheep required no shepherd. All the folk
Around thought nothing of past sufferings,
And looked on vale and mountain as their home.
Thence toward Gílán marched Núshírwán, for there,
And in Dílam, was trouble manifest.
The army stretched from sea to mountain-top,
The air was full of flags, the earth of troops.
The army was extended round Gílán,
And light departed from the sun and moon.
Thus spake the Sháh : " Among the small and great
No trace of Wolf and Lion must be left."
So mighty was the slaughter in the land
That all the region's face was bathed in blood.
At all the slaying, pillaging, and burning
The men and women sent up wails of woe.
On every side the slain were piled in heaps,
The grasses smirched with brains. The warriors—
The just, the prudent and the men of weight—
Remaining in Gílán bound their own hands,
And with their women-folk behind, their children
Before them, came lamenting to the king
With bosoms rent and dust upon their heads.
They all assembled at the monarch's court
With bounden hands and wounded bodies, saying :—
" We have turned back upon our evil courses ;
Oh ! that the Sháh would cease from his displeasure !
If he is vexed at heart against Gílán
We will behead ourselves with our own hands.

It may be that the Sháh then will relent
When he shall see the heaps of severed heads."
When such a cry rose from the court, and when
The Sháh had listened to their supplication,
He pardoned them; the past was blotted out,
But he required two hundred hostages
Both from Gílán and from Dílam that none
Thereafter might pursue the path of ill.
He left a paladin with them to stay,
And, having ordered all things, marched away.

§ 8

How Munzir, the Arab, came to Núshírwán for Succour against the Injustice of Cæsar

C. 1634 Next from Gílán he marched toward Madá'in,
Not knowing his troops' number or extent.[1]
Now as he journeyed on appeared afar
A boundless host of wielders of the spear.
A cavalier—one of that great array—
Approached as quick as dust on their behalf,
And, having lighted from his charger, said :—
" Behold Munzir the Arab."
When Munzir
Drew near the Sháh all chiefs made way for him.
The Sháh saluted him with signs of joy,
And brightened at his looks. That veteran
Set loose his tongue, discoursed of Rúm and Cæsar,
And said : " If thou art monarch of Írán,
The guardian and the backbone of the brave,
Why do the Rúmans lord it so and prance
Upon the desert of the cavaliers ?
While if the Sháh be Cæsar's overlord

[1] They were so many.

That haughty potentate should lose his head.
Now if the noble Sháh will give permission
No more will he behold us asking aid,
And in the fight the horsemen of the desert
Shall triumph o'er the cavaliers of Rúm."

The Sháh was wroth that Cæsar should exalt
His crown, as said Munzir, and, having chosen
Among the troops a man of eloquence,
And learned in Cæsar's tongue, said thus: "Go thou
To Rúm, take not thine ease in peopled parts,
And say to Cæsar: 'If thou lackest wisdom
Thy brains will sorrow for thy policy.
The warrior-lion chasing onager
Will batten on them even in a salt-marsh.
For thee to have thy just dues from Munzir
Sufficeth seeing that Vega is his throne.
Discern then 'twixt thy left hand and thy right,
And, when thou knowest, claim what march is thine.
Since I am the distributor of lands
And realms, am highest in the world and chief,
My conduct shall be worthy of myself:
I will let not the wind blow on Munzir.
Since thou hast stretched thy hand upon the Arabs
In fight take privy heed for thine own self.
Moreover all that sovereignty is mine,
And mine is all between the Bull[1] and Pisces.
If I shall send an army into Rúm
Thy sword of steel will prove a sword of wax.'"[2]

The ambassador came forth from Núshírwán
As 'twere a torrent, came and gave the message C. 1635
To Cæsar, but that worthless one recoiled
From what was just, replied evasively,
Imagining a fall from power remote,
And answered thus: "As for that fool Munzir,
Take what he stateth at its proper worth.

[1] See Vol. i. p. 71. [2] Because "múm," wax, rhymes with "Rúm."

If he complaineth out of wantonness,
Exaggerating thus the evil done,
Or if a single man complain within
The desert of the wielders of the spear,
I will convert the heights of earth to breadths,
And that unwatered desert to a sea."

The envoy heard, came swift as dust, and told
The words of Cæsar. Núshírwán enraged
Said to his minister: "The brains of Cæsar
Are wedded not to wisdom. I will show him
Who hath authority, the power to conquer
The world, to levy war, and make a pact.
His overweening and his haughtiness,
His labour, pillaging, and harrying,
He shall repent more dearly than the drunkard,[1]
That thrusteth both hands in the fire at night."

He then bade blow the trumpets, and a host
Was gathered unto him from every side;
The din of tymbals went up from the court-gate,
Earth was pitch-hued and air was ebony.
He chose of cavaliers from that famed host
A hundred thousand armed with scimitars,
Entrusted that great army to Munzir,
And bade him: "From the desert of the spearmen
Lead unto Rúm an army of the brave
To set the frontier and the land afire,
For youthful monarch though I be and though
I am but newly famouséd in fight,
Yet fear not Rúm or Rúman, thou! for I
Regard the Rúman as a pinch of dust.
Now will I send me an ambassador—
A man of eloquence—to him. Henceforth,
If thou experience naught calamitous,
That Cæsar should keep Rúm would pleasure us.[2]

[1] Reading with P.

[2] Ending section with P.

§ 9

The Letter of Sháh Núshírwán to Cæsar of Rúm

The Sháh then called a scribe that was at court,
And bade to write a letter unto Cæsar :—[1]
" From Núshírwán, the Sháh of glorious birth,
The world-lord and successor of Kubád,[2]
To Cæsar, the exalted lord of Rúm—
Guard of the marches of that prosperous land."
The letter opened with the praise of God
From whom alone all greatness must be sought—
" The Master of the circling sun and moon,
The Source of victory and mastery,
Who is above the will of turning heaven C. 1636
As touching justice, love, and strife. Though thou
Art Cæsar and the lord of Rúm dispute not
Aught with the Arabs, for if thou shalt take
The sheep out of the clutches of the wolf
Thou wilt, as thou art ware, have grievous toil ;
While if thou sendest troops against Munzir
I will not leave thee host or crown or throne.
If any underling grow masterful
He shall be punished by our scimitar.
Step not a single cubit past thy bounds
If thou desirest that our pact shall stand.
If thou shalt pass thy bounds we will pass ours,
And trample under foot thy head and throne.
The greeting of the lord of diadem
And might to those that seek not to cause trouble
By their injustice."
Unto this they set
The Sháh's seal and then chose a cavalier,
Such as was needful, from the court, a man
Persuasive, valiant, shrewd, and veteran.

[1] In C. the previous section ends here.

[2] *Cf.* p. 179, *note*.

§ 10

How the Letter of Núshírwán reached Cæsar and how he replied

The envoy with the letter of the king
Came to famed Cæsar, gave it, greeted him,
And told him all the mind of Núshírwán.
When Cæsar heard and had perused the letter
He writhed and was astound. His brow grew wrinkled,
His visage wan at what the exalted Sháh
Had said. He called a scribe, wrote his reply,
And made his meaning clear for good and ill.
The letter first grew musky with the ink
What time he offered praise to God almighty—
"The Artist of the heavens over us,
The Source of warfare, peace, and amity.
He giveth in the world one man a crown
With slaves before him better than himself.
Though turning heaven itself be under thee,
And Jupiter beneath thy scimitar,
Search out thy records, for no son of Rúm
E'er hath paid tribute to thy royal race.
King as thou art I am no less than thou;
I too possess a head, a crown, and realm.
Why must I take so much abuse in fear
Of foot of elephant or din of drum?
I now ask you for tribute and for toll,
And who is there with power to fight with Rúm?
The doings of Sikandar in Írán
Thou knowest, and we claim that noble Sháh.
C. 1637 Sikandar's sword is still in evidence,
Why pickest thou a quarrel with us thus?
The javelin-wielding horsemen of the waste
Have pillaged our possessions in their raids:
No longer will we bear their wrongs but raise

The dust in all their borders. Núshírwán
Was neither Maker of the sun, nor hath
He seized the key of the revolving sky,
That there must be no other king of kings,
And his will only current in the world."
He gave the envoy no reply in speech,
Not recking of the wrath of Núshírwán,
But, when he set the seal upon the letter,
He spake these words: "Christ and the Cross are with me."
The envoy spent no breath on him, perceiving
With grief the answer, and with grief departed;
Swift as a dust-cloud to the Sháh he sped,
And told him all that Cæsar purposéd.

§ 11

How Núshírwán went to war with Cæsar

The king, when he had read the letter, raged
Against the turn of fortune. Then he called
The archmages and the chieftains, one and all,
And spake to them at large about that letter.
He sat for three days with his counsellors
And paladins—the shatterers of hosts—
And on the fourth day was resolved to lead
His troops to fight with Cæsar. At the gate
Arose the blare of trumpets with the din
Of brazen cymbals and of drums. He paused not,
But went to battle in a righteous cause,
Assembled troops, made up the baggage-train,
And called on God, the Giver of all good.
A dust rose such that thou hadst said: "The sky
Hath smirched its visage in a sea of pitch!"
He clad the surface of the earth with horse-shoes,

While silken flags incarnadined the air.
There was no room on earth e'en for a gnat,
No room for wind left in the firmament.
The hubbub of the horsemen and the dust
Of elephants made earth seem like the Nile.
The world-lord marched with Káwa's flag, with crown,
And golden boots. The army's din was heard
Two miles away. Before the host were drums
And elephants, and on this wise the Sháh,
With chiefs behind him and with chiefs before him,
Sped onward to Ázar Ábádagán.
Now when his eyes beheld Ázargashasp
Afar he lighted down and went afoot,
Requested of his pious minister
The sacred twigs and bathed his cheeks with tears.
C. 1638 He made his entry of the Fane of Fire
With wailing. They set up a throne inlaid
With gold, and spread thereon the Zandavasta,
Wherefrom an archimagus read aloud,
According to the ritual, while priests
And chieftains wallowed in the dust before it,
And rent their skirts. The great men showered jewels
Upon the book and muttered laud thereon.
The Sháh approaching offered praise and prayer
Before the Maker of the world, and asked
For victory, for mastery, and guidance
Upon the path of justice. He bestowed
Gifts on the attendants and on mendicants
Wherever seen. He pitched his tent before
The Fire-fane, and his troops arrayed their ranks
Upon each side. He called a prudent scribe,
Discoursed at large, dictating fitting words,
Bade him address by letter graciously
The marchlords of the country of Írán,
And say: "Fear God, be vigilant, and guard
The world against the enemy. Ye lords

And paladins ! be just to those beneath you,
And keep such forces as will foil the foe.
None while my standard shall be out of sight
Must think to slumber in security."

As from the Fane of Fire he marched towards Rúm
The bruit of him was spread throughout the land,
And all the faithful lieges flocked to him
Until the warriors [1] hid the fields and fells,
And many an aspirant came with gifts
And offerings to the king. Where'er he lighted
There reached him salutations and addresses
From all sides, while where'er he led his host
He still had feast and chase before his eyes,
And 'twas the custom for a thousand chiefs
To come each night to banquet with the king.
When he was near the frontier he made ready
For war and in the first place paid his troops.
His general was Shírwí, son of Bahrám—
A man of rede and self-possessed in battle.
He gave the army's left wing to Farhád,
To whom he proffered many prudent counsels.
Ustád, son of Barzín, was on the right,
Garshasp, the atheling, was o'er the baggage.
Mihrán [2] was at the centre, for his heart
Was steadfast in the fray. The outpost duty
The Sháh gave to Hurmuzd, son of Kharrád,
Enjoining wisdom to his soul and heart,
While everywhere intelligencers went
That nothing might be hidden. Then the Sháh
Called and advised his veterans much and well.
He said to them : " Ye numbers numberless C. 1639
Of men of high estate and warriors !
If any one of you shall quit my way,
Or draw a breath without my privity,
Shall cause affliction to the mendicants,

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Cf.* p. 185.

Or to the mighty men possessed of treasure,
Shall injure any tree that beareth fruit,
Or do an act unseemly, trample down
The cornfields, or leave station to advance
Before the troops, I swear by God, the Lord
Of Mars, of Saturn, and of Sol, who gave me
The diadem and might, forthwith to cleave him
Asunder with my sword though like a star
He hide him in the clouds. I am the scout
Before the host, aspirant, central stay,
Guard of the elephants, of troops, and baggage,
Am now upon the left, now on the right.
I fare o'er land and sea, I seek no rest
And sleep in war."

A herald named Shírzád
Laid up at heart the words of Núshírwán,
And made in haste the circuit of the host,
Went round about tent and pavilion,
And cried : " Ye troops in numbers numberless !
The bidding of the watchful Sháh is this :
Whoever, save in justice, love, and wisdom,
Shall look upon this gloomy earth of ours,
Men shall pour out his blood thereon as one
That hath departed from the will of God."

A proclamation did not satisfy
The Sháh who night and day employed himself
In going on his rounds about the host,
Observing everything both good and bad,
Receiving tidings of the world's affairs,
And slighting nothing whether good or ill.
When any soldier died upon the march
The Sháh prepared a charnel at the place,
And all the man's belongings—silver, gold,
His bow, his helm, his lasso and his belt,
Or good or bad, were buried with the dead,
Who in the grave had still his goods with him.

The world was lost in wonder at the height
Of majesty attained by Núshírwán.
In every place where he engaged in battle
He showed his counsel, caution, and good sense,
And used to call a trusty messenger,
Who went to foes preparing for resistance,
And if they entered on the path of right
The wise Sháh treated them with clemency;
But, if they fought, that valiant Crocodile
Was very wroth, went forth to fight with them,
And gave their fields and crops to spoil. He wooed
The world with justice and the scimitar.
The conduct of the Sháh was like the sun's,
Which shineth in its course on wet and dry,
Denying unto none its radiance, C. 1640
When banishing the clouds from circling heaven,
But giving all its justice and its bounty,
Its hue and scent, its lustrous pearls and waters,
Obscuring unto none its light and height,
But joying hearts and simply shining on.
The king of kings by justice, policy,
And Grace took all the world beneath his wings;
Both war and bounty were mere play to him,
And thus it was that he attained his greatness.
Confronted by the elephant and lion
He ne'er deferred the combat for a day,
And when a foe was instant to appear
In helm and mail before the host for fight,
Him would they slaughter or in scorn would fling
Bound in the dungeons of the conquering king.

§ 12

How Núshírwán took divers Strongholds in his March to Rúm

He marched upon this wise until he reached
A busy city which was named Shúráb,
Wherein Gushtásp dwelt when he went to Rúm.[1]
The Sháh beheld it rising in the air,
Fulfilled with men and goods, with harp and song,
With stone-foundations springing from the deep,
And battlements up-builded to the clouds.
The troops beleaguered it but saw no means
Of access to the gate. The Sháh set up
The catapults on all four sides, and then
The ramparts of the Christian crumbled down.
From every quarter came the breath of doom;
Men saw no place of refuge or escape,
And when the shining sun set in the sky
The castle-walls were level with the plain.
The shouts of cavaliers, the dust of troops,
And fume of fire ascended to the moon.
The strong-hold was all trunkless heads and feet,
Elsewhere were headless trunks. The cries for quarter,
And women's shrieks, rose o'er the drummers' din.
The magnates eminent for wealth or valour
They bound and laid upon the elephants,
While wails of woe and cries for quarter rose.
The Sháh spared none in battle-tide, he spared not
His treasures and dínárs in banquet-time.
He marched thence till another hold appeared,
Wherein were Cæsar's treasures, and it had
A mighty man for castellan. 'Twas called
Áráyish-i-Rúm till that Núshírwán
C. 1641 Ill-ended it. The watchful Sháh surveyed

[1] See Vol. iv. p. 325.

That hold, unentered yet by hostile troops,
And bade shoot showers of arrows till the air
Was thick with them as 'tis with hail in spring.
The chieftains bravely stormed the walls and flung
Fire on the city and the citadel,
Wherein no living thing remained alive
Or, in the country round, a thorn or briar.
The Sháh gave Cæsar's treasures up to spoil,
And all the crowns and purses to his troops.
He brought the Day of Doom upon that city,
And all folk fled. Men, women, children, wailed
Till old and young assembling came before
The noble Sháh and cried aloud for succour :—
" The ministers, the treasurers, and treasure,
Are thine, and thine the gain and toil in Rúm ;
We only beg of thee to spare our lives,
We bondslaves of the Glory of thy crown."
The Sháh bade cease the slaughtering, and he
Provided for these people bounteously.

§ 13

The Battle of Núshírwán with Farfúriyús, the Leader of Cæsar's Host, the Victory of Núshírwán, and his Capture of Kálíniyús and Antákiya

Departing thence the Sháh led on his troops,
And left Áráyish-i-Rúm in his rear.
One came and told him : " Cæsar hath dispatched
A host and lo ! it draweth nigh."
On hearing
Of that great power's approach—all spears and mail—
The Sháh proclaimed the tidings to the troops
That all the host might be prepared. They marched
As 'twere an iron mountain ; battle-cries

Ascended and the blast of clarions.
A courier with tidings from the scouts
Appeared before the monarch of the world,
And told him : "Cæsar hath dispatched an army
Formed of his famous men and warriors.
Their leader is a mighty paladin,
Whose name in Rúman is Farfúriyús—
A haughty cavalier with trump and drum—
And all his troops long for the fight like wolves."
While thus he spake before the watchful Sháh
The dust-clouds of the advancing host appeared.
He smiled and answered thus the messenger :—
"The thing is not unknown to us, for we
Already have prepared the host for battle :
Such thoughts ne'er have been absent from our minds.'
Then with his lips afoam he gave command
That all the army should draw up in line.
C. 1642 So host with host confronted, and the air
Was hindered in its passage by the dust.
It was a glorious gathering of troops,
Proud chiefs and wielders of the scimitar,
All with loins tightly girded for the fray—
The great, the sages, and the seed of kings.
The swords of all were reeking with fresh blood,
And trenchant of the clouds. The enemy
Had no more respite than the quarry hath
From leopard springing. Rúman slain lay heaped
On all sides while the wounded turned from fight.
Farfúriyús himself thus stricken fled
The field with banner rent and drums o'erthrown.
The horsemen of Írán like pards, when they
Clutch on the waste the mountain-sheep, pursued
The Rúmans, sweeping them from dale and desert.
The Sháh marched on again equipped for war,
The soldiers all with mace and sword in hand.
He led his army on along a plain

Until another lofty hold appeared—
A citadel with soldiers, trump, and drum,
And hight Kálíniyús. The eagle saw not
Its battlements, a full moat girdled it,
And all around it stretched a fair domain
Of halls and gardens, grounds and palaces.
'Twas strongly garrisoned by Rúman troops—
All famous men and eager for the fight.
The Sháh encamped his powers two leagues away,
Earth blackened with the dust-clouds of the host,
And war-cries went up from Kálíniyús—
A clamour that bedwarfed the tymbals' din.
The Sháh marked well that city whereunto
His troops for ever thronged increasingly ;
They battled at the gates and showered down
Their shafts and hand-grenades, and when bright Sol
'Gan pale, and half revolving heaven was dark,
No portion of the castle-walls remained :
That city was all level with the ground.
Then from the Sháh's gate proclamation issued :—
" Ye famous men of the Íránian host !
Come from the city, every man, and pass
The night upon the plain. If any cry
Shall rise from women and from agéd folk,[1]
Or any sound of pillage, rioting,
And combating, shall reach mine ears at night,
So that but one complain of evil usage,
As soon as such appealeth ye shall see
The skin of the offender stuffed with hay." [2]
When Sol was stretching out its hand from Cancer,
Had put away fatigue and banished sleep,
The tymbals sounded at the monarch's gate,
Those that were highest in esteem set forth,
And from that hold and seat the men and women C. 1643
Assembled at the gate of Núshírwán :

[1] Reading with P.
[2] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 359.

"No cavalier of all our warriors
Is left," they said, "or magnate in this city;
They all, though guiltless, have been slain or wounded,
And it is time for pardon from the Sháh,
Because God's justice never will approve
That women, babes, and elders should be captive.
The citadel and city's walls are such
That henceforth thou wilt see but thorn-brakes here.
Since Cæsar was the offender how are we—
The people of Kálíniyús—to blame?"

The Sháh gave pardon to those Rúmans: both
The guilty and the innocent escaped.
He left with them an ample store of wealth,
And marched his army with all speed away;
But all the folk that he saw fit for arms
They bound on elephants and carried off.
Then news to Antákiya came: "The Sháh
Is on his way with elephants and troops."

Now at that city was a boundless host
Of Rúman warriors and mighty men.
The Sháh accorded to them three days' grace
That he might war not on them wrongfully,
But on the fourth his host came mountain-like—
The warriors of Írán in close array—
While for the sake of women, children, land,
And wealth the cavaliers of Rúm advanced.
They fought three mighty battles in three days,
But on the fourth day when the sun arose
The marches of that prosperous land lay open,
The Íránians saw no Rúman cavaliers,
The soldiers took possession of the place,
And filled it till there was no room to stand.
The great men that had thrones and coronets,
And those that were the treasurers of Cæsar,
Gave up the treasure to the Sháh—the world-lord—
The treasure unto him that bare the toil.

The Íránians set in bonds on elephants
All that were warriors among that folk.
The Sháh dispatched to Madá'in the captives,
And all the wealth of Cæsar, then went round
The city and beheld a country-side
More brilliant than the orbéd moon. The gardens,
The parks, and streams, restored old age to freshness
And youth. The king addressed his nobles thus :—
"Can this be Antákiya or young spring ?
Whoe'er hath seen not jocund Paradise
Whereof the soil is musk, the bricks are gold,
Whose waters are rose-water and trees jewels,
Whose country is the sky, whose heaven the sun,
Should look on this fresh land, and may it be—
This land of Rúm—in full prosperity."

§ 14

How Núshírwán built the City of Zíb-i-Khusrau in the Likeness of Antákiya and settled the Rúman Captives therein

Then Núshírwán gave orders to construct C. 1644
A city having palaces and streams,
Like Antákiya, radiant as a lamp—
All rosaries and mansions, parks and gardens.
The great men, bright of heart and happy, called it
Zíb-i-Khusrau.[1] 'Twas like the jocund spring—
A paradise all colour, scent, and beauty.
The captives taken in the towns of Rúm,
Whose hands and feet were galled with heavy bonds,
Were set at large by Núshírwán's command,
And sent to dwell in joy in that new city.
He said : "We have erected this new seat—
All gardens, rosaries, and palaces—

[1] The Ornament of Khusrau.

That each might have a dwelling to his mind
And worthy of his name."
He gave to each
Goods, and the earth was decked like Paradise.
At sight of all the mansions, streets, and marts
Thou wouldst have said : " Each space is occupied."
A clamorous cordwainer came and said :—
" O unjust Sháh ! there was a mulberry
Within my dwelling at Kálíniyús
Before my courtyard ; from Zíb-i-Khusrau
I have not any such advantages,
For there is no such tree before my door."
So Núshírwán bade men to plant green trees
Before the door of that misfortuned one.
The Sháh then chose a Christian unto whom
He gave authority, wealth, troops, and said :—
" Zíb-i-Khusrau is thine and thine the charge
Of all the stranger-folk and their new home.
Be like a tree that beareth fruit and be
The city's sire at whiles, at whiles its son.
Be bountiful and beautify the place,
Not covetous, and keep the mean in all."
The Sháh marched forth from Antákiya, leaving
A Christian and experienced man in charge.
Farfúriyús thereafter brought to Cæsar
Intelligence about Kálíniyús,
And said to him : " The experienced Núshírwán
Came in his state with troops and elephants.
So mighty is his host that seas and mountains
Are all confounded by the horses' dust."
Then Cæsar writhed for that which he had spoken,
And called to him his prudent chiefs. His heart
Was full of fear because of Núshírwán ;
All day and through three watches of the night
He canvassed what to do. Thus spake a priest :—
C. 1645 " Thou'rt ill-advised because thou hast not power

To fight with Núshírwán. The foe will raise
The dust from this fair realm and bring to naught
The achievements of the Cæsars. In debate
The feeble-tongued endangereth the state."

§ 15

How Cæsar wrote to Núshírwán and sent Tribute

Now Cæsar heard this and his heart was troubled,
His counsels were o'ercast by Núshírwán.
He chose of the philosophers of Rúm
From regions scathless of the enemy,
A man of eloquence and understanding,
While of the priests three score unsmirched in soul
And wisdom volunteered. He sent the Sháh
An embassage. Those magnates took their way.
Their leader was that man of wits, Mihrás—
A warrior old in wisdom, young in years.
There went before them treasures of all kinds
Past reckoning, while Cæsar, who repented
His language in the past, dispatched no stint
Of adulation, counsels, and fair words,
With heavy tribute and with hostages
Both of his own and of his nobles' kin.
Mihrás, when he had come to Núshírwán,
Pronounced his praises in the Rúman tongue,
And thou hadst said : " So shrewd and just is he,
He will produce stars from his sleeves ! " 'Twas thus
He spake to Núshírwán : " Set not, O king !
Such value on the world. Thou art in Rúm
Now and Írán is void ; it hath not worth
Or Glory. So, when Cæsar is away
From Rúm, this country valueth not one gnat.
The worth deriveth wholly from the man ;
When he is lost the value is lost too.

If this commotion be but for wealth's sake—
That ruiner of wisdom and contentment—
Lo ! I have brought thee all the wealth of Rúm,
For more than land and treasure is a soul
Serene."

The king's heart, when he heard this, grew
As jocund as a garden in the spring,
And he accepted what the envoy brought—
The purses of gold coin, and hostages—
Gave commendations to the ambassadors,
Enlarging on the value of the gifts,
And said : " O clear in wisdom ! any one
Whom wisdom feedeth is a mighty man.
If all the soil of Rúm were turned to gold
Thou wouldst outvalue still that noble land."
They set as tribute on those fields and fells
A hundred ox-hides brimming with dínárs
C. 1646 To be dispatched by Cæsar to the king
Each year with other gifts and offerings.
His troops were not to ocupy Yaman,
Or to require aught of the people there.
Therewith was heard the blare of trump and clash
Of brazen cymbals, and the prudent world-lord
Led back his host. He went his way to Shám,
And tarried there awhile. He brought with him
So many implements of war and troops,
So many captives, purses, crowns, and thrones,
That earth's back bent beneath the elephants,
And purses full of drachms. When he resolved
To quit that land he set in charge thereof
Shírwí, son of Bahrám, and said : " Demand
The tribute due from Cæsar and accord not
Remission for a month or day."

Shírwí,
Who kissed the ground, blessed and addressed the Shah :—

"Mayst thou be happy and victorious,
And may the royal Tree ne'er pale its leaves."
When at the monarch's portal had begun
The drum-roll flag and troops fared toward Arman.

§ 16

The Birth of Núshzád, the Son of Núshírwán, by a Woman who was a Christian

Like to the sun was Núshírwán, the king—
The world's hope and its fear. Just as above
Sol speedeth on its pathway carrying
A sword in this hand and in that hand love,
Is all relentless in its hour of rage,
But in its day of ruth all clemency,
So was this Sháh of royal lineage,
Who had adorned the world with equity.
Know this—in my regard the monarch's state
And subject's, if they holy be and pure,
Requireth of necessity a mate,
Dress, provand, and a privacy secure;
While if the wife be pious and discreet
A heaped-up treasure will she prove, and all
The more if locks musk-scented to her feet
Descend, and she be more than common tall,
Wise, learned, well counselled, chaste, and can express
Herself in fair discourse with gentleness.
The noble Sháh possessed a wife like this,
In height a cypress and in looks a moon,
This Moon-face was a Christian, and her beauty
Engrossed the tongues of all. She bare a babe
Sun-faced, out-shining Venus in the sky.
The noble mother called the child Núshzád,
And no fierce blast assailed that lovely boy.

C. 1647 He grew up as he were a straight-stemmed cypress—
A youth of parts, the glory of the realm.
He knew of Hell, the path to Paradise,
Of Christ, of Esdras, and Zarduhsht, but he,
Believing not the Zandavasta, bathed
His visage in the fount of Christ, preferring
His mother's to his father's Faith : the age
Was lost in wonderment at him. The king
Was grievously concerned about his son,
Because that Rose bare only fruit of thorns.
They shut the portal of Núshzád's fair palace,
And there imprisoned him. His prison-house
Was at Gund-i-Shápúr [1] far from his home
And father. Many criminals and captives
Were with him in that city and in ward.
Now when the Sháh was on his way from Rúm
The turmoil and the journey tried him sorely ;
So weak was he that he could hold no court.
One bare the tidings to Núshzád and told him :—
" The Glory of the empire is bedimmed ;
The watchful world-lord Núshírwán is dead,
Bequeathing to another earth and time."
His father's death rejoiced Núshzád. Oh ! may
No pleasure and enjoyment e'er be his !
He that doth joy when just kings pass away
Must have a gloomy temper. As to this
A famous ancient said : " If thou art glad
At my decease see that thou never die."
From death thou know'st no succour can be had,
The past is one here with futurity ;
But never death will wreck the soul of one
Whose toil hath favour in the sight of God.
Call we a reprobate and fool that son
Who in his father's footsteps hath not trod.
Wet be the seed of colocynth or dry

[1] Kand-i-Shápúr in the text. For this city see p. 219.

It will not savour musk, then where the need
That it should change from what should spring thereby
By nature if the gardener sow its seed ?
When any plant is predisposed to earth,
It parteth with the sunshine and pure air,
Therefrom no foliage or fruit hath birth,
It liveth for the earth and dieth there.

§ 17

The Sickness of Núshírwán and the Sedition of Núshzád

I have made mention of Núshzád. Take heed
That thou quit not the path of equity.
If heaven possessed a father then indeed
He would resemble Núshírwán, so why
Should his own son quit the paternal way,
And seek the royal dignity and throne ?
Accord thine ear to all that I shall say, C. 1648
And I will keep back nothing, O my son !
I have well ordered that I did receive
From rustic bard, and by that token too
Am fain some memory of myself to leave,
So be the honour unto whom 'tis due.
This is my wish that after I am dead
My fame as poet evermore shall last.
On this wise spake a Persian bard whose head
A hundred years and twenty had o'erpast :—
" He that is hostile to the world's great king
Not of man's stock but Áhriman's must be."
Now of Núshzád they tell that very thing
As handed down by ancient legendry.
Whenas the son of Núshírwán had heard :—
" The throne of that right royal Tree is void,"

He oped his palace-door, and from all quarters
Troops gathered unto him—all that had 'scaped
From wisdom's bonds and had been put in ward
By Núshírwán. Núshzád unchained the mad,
And all the city was in consternation ;
But he assembled of the citizens
All that were Christians, whether priests or prelates,
Assembled many haughty cavaliers
And swordsmen, while his mother gave him wealth—
The treasures lavished on her by the Sháh.
There gathered to him thirty thousand men,
All famous and prepared to fight. He took
The cities round ; his fame was noised abroad.
He wrote a letter to his kinsman [1] Cæsar,
Made known his dark designs, and said : " Arise
O king ! for thou art lord, friend, of one Faith
With me, and Cæsar. As 'twere Rúm, Írán,
Its worship and its settlements, are thine,
My father hath been sick and now is dead,
His wakeful fortune hath been overthrown."
The tidings reached the towns of Madá'in
Of what the son of Núshírwán had done,
Whereat the warden of that march dispatched
To Núshírwán a cavalier to whom
He told what he had heard and what was secret.
The messenger went like a rapid stream,
And came to Núshírwán to whom he gave
The letter, telling all that he had heard,
And of the overt actions of Núshzád.
The Sháh, when he had listened and had read
The letter, grieved thereat and was confounded,
Held session with the noble archimages,
Debating much with them in privacy,
And, when the consultation reached its end
In resolution, bade a scribe attend.

[1] In the Faith. *Cf.* p. 269.

§ 18

The Letter of Núshírwán to Rám Barzín, the Warden of the March of Madá'in, respecting the Taking of Núshzád

The Sháh, both seared and sore, with frowning face C. 1649
And sighing lips, then had this letter written
Wherein he first of all gave praise to Him,
Who fashionéd the heavens, time, and earth,
The Artificer of Sun and Moon and Saturn,
The Illuminer of Grace, of crown, and throne :—
" From worthless stubble up to elephant
And lion, from the dust on emmet's foot
Up to the Nile, though men shall roam from earth
To turning heaven they roam beneath God's sway.
No limit can be seen to His behest,
And none will rob Him of the sovereignty.
Of that unpleasing letter have I heard,
Sent by that most injurious son of mine,
And of the criminals who brake from ward,
And are assembled now about Núshzád.
'Twere better one should quit the world than see
A day like this, for all are born to die ;
First Núshírwán and then Núshzád must go.
From gnat and ant e'en to rhinoceros,
And elephant, none can escape the claws
And beak of death. If earth revealed its secrets,
Displaying everything from first to last,
Its bosom would be found fulfilled with kings,
Its breast with blood of cavaliers, its skirts
With men of lore, the creases of its robe
With fair-cheeked dames. Then wherefore set a crown
Or helmet on thy head when death's plumed shaft
Will pierce them both ? No one rejoiceth much
At death of son, albeit all must die ;
But as for those consorting with Núshzád,

Who reckon on the death of Núshírwán,
The death of them would be a cause for joy
If but Núshzád should 'scape the evil day.
Moreover none but misbegotten knaves
Would count upon the death of righteous Sháhs.
Now though Núshzád hath turned his head from us,
In that the Dív thus hath conspired with him,
His purpose is not firm in this regard ;
He was inflamed when he obtained his wish.
He could not have the post as well as we,
And thus was ruined by a false report,
For had the crown been void of Núshírwán
Núshzád had been the glory of the realm.
Still such an act is worthy of his Faith,
And suited to an evil soul like his.
C. 1650 I am not moved or fearful in this matter,
In that our son's religion is impure :
Moreover for the wealth that he hath wrecked,
That matter weigheth nothing on my heart ;
While as for all that have combined with him,
And banished from their hearts their awe of us—
The ill-doers, the malignant, and base-born,
Unworthy to be subjects to myself—
We look upon them also with contempt :
Let not their doings make thy heart afraid.
My fear is of the Master of the world,
Who is in wisdom wiser than the wise.
We must not grow unthankful in our souls
To God who is omniscient in good.
Me hath He given triumph and success,
Grace and the diadem of king of kings,
And had my praise been worthy of His gifts
It would have bettered my prosperity.
My son hath found a home and rest elsewhere ;
No single drop of him came from my loins.
With his awakening my foe arrived,

And, I do fear me, toil. Still if the World-lord
Hath no occasion to be wroth with me
I reck not of such things. In my regard
All they that are confederate with my son
Are vile and despicable. 'Tis his letter
That, if it bringeth Cæsar, will befoul
My stream. The twain must be akin, methinketh,
Since they are one in Faith and policy.
The man that quitteth his forefathers' Faith
Is one whose wits are much to seek. That son
Is best who is of one Faith, not at war,
With his own sire. Albeit though that insensate
Turn from the right no lip must ope to curse him.
To curse him is in essence to curse us,
Because he is of our own flesh and blood.
Array the host, take order for the war,
But act with moderation and hold back,
While if the matter cometh to a pass,
And if he offer battle, be not fierce.
To capture him is better than to slay :
Perchance he will turn back from evil doing,
And then the stream that reared that noble Cypress
Must come not on it in a bath of dust ;
But if he hold his honoured person cheaply,
If that tall Cypress shall demean itself,
And if he spurn the pillow of delight,
Withhold not thou the mace and scimitar.
A man of rank indulging base desires
Can not be freed from that propensity,
And such a high-born man is base indeed
When he doth fight the monarch of the world.
Fear not to slay him if he would pour out
His own head's blood upon the dust. He hasteth
To give his faith to Cæsar and put off C. 1651
Allegiance to our crown, whereby his greatness
Hath grown vile, wretched, and calamitous,

And he hath chosen ruin from high heaven.
In this regard said Mihr-i-Núsh—a sage
Who worshipped God and wore the woollen vest :—
'The man that joyeth in a father's death,
May his be neither happiness nor breath.'
Seek not for light from darkness, else wilt thou
But mingle fire and water in the stream.
Man's only rest is when his toil is done :
It is fate's law and we must acquiesce.
Be not in friendship with the turning sky,
For whiles thou art the kernel, whiles the shell.
Why seek from its pomegranate hue and scent,
For it will rob thee of them both at sight ?
Whene'er the turning sky exalteth thee,
Then is thy time for travail, fear, and loss.
As for the soldiers that are with Núshzád,
And err so greatly from the path of duty,
Know that they are but wind and sport to us,
The mockery of the wise, no mystery.
As for the Christians that are in his host,
And have revolted for religion's sake,
The regimen of Christ is such that they
Are frighted if one lifteth up one's voice,[1]
Desert his precepts and his path, and end
By turning into foemen of the Cross.
As for the other folk—the common herd,
Ill-taught, ill-minded, and adventurous—
They will not fright the heart of any man :
Their counsel and a breath of air are one.
Now if Núshzád be taken in the fight,
Discourse not with him touching these affairs ;
His person must not suffer injury,
His raiment must not show the rents of blows,
Because his women-folk will slay themselves.
His palace will afford the best of prisons

[1] The Persian word for a Christian also means a coward. *Cf.* p. 219.

Both for himself and those that follow him.
Bar not to him the portal of my treasures,
Albeit one so dear hath grown so vile,
And as for raiment, victuals, tapestries,
And carpets there must be no stint at all,
For he is fitted but for things like these.
As for those marchlords of the Íránians—
Those that have girded up their loins with him—
When thou hast conquered do not hesitate,
But cleave them through the middle with the sword,
For all that are the great king's enemies
Thou rightly flingest to the crocodiles.
Besides these, all that are opposed to me
At heart—the seed of wicked Áhriman—
Who have forgotten all our benefits,
Thou now wilt test in dealing with Núshzád.
All acted as our watchmen heretofore, V. 1652
And were in terror of our punishments.
For those on-lookers who have vilified,
And wagged their tongues against, Núshzád, know thou
That they have in especial cursed ourselves,
Preparing trouble in mine evil day.
Do not thou too as they ; thus foemen speak.
Unworthy as he is he is mine own,
Such is the truthful witness of my heart.
The tongue of each man that hath spoken ill,
Or acted with injustice toward him, brand
In presence of the folk. May such an one
Have neither tongue nor mouth. As for the man
That warreth to o'erthrow the Sháh, employing
Guile, enmity, hostility, and faith
In Áhriman, such, as the famed Sháh's foe,
Must not be suffered in the realm."
They set
The Sháh's own seal upon the letter. Then
The messenger departed with all speed,

And, when to Rám Barzín he made his way,
Told all that he had heard the great king say.

§ 19

How Rám Barzín fought with Núshzád, and how Núshzád was slain

That done, he gave to Rám Barzín the letter
With its behests for dealing with Núshzád,
To levy troops, make war, and banish ruth.
When the old man had read it, and had heard
The messenger at large, the din of tymbals
Arose at cock-crow at the palace-portal,
A mighty host marched forth from Madá'in,
And Rám Barzín went swiftly to the war.
News reached Núshzád who called and paid his host,
While all the Christians and grandees of Rúm
That dwelt along the march of that fair land
Assembled with Shammás as general:
Those warriors' hands all had been bathed in blood.
A shout rose from the portal of Núshzád,
And then the army, like a wind-tossed sea,
Moved from the city out upon the plain,
Their heads all war, their hearts revenge and venom.
When Rám Barzín beheld that army's dust
He blew the trumpets and arrayed the host.
The dust of cavaliers, the charge of chieftains,
The brandishing of mighty maces, rent
The hearts of flints; none saw the bright sun's face.
C. 1653 Then in the centre of the host Núshzád
Set on his head a Rúman helm. His host
Was full of Christian clericals from Rúm;
The soil was hidden by their horses' hoofs.
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth seetheth, and the air
Is shrieking over it."

A warrior,

Beclad in mail and hight Pírúz the old,
Came boldly forth and cried : " O famed Núshzád !
Who wantonly hath turned thy head from right ?
Contend not with the army of the king
Because thou wilt repent thee of this strife.
Thou hast abjured the Faith of Gaiúmart,
The pathway of Húshang and Tahmúras.
The arch-deceiver Christ was put to death
Because he had renounced the Faith of God ;
So choose not him, of all that founded Faiths,
Who so mistook the aspect of his work,
For if the Grace of God had shone in him
How could the Jews have gained the upper hand ?
Heard hast thou what thy sire, that noble man,
The world-lord, did to Cæsar and to Rúm,
Yet now thou wouldst contend with him and raise
Thy head to heaven ! For all thy moon-like mien,
Thy Grace and stature, neck, limbs, hands, and mace,
I see no wisdom with thee anywhere,
Such recklessness possesseth thy dark soul !
Woe for this head of thine, crown, name, and birth,
Which now thou wouldst abandon to the blast !
For son to seek his living father's throne,
How should this be ? 'Tis neither use nor right.
To seek the crown, if he be dead, is well ;
To seek to fight him now is criminal.
Save thou be snorting elephant or lion
Thou canst not match Sháh Núshírwán, and though
I have not seen, O prince ! a bridle-hand
Like thine limned in the palace of the Sháhs,
Such foot and stirrups, such a breast and neck,
Such ardour in the fight and such a mace,
Though painter never looked on such a picture,
Or any age on such a prince, yet burn not
The soul of Núshírwán by childishness,

Or stultify the world-illuming crown,
For hostile howsoe'er a son may be
His father will lament when he is slain.
Dismount, ask quarter of the Sháh, and fling
This mace and Rúman helmet to the ground ;
Then if far hence some chilling blast should make
The dark dust settle on thy countenance,
The Sháh's heart would consume for thee, the sun
Weep o'er thy face. Sow not throughout the world
The seed of enmity, for hastiness
Becometh not a prince. If thou dost swerve
From mine advice and trust to violence,
And to thy might, the counsel of Pírúz
C. 1654 Oft will recur to thee, and then the words
Of thine ill counsellors will seem but wind."
Núshzád made answer : " O wind-pated dotard !
Ask not my troops—exalted warriors—
Or me—the Sháh's son—to cry out for quarter.
The Faith of Núshírwán is naught to me ;
My heart inclineth to my mother—her
Whose constant practice is the Faith of Christ.
I will not quit her Grace and Faith. Although
Its Founder—Christ—was slain, the World-lord's Grace
Hath not forsaken Him. That Holy One
Hath passed from this earth back to holy God,
Such was His aspiration when on earth.
I may be slain but shall not fear to die,
For to that bane there is no antidote."
He answered thus the old Pírúz and veiled
Air's face with shafts. The warriors of the host
Advanced, the battle-cry and clarion's blare
Went up, Núshzád, the chief, spurred on like fire,
Came as it were Ázargashasp, and brake
The left wing of the army of the Sháh,
Where none remained to fight with him. He slew

Full many a Lion of the host, whereat,
Grown wrathful, Rám Barzín bade shower arrows,
And fill the air as 'twere with hail in spring.
The din of battle went up on both sides
From all the valiant soldiers there engaged.
Núshzád was wounded in the mellay. Oft
He called to mind the counsel of Pírúz,
And reached in pain the centre of the host,
Pierced by a shaft and pale with agony.
Thus said he to the warriors of Rúm :—
"To fight one's sire is wretched, vile, accursed!"
Bewailing and lamenting thus he summoned
A bishop and confessed his heart's desires.
He said : "The evil fortune caused by me
Hath fallen rigorously upon myself.
Now, since my head will pass beneath the dust,
Dispatch a horseman to my mother. Say
To her : 'Núshzád hath left this world. For him
The days of right and wrong are at an end.
I prithee be not grieved at heart for me ;
Such is the fashion of this Wayside Inn !
Since I have been allotted this dark day
How could my heart be glad and brighten earth ?
All living creatures are but born to die ;
Grieve not for me, for thou art mortal too.
'Tis not my slaying that confoundeth me,
But worse—my sire's displeasure. Let me have
No mausoleum, throne, or stately rites,
But bury me with Christian burial.
I need no camphor, musk, or spicery,
For arrow-stricken I depart the world.'"
He spake and shut his lips. Thus passed Núshzád, C. 1655
That noble Lion-heart. Now when his troops
Heard of his death they fled the battlefield.
The Íránian leader, hearing that the prince
Was slain, went weeping to his couch in haste

The troops ceased slaying on the field of fight,
And neither joyed nor spoiled. They saw the prince
Slain and o'erthrown with ignominy, his head
Upon a Rúman bishop's breast : the field
Was filled with wailing for him. Rám Barzín
Was troubled to the heart and asked the prelate :—
" What know'st thou of the prince's dying wishes ? "
" Except his mother," thus the bishop answered,
" None must behold his head exposed. He, seeing
That he was wounded by a shaft, forbade
All obsequies and musk and spicery,
Or coronet, brocade of Rúm, and throne,
Perceiving his to be the slave's dark lot.
His mother now will shroud him and provide
A tomb and winding-sheet with Christian rites,
While his condition now is that of Christ's,
Although he did not die upon the Cross."
Of all the Christians that were in the land
There was not one but had his visage torn.
A cry rose from the country. Men and women
Assembled. From the plain they raised the corpse
Of that young, gallant prince—the Heart and Eyes
Of Núshírwán, the Sháh—upon a bier,
Transporting it three leagues by hand, then set it
Upon two mules which bare it to his mother.
Now when she was aware of what had chanced
Her head and crown descended to the dust.
She came forth to the street unveiled. A crowd
Assembled round her in the market-place.
They set a camp-enclosure round about,
And all the folk cast dust upon their heads.
They laid him in the earth. He passed. He came
From wind and suddenly to wind returned.
Gund-i-Shápúr [1] was all in tears, consumed
With sorrow for the anguish of the Sháh.
Why writhe so madly in the bonds of greed ?

[1] See p. 219.

Thou know'st that here thou canst not long remain.
Seek to escape, give not the world such heed,
Smell not its rose so fondly, 'tis but bane.
From Faith and righteousness turn not thy head,
Or else the wrath of God will chasten thee;
"A father's wrath," a pious Arab said,
"Will bring upon thy life calamity."
When sire shall be displeased with son in aught
Know that in seed and fruit that son is bad.
Oh! never make thy father's soul distraught
Whatever trouble thou from him hast had.
When thou'rt secure refrain thy heart from woe, C. 1656
Nor on thy heart the fire of trouble fling,
Let not thy passions master wisdom so,
But act with seemliness in everything.[1]
Now be the world's king happy all his days,
And may he bear these words of mine in mind.
Mahmúd, the world-lord, who ensueth praise,
A niche therefor in every heart will find.
Love ever shineth from his Grace divine,
His crown's top is the pillar of the sky.
Now ask, if cup thou hast, for amber wine,
And hold not quaffing acting sinfully.
Seek joy and mirth but never be bemused,
Nor think that talk—wise talk—should be abused.

[1] Four couplets omitted.

PART II

THE STORY OF BÚZURJMIHR AND OF THE SEVEN BANQUETS OF NÚSHÍRWÁN

ARGUMENT

The Sháh, being disquieted by a dream, sends emissaries through the empire to find an interpreter. One is discovered at Marv in the person of Búzurjmihr, then a youth, who having been brought before the Sháh interprets the dream and is advanced to great honour. The Sháh subsequently gives a series of entertainments at which discussions on wisdom and morals are substituted for the usual diversions of Oriental banquets, and Búzurjmihr again greatly distinguishes himself.

NOTE

Persia, like other nations, has its Wisdom-literature. This comprises apologues, apothegms, proverbs, parables, the interpretation of dreams and dark sentences, astrological forecasts, the solution of problems, the supplying the correct answer to questions relating to religion, morals, conduct, and expediency, and longer discourses thereon, reflections on fate and fortune, on the uncertainty of all terrestrial affairs, on the vanity of striving after wealth and fame, and the importance of leaving behind one a good name after death. All these forms of wisdom find expression in the Sháhnáma, and the poet himself has been not backward in contributing his quota. At the first available opportunity in his work he utters his "Praise of Wisdom"—the first created of God and His best gift to man.[1] A collection of all the passages dealing with such themes and subjects as are mentioned above, and including Firdausí's own reflections on such matters, as have occurred in the poem up to this point, would amount to something considerable, but scattered through a mass of narrative they are apt to be overlooked. In this reign, however, we are confronted by formal collections of primitive Persian Wisdom associated for the most part with the name of Búzurjmihr but to some extent with other great officials and with

[1] Vol. i. p. 101. *Cf.* too p. 103, *supra*.

Núshírwán himself. Firdausí availed himself of the opportunity of the conjunction of the just Sháh with the wise counsellor to bring together all that he could find in his authorities and elsewhere on some of the subjects mentioned at the beginning of this note. That a large Pahlaví literature once existed on such matters, and arranged sometimes in the form of question and answer, we know from what is extant. Thus the sage in the "Dínâ-í Maínóg-í Khirad" ("Opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom") consults the Spirit of Wisdom on sixty-two points and receives answers, *e.g.* "The sage asked the spirit of wisdom thus: 'Which man is the mightier?' . . . The spirit of wisdom answered thus: 'That man is the mightier who is able to struggle with his own fiends; and, in particular, *he* who keeps these five fiends far from *his* person, which are such as greediness, wrath, lust, disgrace, and discontent.'"[1] The concluding question is: "Which is that good work which is greater and better than all good works, and no trouble whatever is necessary for its performance?" The answer is: "To be grateful in the world, *and* to wish happiness for every one. This is greater and better than every good work, and no commotion whatever is necessary for its performance."[2] These questions and answers are quite of a piece with the sages' gnomes in the poem. There are also extant in Pahlaví the "Pandnámak-í Vadshórg-Mitró-í Búkhtakán" or "Bakhtagán," *i.e.* the "Book of Counsels of Búzurjmihr the son of Bakhtagán," the "Characteristics of a Happy Man," and other texts dealing with similar subjects.[3] There can be no doubt but that Firdausí derived the sententious, gnomic, parenetic, or whatever one chooses to call them, portions of the Sháhnáma, like the narrative, indirectly from the Pahlaví. Four series of such passages occur in the present reign. The first and longest is in the present Part. The second is Búzurjmihr's Discourse on good deeds and works in Part III. The third is Núshírwán's answers to the questions addressed to him by the archmages. The fourth is the *vivâ voce* examination that Hurmuzd, Núshírwán's son, has to pass at the hands of Búzurjmihr, by order of the Sháh, before being nominated as his father's successor. One cannot help feeling a sneaking sympathy, reprehensible though it be, with him when we find him signalising his advent to the throne by making a clean sweep of his father's ministers from whose "wise saws and modern instances" doubtlessly he had suffered much in the days of his youth. Nero acted similarly in the case of Burrus and the younger Seneca. Of these four series the third is concerned only partly with Wisdom-literature, some

[1] WPT, iii. 81. [2] *Id.* 113. [3] GIP, ii. 113 *seq.*

of the questions dealing with Núshírwán's own conduct on specified occasions. This and the fourth series will appear in Volume VIII.

Búzurjmihr, the son of Bakhtagán, of Marv, the man chiefly associated with the Wisdom-literature of the Sháhnáma, is but a semi-historical figure hardly mentioned by any historian before Firdausí's time with the exception of Mas'údí who died when the poet was a youth. Mas'údí gives twelve maxims of Búzurjmihr's and little else,[1] so that practically we are dependent on what Firdausí tells us, and this, with regard to the incidents recorded, generally has something of the præternatural about it. Búzurjmihr's career begins with a dream, and while sleeping on his journey to the court a snake, which seems an Arab rather than a Persian touch, comes and breathes over him. Moreover, his fall from power is preceded by an omen and his restoration to favour accomplished by another. We never hear of him as being associated with any of Núshírwán's great achievements in administration or in war. He is employed, it is true, upon two missions, once to expound a game—chess—and to propound another of his own invention—nard—and once to negotiate in time of war a loan for his master, which falls through owing to the fact that Núshírwán has a higher conception of the dignity of the office of the scribe than Búzurjmihr himself. His repute seems largely due to Firdausí, who used him as a peg whereon to hang all the old clothes of the Wisdom-literature that the poet was too conscientious to discard but could not dispose of elsewhere. There is, however, a thanksgiving couplet to testify that he was not sorry when the worst of his task was over.[2] If the number seven were not such a favourite in Persian story one might suggest that the Seven Banquets of Núshírwán originated in a perverted reminiscence of the seven Greek philosophers who were entertained for a while at his court when Justinian closed the schools of Athens,[3] and that Búzurjmihr himself is not much more than a native composite reproduction of those hapless and disillusioned sages.

Mohl has some apposite remarks on the Wisdom-literature:

"Ce qui a le plus contribué à la gloire du règne de Nouschirwan, c'est la réputation de son vizir, Buzurdjmihr, qui est en Orient le représentant de toute la sagesse humaine, comme Nouschirwan lui-même est la représentation de la justice. On les a entourés tous les deux d'une auréole de fables, et l'on a mis sous leurs noms tous les contes qui se rattachent par leur nature à la renommée particulière de chacun. On a donc attribué à Buzurdjmihr tous

[1] MM, ii. 206 *seq.*, vii. 164. [2] See p. 379. [3] GDF, v. 93.

les traits de sagesse et toutes les moralités qu'on a pu trouver, et Firdousi les rapporte au long les uns et les autres. Quant aux moralités, le poëte avait évidemment découvert quelques collections où on les avait réunies, et il nous en donne à trois reprises différentes, ou des traductions complètes, ou d'amples extraits. Je crois que les originaux ont dû être composés en pehlewi, et que ces sentences ont éprouvé quelque dommage, soit de la part des copistes, soit de celle des traducteurs, car les questions et les réponses ne paraissent pas toujours s'accorder suffisamment. De plus, les copistes du *Livre des Rois* on évidemment été arrêtés par le texte et ont fait pour le redresser beaucoup d'effort malheureux. . . . Il est très-probable encore que les sentences que nous trouvons dans les moralistes arabes et persans sont des restes de cette antique sagesse des Perses. Les observations et les règles qu'elles contiennent nous paraissent en général bien simples et parfois bien puériles ; mais cela même parle pour leur origine reculée. Elles ont été une fois neuves et frappantes et ont été transmises aux nouvelles générations, entourées du respect qu'inspire en toute chose la réputation d'antiquité. Ce n'est certainement pas dans une monarchie comme celle de la Perse sous Nouschirwan, que commençait à tomber de vétusté, qu'on avait besoin d'inventer des moralités élémentaires."[1]

On the same subject Nöldeke says : "In the discourses on wisdom and riddles which take up so much space in the story of the first Chosrau (Kisrâ) are probably to be found many duplicates of whole passages; to settle these questions much material besides the Sháhnáma is available, but truly to investigate these wearying fragments would require an unusual amount of patience!"[2]

§ 1

How Núshírwán had a Dream and how Búzurjmihr interpreted it

Now in the tale of Búzurjmihr will we
  Reveal a cheerier visage. Do not deem
  That there is naught but folly in a dream ;
Know that a dream may smack of prophecy,
And in especial when such visitings

[1] P, Vol. vi. Préface. [2] NPS, II, p. 29.

Impress the clear mind of a king of kings.
The stars with sky and moon hold conference,
  Their words are whispered and dispersed through space,
And clear souls dreaming see the future thence
  As fire is mirrored in the water's face.
One night Sháh Núshírwán, the wise and shrewd,
That lucid spirit, lay asleep and dreamed :
A royal tree grew up before the throne,
And joyed his heart. He called for harp and wine
And minstrelsy, but on his throne of peace
And joy there sat with him a sharp-toothed boar,
Sat ready-dight for revelry and claimed
To quaff the wine from Núshírwán's own cup.
Sol rose in Taurus and the skylark's note
Was heard on all sides yet the monarch sat
Upon his throne in dudgeon at that dream.
They called the interpreter of dreams and held
A session of the magnates at the court.
The Sháh narrated to those archimages,
The counsellors, his dream. The interpreter
C. 1657 Made no reply, he knew of no such case,
And one that pleadeth ignorance is excused.
The Sháh, thus left unanswered by the sages,
Was instant what to do in his concern,
And sent to every side an archimage,
One enterprising, shrewd of heart, and wise.
He made each take a purse and entertained
High hopes from their return. In every purse
There were ten thousand drachms that every envoy
Might seek out some interpreter of dreams,
Some man of understanding, some adept,
To solve the world-king's dream and to reveal
The mystery, and then bestow on such
A full purse and the royal compliments.[1]

[1] Reading with P.

So to all parts a veteran archmage went—
A prudent cavalier and man of lore.
One of these chiefs—Ázád Sarv [1]—came to Marv,
Went through the town and saw an archimage,
Who taught the Zandavasta to some youths
With harshness, anger, and raised voice. The tallest,
An earnest student of the Zandavasta,
One whom they used to title Búzurjmihr,
Was poring lovingly upon the roll.
Ázád Sarv turned his rein, drew near, and sought
An explanation of the great king's dream.
The scribe replied : " 'Tis not my business ;
The Zandavasta is my help to knowledge.
I teach these children but I do not dare
To breathe of aught beyond," but Búzurjmihr
Said blushing to his master, having heard
The envoy's words : " This quarry is for me ;
It is my business to interpret dreams."
His teacher bawled : " Hast thou thy roll by heart
That thou shouldst thus exalt thy neck in pride,
And set up as a dream-interpreter ? "
The envoy said to him : " O learnéd man !
He may possess this skill ; abash him not.
This youth's lot may be high through fortune's teaching,
Not thine."
The master wroth with Búzurjmihr
Cried : " Tell then what thou knowest," but he answered :—
" I will speak not till set before the Sháh."
The envoy gave him money and a steed
With all things needful. They set off from Marv,
As pheasants pace 'neath roses, and discoursed
About the Sháh, his power, Grace, crown, and state C. 1658
Till at the hour for provand and repose
They reached a spot with water, lighted down

[1] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 260.

Beneath a tree and, having eaten, rested.
While Búzurjmihr slept in the shade, his mantle
Drawn o'er his face, his noble way-mate saw,
Being still awake, a snake which drew away
The mantle from the sleeper, vehemently
Breathed over him from head to foot, then clomb
The tree. When that black snake had scaled the stem
The youth awoke, and when the serpent saw
The youth's discomfiture it disappeared
Amid the dusky boughs. The envoy stood
Astound, invoking oft the name of God,
And thought: "This wise youth will attain to greatness!"
They left that wood, pushed on, and reached the Sháh.
The envoy hurried first before the throne
Of Núshírwán, and said: "Oh! may thy fortune
Be ever young, O Sháh! From court I went
To Marv and roamed about as pheasant doth
Within a rosary. Amid the sages
I found a wise youth and have brought him hither
In haste."
He told withal what Búzurjmihr
Had said and of the portent of the snake.
The world-lord called and told the dream to him.
He heard, grew full of matter, and replied:—
"There is a youth disguised in women's garb
Within thy bower. Now put all strangers forth,
That none may know our purpose, and command
Thy ladies all to pass before thy presence
With measured tread, and then I will demand
Of that bold reprobate how came he thus
Within the Lion's lair, for God will show
The secret fact to be as thou hast dreamed."
The Sháh put forth all strangers, closed the palace
Of king of kings, and bade the eunuchs bring,

As swift as smoke, the Idols dwelling there.
They came, those Idols of his bower, in all
Their perfumes, tints, and beauty. All these fair ones, C. 1659
Exhaling jasmine, dainty, modest, passed
With leisured tread before him, but no man
Appeared among them, and like angry lion
Raged Núshírwán. Then said the interpreter :—
" This should not be ; there is a youth among them.
Bid them to pass a second time all bare,
And probe their practice to the uttermost."
The Sháh spake thus : " Cause them to pass again,
And put away the veil of modesty."
They passed the second time and, when all thought
The dream an empty one, a youth appeared
Of cypress-stature and of kingly looks,
But quaking like a willow and despairing
Of his dear life. Now in the great king's bower
Were seventy girls, all noble Cypresses,
And one of them, with cheeks of ivory,
Was daughter to the governor of Chách.
The youth with jasmine-face and musk-perfumed
Had been her love at home. He followed her
Where'er she went and served her like a slave.
The Sháh inquired of her : " Who is this man
So cherished by my slave, so favoured, young,
And daring, in the bower of Núshírwán ? "
" He is not," said the girl, " as old as I.
He is but young. One mother bare us both.
Our sire was different, our mother one.
There is naught wrong between us. He assumed
This kind of habit, for through modesty
He did not dare to look upon the Sháh.
Oh ! make it not a pretext that my brother
From shamefastness before thee veiled his face."
The Sháh said to the youth : " Thou worthless dog !
Both race and family are smirched by thee."

He frowned. He was amazed at that young pair,
Then bade in wrath the executioner :—
"Let the dust hide them."
So he haled them back
Behind the curtains of Sháh Núshírwán,
And hung them there—a warning to the rest.
The Sháh gave that interpreter of dreams
Purse, steeds, and robes, and, wondering at his knowledge,
Observed his sayings. They inscribed his name
Among the counsellors, the archimages.
Thus prospered Búzurjmihr, and circling heaven
Showed him its face, while ever day by day
His fortune greatened, and the Sháh's heart joyed
In him exceedingly.
C. 1660 That heart was full
Of right ; the Sháh was cultured, heart and brain.
He had residing at his court archmages,
And sages understanding in all knowledge.
Three score and ten—all men of eloquence—
Were lodged and entertained continually.
He used, when not engaged with justice, largess,
Festivity or war, to question them,
And deck his heart with knowledge. Búzurjmihr,
Though still a youth, was eloquent and shrewd
And fair to look upon, surpassing all
The famed archmages, readers of the stars,
And sages, in his knowledge, and became
Exalted over those philosophers.
None was so learnéd in astrology.
In leechcraft he excelled [1] and spake with ease
Of conduct, government, and policies.

[1] Reading with P.

§ 2

The first Banquet of Núshírwán to the Sages, and the Counsels of Búzurjmihr

The board was spread one day. The Sháh commanded :—
" Bid the archmages come, the learned, the curious,
The eloquent, the prudent, and observing."
The archmages vigilant of heart, the chiefs
That were accomplished in all knowledge, came,
And, having feasted, called for wine and drank
Until their spirits rose, not bringing wisdom
To disrepute but to refresh their souls.
The prudent Sháh said to those men of lore :—
" Display the hidden knowledge that ye have ;
Let every one possessed of understanding
Within his heart hold forth and pleasure me."
The wise men bold and mighty in discourse
Set loose their tongues in presence of the king,
Both young and old, as he required of them.
When Búzurjmihr had listened to their words,
And noted that the Sháh held knowledge dear,
He rose, did reverence, and said : " Just judge !
Be earth the bondslave of thine ivory throne,
Heaven lustrous with the Glory of thy crown.
If now the Sháh shall bid his slave unlock
His tongue then I will speak although unworthy,
And, in respect of knowledge, least of all.
No wise man can be blamed for having loosed C. 1661
His tongue in presence of Sháh Núshírwán."
The monarch looked upon the sage and said :—
" What reason can there be for hiding knowledge ? "
The youth forthwith displayed his mastery,
And spread light round him while his eloquence
And counsels fixed the archimages' hearts.

He first displayed his gifts in praise of God,
And then proceeded : " One whose mind is clear
Will utter much in little ; hasty folk
Are talkative and tedious. When fools' talk
Endureth long the speaker is despised.
Seek worth and not addition, for the world
Is fleeting, and we are but sojourners.
Were our days to endure for evermore
The world would have too many candidates.
While here below humanity is best,
And knowledge in that view will not gainsay thee.
Our inward light we owe to righteousness,
And we must weep o'er darkness and chicane.
The heart of every one is slave to passion,
Which differeth with each, and in the world
Each hath his humour ; it is well that thou
Conform therewith. All foremost in affairs
Still will be scheming and endeavouring more,
But sages, scholars, and the inly blest
Dwell here below and set their hearts above.
Vex not thyself about the unattained ;
'Tis toil of body and distress of soul.
He that is strong will act straightforwardly,
But lies and double-dealing come of weakness.
If thou lack knowledge silence is the jewel,
While if thou art in love with thine own knowledge
Debate will take that wisdom out of thee.
Rich is the man that hath not greed, and blest
Is he that hath not covetise for mate.
Humanity is brother unto wisdom,
Which is as 'twere the crown upon the soul.
To have a sage for mortal enemy
Is better for thee than a fool for friend.
The man content is rich ; he putteth greed
And care in bonds. Thou wilt give ear to sages
If thou art humble in thy wish to learn.

When one is masterful in counselling
Men falter not in action. Let the man
That hath forgot his knowledge hold his tongue.
When thou hast wealth in hand with gold and silver,
And steeds caparisoned, in daily cost C. 1662
Be neither close nor lavish. Choose the mean,
And let thine only guide be rectitude.
The wise man keepeth foes afar, and they
Become his servants. Know thou, he that doth
His best will win in war. Speak not vain words,
For from that fire ensueth naught but smoke.
Spend not thy thoughts upon what ne'er can be,
Because with water thou canst pierce not iron.
A king if he be learned is humble too
Though knowledge make him great and powerful.
He that acknowledgeth God's handiwork
Hath passed the ills of fortune ; he will serve
God more and more, cast out the Dív's suggestions,
Refrain himself from what should not be done,
Afflict not those that should be unafflicted,
And in the last resort incline to God,
Who is our Nourisher and Fosterer."
Now at that goodly speech of Búzurjmihr
The doctors all grew fresh of countenance,
Rose in the presence of the king of kings,
And proffered praise anew. The company
Were all astound at Búzurjmihr, that one
So young should rise so high. The world-lord marvelled
At him, then summoned the chief registrars,
And bade them set his name first on the roll :
His fortune shone forth like the sun in heaven.
Again the archmages entered on discourse,
While all the sages were in wonderment ;
The youth set loose his tongue, for he was pure
Of heart and of an ardent soul, and thus

He said : " We must not even in our thoughts
Turn from the king, the righteous judge, for he
Is as the shepherd and we are the sheep ;
Again, we are the earth, he is high heaven.
We must not quit our fealty to him,
Must not renounce his way and ordinance,
But joy when he is glad, if we are fain
To proffer to him all the age's due,
Diffuse his excellences in the world,
But keep his confidence inviolate.
Presume not thou upon his dignity,
For e'en the lion's heart is frayed by fire.
We should call e'en a mountain that despised
His bidding foolish-hearted and light-witted.
All evil and all good come from the Sháh,
From him come bond and dungeon, crown and throne.
The world hath from his love its worth and Grace,
While at his wrath our livers seethe within us.
C. 1663 The crowned head is the Grace of God, the sage
Hath joy and mirth therefrom. Of Áhriman
Is he that joyeth not ; his heart and brain
Are cultured not with knowledge."
They gave ear
To what the young man said, and those outworn
Revived in soul. With tongues and mouths all praise
That mighty convocation went its ways.

§ 3

The second Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

A se'nnight passed. That king of ardent heart
Convoked the wise and shelved the world's affairs
Because he wished to hear the words of sages—

Those that were worthy to be called to court,
And were approved by knowledge to the Sháh.
They came, the wise in utterance, both young
And elders of experience. With the doctors
Of ardent soul fared youthful Búzurjmihr,
The exalted one. These doctors sage and shrewd
Sat near the lofty throne and turned their looks
On Búzurjmihr because at him the face
Of Núshírwán grew bright. One of the wisest
Then questioned him concerning fate and fortune :—
" What is their character and who ordained them ? "
He answered : " One aspireth, being young.
He toileth night and day, and yet his path
Is dark and narrow and his conduit low,
While some mere dolt will sleep on fortune's throne,
And rose-trees scatter roses over him.
Such is the character of fate and fortune,
No toil avoideth their apportionment ;
The World-lord, the All-wise, our Fosterer,
Hath fashioned thus the star of destiny."
Another said : " What man attaineth greatness ?
To whom is high estate the most becoming ? "
He said : " The man that hath the better knowledge
Of what is good and putteth it in practice."
Another said : " What is there best in us ?
Who from the world is worthiest of good ? [1]
He answered : " Gentleness, munificence,
With magnanimity and courteousness.
The humble man who boweth down his neck ;
His hand will give, expecting no return ;
He toileth and by toil would win the world,
And keepeth step with fellow way-farers."
" What is the special virtue of the sage,"
Another said, " in moments of dispute ? "

[1] Reading with P.

C. 1664 He answered : " To discern when he is wrong,
And modify his methods and his views."
Another one inquired : " How should one act
To make existence more endurable ? "
He thus made answer : " Whensoe'er the heart
Is fraught with wisdom there is gladness too.
Then will the man both give and take aright,
And shut the door of fraud and knavery,
Will pardon faults whene'er he hath the power,
And not be hasty or irascible."
Another asked of him : " Among the folk
Who is best able to command himself ? "
He said : " The man that is not led by passion
Away from nobleness and native worth,
And likewise he that can command his weakness,
Aware that evils follow on excess."
Another said : " Is there aught anywhere
More excellent than bounty and good nature ?
Who bringeth speedily his crop to fruit,
And furnisheth two springtides in a year ? "
" One," thus he made reply, " that all unasked
Doth deck his soul with generosity,
But one that hath the praise of the receiver
Regard him not as giving but as trading."
One said : " What are the adornments of a man,
And which is noblest ? "
Búzurjmihr replied :—
" He that is bounteous toward a worthy object ;
He towereth like a cypress in a garden,
And never withereth, but one unworthy,
Though he be set in musk, will savour not ;
No flower will grow upon that arid thorn.
To question of the dumb or of the deaf,
Though thou art justified, is profitless."
" Within this Wayside Inn," another said,
" The sage is not exempt from pain and trouble.

How shall we act that we may win fair fame,
And so begin that nobly we may end ? "
He answered : " Keep from sin ; treat all the world
As though it were thyself ; what thou mislikest
Inflict not on another—friend or foe."
Another said : " Which sayest thou of the twain
Is better—labour moderate or great ? "
He answered thus : " From wisdom's standpoint thought
Alone is worthy. If thou needest fruit
Toil in proportion to the work in hand."
" If we must weep o'er those that are to blame,"
Another asked, " who can deserve our praise ? "
He answered thus : " Whoever hath the most
Of hope and fear and awe of holy God."
Another said : " O thou illustrious
In wisdom and whose head out-toppeth heaven !
What is the goodliest destiny for me
From this exalted and unstable sky ? "
That man of eloquence made answer : " His C. 1665
Who is secure and is exempt from need ;
Him fortune treateth with benevolence
So long as he is just in all his ways."
" What is the knowledge," asked another one,
" Whereby I may be happy in the world ? "
He answered thus : " That of the patient man,
Who holdeth in contempt the impudent,
And his whose brain is not perturbed by wrath,
And who, though wroth, will wink at others' faults."
Another asked : " What man is he, O sage !
That winneth the approval of the wise ? "
Said Búzurjmihr : " The man whom wisdom feedeth,
Who mourneth not the lost but giveth up
His darling to the dust without regret,
Pain, or dismay, rejecteth empty hopes

Like willow's fruit, is always glad and gay,
And careless of the processes of time."

Another said : " What are the faults of kings
Whereby the hearts of righteous men are saddened ? "

He answered : " Wise men say that there are four :
The first is terror of the foe in fight ;
The second being niggardly in giving ;
The third rejecting wise advice in war ;
The fourth is hastiness of temperament,
And sleeping not upon their purposes."

Another one inquired : " What man is faultless,
And what is there to blame in noble men ? "

" We call one upright," thus said Búzurjmihr,
" When wisdom beareth witness to his words,
While those that seek by cunning and injustice
To shine are blamed for falsehood and deceit.
Between them is the man of violence,
Abusive, with his head fulfilled with strife,
And who, though meek and humble with the king,
Yet madly persecuteth holy men."

Another said : " What kind of character
Will profit him that seeketh not mishap ? "

" The speaker of the truth is true in all
His deeds," he answered, " governeth his tongue,
Is modest, and soft-voiced amidst of clamour.
Best is the sage who holdeth it unmeet
To banish wisdom for the sake of passion."

Another sage inquired : " Who is the man
That can without mishap transact affairs,
Tend his own life, and profit kith and kin ? "

He thus made answer : " He that from the first
Hath known and sought the door of holy God—
The Source of thy thanksgivings and thy Refuge,
The Lord of day and night, of sun and moon.
Moreover heartily he must obey
The Sháh's behests in public and in private,

Tend his own person dearly and shut fast C. 1666
Thereon the door of travail and of greed,
Must care for his own kindred, feed the poor,
And give his children teachers, for the world
Must not be trusted to the ignorant,
And when a son is docile to command
'Tis for the father to make much of him."
" What is the place an upright son should hold,"
Another asked him, " in his sire's esteem ? "
He thus made answer : " In his father's eyes
A glorious son is dear as life itself :
The father's name abideth after death
Because the son will say : ' My father taught me.' "
Another asked : " What dost thou see in riches
To grace the heart ? "
He made reply : " The man
Of wealth is honoured though the wealth is vile ;
But there is much that is bound up therewith,
Take heed that thou misprize not these my words,
For, first, whate'er thou hast a mind unto
Will by its nature show if thine be good ;
And, next, for thee to have and not employ
Is to treat stones and royal gems as one."
" Among the kings with fame and lofty crown,"
Another said, " whom callest thou the best ? "
" That king," he made reply, " with whom the good
Dwell safely while the bad quake at his voice :
The earth reposeth underneath his throne."
Another said : " What maketh a man rich,
And who in this world is distressed and poor ? "
He thus replied : " The man that is content
With what the Master of high heaven bestoweth,
While for the man whom fortune favoureth not
There is not any evil worse than greed."
The famous men were full of wonderment
At him and lauded him with one consent.

§ 4

The third Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

A se'nnight passed. The eighth day with the dawn
The all-conquering Sháh sat on his throne and summoned
Before him all the men of understanding,
The wise and eloquent, who all discoursed
At large, but truly none much pleased the Sháh,
Who after said to Búzurjmihr : " Unveil
Thy shamefast face."
That fluent sage set loose
His tongue, displayed his varied lore, and first
He blessed the Sháh, and said : " Be this crowned head
Victorious," adding : " None becometh great
Unless he shun the pathway of mishap.
If thou wouldst rise to greatness by thy knowledge
Thou needest wisdom in thy choice of words.
C. 1667 In quest of fame one must be brave, the age
Rejecteth faint-hearts. If thou seek'st the throne
Accomplishments are needed since the bough
That putteth forth its green must bear thee fruit.
When folk make question of accomplishments
'Tis vain to cite mere aptitude,[1] for that,
With these to seek, is not approved and worthless.
In dealing with this point a wise man said :—
' If roses savour not forbear to speak
Of colour ; none in fire a stream will seek.'
A king is all the richer for his bounty,
And hath no credit for his secret treasures.
If thou hast claimed attainments justify
What thou hast fairly spoken by thy deeds.
The sage is happy being fed by heaven

[1] Or " high lineage."

With wisdom, and the man of simple heart
Because 'tis free from all deceitfulness.
In this world wisdom is a trusty tree,
And the great king's heart is its first of fruits.
Thou wilt be easy if thou art content,
But practise greed and thou wilt quake therefor.
Do not thy kindness in the sight of men,
For thou wilt have small kindness in return.
Good fortune favoureth the open-hearted,
And he is blest who beareth patiently.
Still if a man would rise he must be furnished
With certain things to aid him in the struggle.
First, rede and erudition ; secondly,
A ripe experience ; thirdly, friends to help
In time of action and to estimate
The chances every way for good and ill,
And to be profitable afterward
In every-day life and emergencies.
He needeth, fourthly, rectitude and wisdom
To purge his heart of falsehood and of fraud,
And, fifthly, if thou art possessed of strength
Toil with thy body ; greatness will result.[1]
The strong unless they labour ne'er will reach
The height of their desires, but over-toil,
Know, endeth in despair. I will set forth
The five characteristics of the sage,
Which to observe involve him not in trouble,
With seven too of the fool, and 'tis no marvel
If he be irked thereby : and, to begin,
No sage is vexed at loss or prematurely
Is glad, for disappointment will perturb him.
He counteth not upon the unattained
So as to break his heart if he should miss it.
He neither hopeth that which ne'er can be,
Nor saith : 'The willow-bough will bring forth fruit.'

[1] Couplet omitted.

When at his ease from travail and from ill
He recketh of the future, wherefore when
Time bringeth hardship on him he will prove
Beforehand and not slack in enterprise.
C. 1668 The fool's way, as I said, is sevenfold :
His wrath is kindled with the innocent,
His treasure opened to the unworthy man
Without return of meed or recompense,
While, thirdly, he is an ingrate to God,
And is not wise and cognizant of good,
But, fourthly, talketh loudly of himself
To every one and, fifthly, is involved
In pain and loss through his own feckless words ;
He trusteth, sixthly, to untrusty folk,
Expecting thorns to bear him painted silk,
And, lastly, uttereth lies in argument,
Endeavouring to shine by impudence.
Know this, O thou exalted sovereign !
That no man getteth aught but harm from ill.
When any one is mute in company
That silence is melodious to the heart.
By hearing some one wise and eloquent
Thou wilt get provand for thy body, counsel
And prudence for thy heart. Forget not thou
Such words because they crown the throne of knowledge.
If thou wouldst bring that knowledge into bearing
Release thy jewel from its case by speech,
And if thou wouldst extend thy fame draw forth
Thy tongue as 'twere a falchion from its sheath ;
But if thou holdest session with the unwise [1]
The under then will have the upper hand.
By knowledge are the soul and heart illumed ;
See thou go not about to compass lies.
When one of eloquence is holding forth
Abide his words, be not impatient ;

[1] Reading with P.

Thou mayst get wisdom from his utterances,
And afterwards repeat what thou hast heard.
Use not thy wisdom as a means of gain
Though not to do so may result in hardship.
With heart and tongue in an accord of right
The door of loss is barred on every side.
Oh ! may the heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh,
Be open to instruction evermore."

An archimage of subtle intellect
Then asked : " What are the good and seemly things
That give a man a lustre in the world,
And quittance from the troubles of the time ? "

He answered thus : " Whoe'er attaineth wisdom
Will gain thereby the fruitage of both worlds."

" But if he hath not wisdom," said the archmage,
" Since wisdom is God's radiant robe of honour ? "

Said Búzurjmihr : " Then knowledge is the best,
The learned is mighty midst the men of might."

" But if," the archmage said, " he hath not sought
That stream and never bathed his soul therein ? "

Thus Búzurjmihr replied : " The warrior
Must count his body as a worthless thing,
And if he striveth in the day of battle,
And layeth foemen's heads upon the dust,
He will be cherished in the great king's heart,
For ever happy and in good command."

" But if one is not valiant," said the archimage, C. 1669
Nor seeketh after knowledge, law, and Faith ? "

Then Búzurjmihr replied : " 'Twere well that death
Should set the helm of darkness on his head."

Another asked : " How shall we act that all
Of us may eat the fruitage of the tree
Set by the sage within the garth of spring,
And walk moreover underneath its shade ? "

Said Búzurjmihr : " The man that barreth up
His tongue from evil vexeth not his soul,

And rendeth not in talk another's skin.
He will be likewise friends with all the folk,
All troubles will be smoothed away for him,
And enemy and friend will be as one."

Another asked him, saying : " Are the men
That shun the way of failure great or good ? "

Thus Búzurjmihr replied : " An evil deed
Is like a tree that beareth evil fruit.
Thus if a man speak gently with his tongue
But little harshness will befall his ear,
For know it is the tongue that troubleth men ;
So if thou wouldst be easy weigh thy words.
The man of few words and a loyal subject
Hath only one fit post—before the throne.
Moreover he escapeth ills not come,
As bird or beast escapeth from the net,
While furthermore he triumpheth o'er evil,
Is self-controlled and wise exceedingly.
He leaveth well alone and troubleth not
The inoffensive, letteth no good 'scape him,
And counteth not upon the days to come.
He shunneth foe with more than quarry's speed,
And cleaveth unto friend like shaft and feather.
For any pleasure that will end in grief
The man of wisdom hath but little yearning.
Put ease and indolence afar from thee,
Take pains and make a feast of toil ; without it
Thou wilt win not addition in the world ;
There is no treasure for the indolent.[1]
May this world live in Núshírwán, be he
Its world-lord ever and his fortune young."

They held discourse at large upon this theme :
The hearts of those grown drowsy were awakened.
The archimages, magnates, and shrewd sages
Blessed Búzurjmihr and gave the Sháh great praise,
Then went rejoicing on their several ways.

[1] The two following couplets are transposed.

§ 5

The fourth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

Two se'nnights passed away and then the Sháh
Relinquished public business for a day,
And bade the archimages and great men
Assemble at the palace with the sages.
He asked about the body and its birth, C. 1670
About wrath, peace, the intellect, and justice,
About the sovereignty, the crown, and power,
And how good fortune doth begin and end.
He questioned those archimages and inquired
Concerning that which pleased him. When the others
Had spoken as their knowledge was, but failed
To gratify the Sháh, he next addressed
Himself to Búzurjmihr and said : " Bring forth
The splendid jewel from its hiding-place."

Then Búzurjmihr gave praises, saying thus :—
" O Sháh most loving and serene of heart !
Know that in all the world no king like thee
For justice, understanding, crown, and throne,
For Grace and mien, for counsel and for fortune,
Hath set the diadem upon his head.
The king that exerciseth self-control
Will be at rest from vengeance and from war
Because to shun unwarrantable deeds
Is better than to get a sorry heart.
How goodly is the saying of the sage :—
' Self-discipline is goodly in a king.'
In seasons of dispute he feareth God,
Inclineth not to vengeance and to prowess,
And maketh wisdom ruler of his passions
When he is choleric. A monarch's thoughts
Should not displease the Master of the world

Through whom he doth discern 'twixt good and evil,
And seeketh Paradise as virtue's meed.
A tongue truth-speaking and a reverent heart
Will be his glory in the world for aye,
While every one that is his counsellor
Will be a man of weight among the people,
Be eloquent, serene of heart, and just,
And give to small and great alike their due
According to the measure of their states.
The man that is the servant of the Sháh
Should not be damnified on that account,
And while a monarch holdeth sages dear
His crown will be exalted ; but if he
Shall take the counsel of the ignorant
He will bring down his crown's head underfoot,
For knowledge frighteneth the fool away,
Who in his ignorance is combative.
The world-lord, whose informants are all wise,
Aware of what is going on at court,
And able thus to foil the malcontent,
Will be still glorious. None must sleep aggrieved
Lest ill befall the Sháh from that mishap,
Who should ban him deserving chastisement,
The misbegotten and the ill-disposed,
Lest such should trouble those that are offenceless.
All captives in the prisons of the Sháh,
The guilty and the innocent alike,
Should be enlarged by the decree of God,
Who thus directed in the Zandavasta.
C. 1671 If one be an ill-doer black and base
The face of earth should be relieved of him,
For while his evil day continueth
He will bring ruin on the homes of men.
The world-lord must rejoice in faith and right
So long as he is in the world as Sháh.

'Tis his to cleanse it from the wicked Dív
In public and in private by the sword.
The king that ruleth his troops well will be
Untroubled by the griefs of suppliants.
When thou art wary of thy foes in counsel
Thine evil-wishers will lose heart. Man all
The breaches of the realm ere war betide.
Whenas the Sháh is blamed for anything
Reproach too falleth on the crown and throne,
Through grief the wish is to be quit of him,
And to make wisdom testify thereto.
Let grow the love thou bearest to thy son,
Who is as 'twere the reflex of thy face
In water. Teach him wisdom and good sense,
And seek but to illuminate his soul.
Unlock for him the portal of thy treasures;
He must have no cause to bewail himself,
And when he putteth forth his hand to wrong
There is no need to break the prince's heart.
Recall him to the way with gentleness,
And keep a hold upon him from the first.
If in his heart thou find hostility
It is an ill weed; pluck it from his plot,
For if it bideth 'twill grow strong and fill
The garden of the sovereignty with tares;
But when the atheling hath Grace and sense
He must not hear the words of evil speakers;
Still when the hand can reach the miscreants
Haste not to bloodshed save at God's command.
Destruction cometh on the royal crown
Through rascal-ministers and wicked wives.
Give fools a hearing, but when they propose
An unjust action do not thou consent.
'Tis needful to fulfil all righteousness,
And clear thine own heart of perversity.
The sole adornment for the mighty Sháh

Is right, for 'tis the Dív that causeth wrong.
Now when the Sháh shall hearken to these words
He in his heart will witness unto wisdom,
The crown will call down blessings on the king,
The throne of empire be confirmed to him,
Both will rejoice in him, his foes despair
Of fortune ; while this restless sky revolveth
His good name will be his memorial.
Now may the accomplished soul of Núshírwán
Be young while day endureth."

At his words
The assembly was amazed, compared with them
The counsels of the wise seemed lustreless.
When Núshírwán had listened to this speech
His greatness greatened great although it was.
C. 1672 The counsels given filled his eyes with tears :
He filled the speaker's mouth with lustrous pearls.
Then from the palace with their lips all praise
The company departed on their ways.

§ 6

The fifth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

Thus seven days passed away. Upon the eighth,
Whenas the world-illuming sun blazed forth,
Put off its robe of lapis-lazuli,
And decked the world with golden-hued brocade,
The king of kings sat with the archimages,
The veterans, and officers of state—
Ardshír, the high priest and the chief of nobles,
Shápúr and Yazdagird, the scribe, the men
Of science and the readers of the stars,
The wise, the enlightened, and the eloquent.
The youthful Búzurjmihr, the orator,

Came to the presence of Sháh Núshírwán,
And did obeisance to his sovereign,
Who joyed at him and thus addressed the sages :—
" Who wotteth aught whereby the Faith of God
May be confirmed, the royal throne kept scathless ? "
Thereat the high priest loosed his tongue amid
The chiefs and said : " The justice of the Sháh
Will cause his Grace, his crown, and throne to shine,
And when it openeth his treasury-door
His high renown will last when he is dead.
Moreover he should purge his tongue of lies,
And seek not lustre in the world by guile.
Next he will be both just and merciful,
And make his throne the glory of the age.
Then too the head of the illustrious Sháh
Should be not wrathful with an erring liege,
And, fifthly, he will speak so that his fame
In this world never will grow obsolete;
He will speak truth in all things small and great,
And never derogate in any thing.
He will esteem withal as his own fortune
The servant of his throne. If wise in words
His speech will be convincing, and his heart
Ne'er satiate of learning and consuming
His brains with thought. All men are set at large
By wisdom and have little cause to wail
At fortune. Wisdom nourisheth the souls
Of sages, wisdom pointeth out the way
To those that seek. Tear not thy heart, O Sháh !
From wisdom's path, for wisdom fostereth
Fame and a noble end. Base and a fool
Is he that ever said : ' I am the man,
Because there is no peer to me in knowledge.' "
Then Yazdagird, the scribe, spake thus and said :— C. 1673
" O wise and wisdom-loving Sháh ! in Sháhs
It is a thing unseemly to shed blood,

Or suffer trifles to disturb the heart.
Moreover when the king is light of wit
He putteth hand to matters thoughtlessly,
While, further, he is hasty with the wise,
And all the more so through his ignorance.
When lust for vengeance hath possessed his heart
The Dív is the associate of his soul ;
So too a judge's words, if he be hasty,
Lead not to fair results. The warrior,
Moreover, that is fearful of his life
In battle-time, not of disgrace, and he
Whose heart, though he be rich, is mean and narrow,
Were better hidden underneath the ground.
Authority becometh not a beggar,
Since he himself becometh not high rank.
A guileful elder is a hateful thing,
And after death his soul will be in fire.
When any youth is slack in business
The heart of fortune will grow sick of him,
Disease will make him prematurely old,
And may his vigour and his spirit cease."

When Búzurjmihr had heard these goodly words,
And had adorned his brain with wisdom's lore,
He said : " O Sháh whose face is like the sun's !
May shining heaven be at thy dispose.
Know this : that men of wisdom will sustain
Their souls with knowledge since the hearts of stones
And mountains sorrow o'er the ignorant,
For none respecteth him. He knoweth not
End from beginning, fame from infamy.
The common folk, still more the wisdom-seekers,
Despise the doings of such men as these—
The lying judge unhonoured by the sage ;
The general who guardeth well his treasure,
And is abandoned by his toil-worn troops ;
The sage that feareth not to do amiss

If he can have enjoyment therewithal :
The leech that aileth ; how can he cure others ?
The mendicant that braggeth of his wealth
While that whereof he talketh is but naught ;
A Sháh who letteth not his people rest,
Or sleep at night, disquieting their hearts,
And yet when favouring breezes blow on thee
Assumeth all the merit for himself ;
A choleric sage who eyeth others' goods,
And lastly he that counselleth a fool,
Or giveth the indolent authority.
They that lack wisdom and acquire it not
Will have occasion to repent their words.
The heart of any man, my gracious lord !
That hath not wisdom wrestleth with desire
In such wise as a flame devoureth brimstone, C. 1674
Or maketh provand of a bed of reeds.
Long live the heart of Núshírwán, may he
Have this world's chiefs his servitors to be."

§ 7

The sixth Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

The Sháh allowed another week to pass,
Then issued orders to prepare the court,
Came and assumed his seat upon the throne
Of gold, with armlets, crown, and golden girdle.
On one hand was the archmage that was vizír,
And on the other Yazdagird the scribe,
While round him were the other archimages,
The chiefs, and Búzurjmihr the eloquent,
To whom the Sháh : " Why keep the jewels hidden—
Those words which are a profit to the soul,
And make the unprized man of high estate ?

The speaker's treasure is not minished,
While 'tis a pleasure to the listener."
Thus spake the archimage to Búzurjmihr :—
" O thou more famous than the turning sky !
Know'st thou the thing whose more will harm, whose less
Will strengthen thee ? "
He thus made answer, saying :—
" By eating less thou wilt be easier
In body and withal feed up thy soul,
But by too much well-doing wilt advance
Thy rival."
Then said Yazdagird, the scribe :—
" O man of eloquence and heedful mind !
What are the heart's three [1] secret blemishes
Which men retain although they need them not ? "
He answered : " In the first place thou must purge
Thy heart of all censoriousness, for none
In this world publicly or privily
Is free from fault. A chieftain, jealous of thee,
Will weep [2] on growing thine inferior,
While, thirdly, he that is a slanderer—
The man of double face—endeavoureth
To raise dust e'en from water." [3]
Then the archmage
Inquired : " O thou that art supreme in knowledge !
None in this world is franchised from desire,
Which may be hidden or exposed to all.
Supposing ways to gratify it open,
So that 'tis manifestly in one's power,
In my case which way will advantage me,
And which result in travail, pain, and loss ? "
He answered thus and said : " The ways are twain,
And thou canst journey either at thy choice.
C. 1675 One is the way of rashness, full of ill,

[1] Reading with P. [2] With envy. [3] Three couplets omitted.

The other that of wisdom and well-doing,[1]
And therein wisdom is the guide for thee—
A fact that is beyond all questioning.
God's robe of honour is upon the sage ;
Observe what man is worthy of that gift.
No one will purchase one of giant strength
Devoid of wisdom. In defect thereof
It is not well to live, for God is witness
That wisdom is the very life of life.
The man that hath acquired a base of knowledge
Is fitted for the warfare and the struggle.
First, let thy knowledge make thee turn to God,
Who is and who will be for evermore.
By faith in Him thou hast thy heart's desire,
And hast attained the goal whereto thou spedest.
Another point of knowledge is that thou
Shouldst use discretion in the choice of food.
Strive after purity in food and raiment,
And thus uphold the ordinance of God.
When thou hast need to earn thy daily bread
Run not to misers for their help and treasure,
But let thy choice be of some business
Whose reputation will not sink repute.
Make to thyself a friend of some great man,
Who can assist thee when thou art in straits.
Be silent when thou art in company
If thou wouldst win the praise of every one,
But if thou speak'st speak that which hast learned,
And branded on thy liver. Weigh thy words,
Not the dínárs within thy treasury,
For to a wise man treasures are but vile.
When thou art speaking let thy tongue be shrewd,
Make it thy shaft and let thy bow be wisdom.
Be not imprudent when a fight is toward,
But guard thy body from the enemy,

[1] Couplet omitted.

And when he hath arrayed the host against thee
Be prudent and preserve thy self-control.
When thou beholdest thine antagonist
Thy face must pale not. Thou wilt be victorious
If thou art prompt, but slackness will undo thee.
Be wary as thou urgest on thy steed,
And watch the weapons of thine opposite.
If he is eager do not turn away,
And choose thee prudent fellow-combatants ;
But strive not and have sense to quit the fight
On finding that thou art no match for him.
Thus tender too thy body when thou eatest ;
Food should not harm thee ; eating much will do it,
While taking little will increase thy strength.
Make not thyself a carfax at thy meals,
But always leave off with an appetite.
Use wine but use it for refreshment only,
For drunkards hear no praise from any one.
C. 1676 If thou adore God thou wilt be commended,
The world will be a head and thou the eye.
Let all thy converse be of the Creator
With adoration for the base thereof.
Profoundly watch the occasion when to act,
And when to take repose by night and day.
Select the mean in every enterprise,
In making peace as well as waging war.
All wind and water blent with dust art thou ;
Forget not thou the way of holy God.
Think more about thy worship than thy meals ;
Be still a novice though the law is old ;
Incline to good ; acknowledge benefits ;
Attribute all to Him who made the world ;
Prefer not lust to wisdom and advice,
Or wisdom will regard thee not thenceforth ;
Go not about to compass wickedness,
But being wise adorn thyself with virtues.

He that is good in public and in private
Is most to be commended in the world.
Teach to thy son the business of the scribe
That he may be as life to thee and thine,
And as thou wouldest have thy toils bear fruit
Grudge not instructors to him, for this art
Will bring a youth before the throne and make
The undeserving fortune's favourite.
Of all professions 'tis the most esteemed,
Exalting even those of lowly birth.
A ready scribe who is a man of rede
Is bound to sit e'en in the royal presence,
And, if he be a man of diligence,
Will have uncounted treasure from the Sháh,
While if endowed with fluency and style
He will be studious to improve himself,
Use his endeavours to be more concise,
And put his matter more attractively.
The scribe hath need to be a man of wisdom,
Of much endurance and good memory,
A man of tact, accustomed to court-ways,
A holy man whose tongue is mute for evil,
A man of knowledge, patience, truthfulness,
A man right trusty, pious, and well-favoured.
If thus endowed he cometh to the Sháh
He cannot choose but sit before the throne."

Whenas the king had listened to these words
His heart grew fresh as roses in the spring,
And he addressed the high priest thus: "Go to,
Give Búzurjmihr advancement. Claim for him
A robe of honour fitted for his state,
And money: he hath made our hearts elate."

§ 8

The seventh Banquet of Núshírwán to Búzurjmihr and the Archimages

A se'nnight passed, the Sun lit up his crown,
And came and sat upon the ivory throne,
Together with the high priest, the grandees,
The world-aspiring and shrewd-hearted sages,
C. 1677 With Sáda and with Yazdagird, the scribe,
And as their leader the astute Bahman.
Then spake the Sháh to Búzurjmihr and said :—
" Adorn our hearts and show to us the way.
Speak truth about me as thou knowest it,
And seek not this world's honours by deceit.
How should men give obedience to my hest,
Observe my counsels, and act loyally ?
Speak at thine ease and speak without reserve :
Dress not plain words with colour and with scent."
Thus Búzurjmihr, the shrewd, said to the Sháh :—
" O more exalted than the azure vault !
The service of the monarch of the earth
Is, saith the sage, the path-way of the Faith.
The orders of the Sháh brook no delay,
Because the Shah's heart never must be straitened,
And every one that is his enemy
Is in his soul the liege of Áhriman.
The heart that loveth not the monarch's person
Should forfeit brain and skin. Know that the Sháh
Is the world's peace, and when thou dost aright
He will advance thee. Both for good and ill
The power is his, he taketh not revenge,
And injureth none. Wish not his son to fill
His room but hold his dear face as thy life.
Want never findeth entrance to the soil
Of states whose monarch is their well-beloved.

His Grace will fend thee from all ill, for why
His fortunes nurse all virtue. When a king
Hath God's Grace on his face the world's heart laugheth
For joy. As thou partakest of his favours
Strive ever to give ear to his commands.
If thou shalt grow disloyal, e'en in thought,
That moment fortune will abandon thee.
If he associate with thee be not proud,
And if he banish thee revile him not.
Mark that a subject toiling for his king
Will in the toil find treasure and renown.
He that shall praise the monarch is of God,
And he that is of God will praise the monarch.
The liege must neither weary of his work,
Nor yet be slack in fight, must keep concealed
The counsel of the Sháh and tell it not
To sun and moon. One that is slack to do
The Sháh's commands doth outrage to himself.
Accurséd are the blossoms of the tree
That scattereth naught but leaves o'er crown and throne.
Calumniate not his lieges to the Sháh,
Or thou wilt minish thine esteem with him :
Great liars get small lustre in kings' eyes.
Let no one utter in the royal presence
Words that are not conformable with wisdom ;
But, if the Sháh shall ask thee, speak, not losing
Thy credit with him by loquacity,
Because there is more knowledge in the world C. 1678
Than ears can hear in public and in private.
He whom the monarch of the world misprizeth,
That soul will be in pain for evermore,
While he will be in high esteem on whom
The Sháh's lips smile. If he shall show thee favour
Hug not thyself, old servant though thou be,
For, though thy service may have lasted long,

Know that thou art not indispensable,
And if he favoureth another man
'Tis doubtless one as loyal as thyself.
If he shall be displeased with thee in aught
Make thine excuses ere thou drawest breath,
And if thou wottest naught of thine offence
Lay bare thy heart in presence of the Sháh,
While if thou hast a grievance in thy heart
Break it but show not unto him thy face,
Lest by God's Grace he should discern thy secret,
Discern thy heart perverse and clouded mind.
Thereafter thou wilt get no good of him,
Not hearken to his accents warm with love.
Account the Sháh's court as a sea where lieges
Are sailors, and accomplishments are vessels
With words for anchors and with wits for sails.
A wise man, who is voyaging o'er that sea,
Will make his sails robust because they are
A source of strength and shelter to himself.
The accomplished man, whose wisdom is to seek,
Should tread not on the portal of the Sháh.
Although the Sháh should be a mount of fire
Still would his servants find existence good,
For if such fire burn at the time of wrath
It will but shine the more when gratified.
The Sháh at whiles is milk and honey, whiles
A biting bane. His acts are like the sea ;
The moon is bright in heaven at his behest.
One getteth from the sea a pinch of sand,
Another hath the pearl within the shell.
Be all the world alive in Núshírwán,
And circling heaven aye subject to his will,
For he doth head the monarchs of the world,
And ornament the empire with all good."

To Búzurjmihr's oration Núshírwán
Gave heed, heart-joyed to look on him. The king

Was wont to give his largess on this wise :
If he said " Good ! " the largess was four purses,
But whensoe'er he said : " Good ! very good ! "
The gift amounted in that case to forty,
And when the treasurer reckoned with the Sháh
Each purse was taken at ten thousand drachms.[1]
The king of kings had said : " Good ! very good ! "
A speech equivalent to all that coin.
The treasurer brought with visage sunny-clear
The purses full of drachms to Búzurjmihr.

[1] *Cf.* p. 215, *note.*

PART III

THE STORY OF MAHBÚD AND OTHER MATTERS

ARGUMENT

The poet tells how Mahbúd, sometime chief minister of Núshírwán and a virtuous and blameless man, was done to death by the machinations of Zúrán, the chamberlain, and of a Jewish sorcerer, how too late Núshírwán discovered the plot, put the chamberlain and the Jew to death, and made all the amends in his power. The poet then tells how the presents sent by the Khán of Chín to Núshírwán were plundered on the way by the Haitálians, of the wars that followed and how Núshírwán married the daughter of the Khán. Firdausí then discourses of the justice of Núshírwán, of the happiness and prosperity of the world under his administration, and of the tribute paid to him by Cæsar and other potentates. The Part ends with a discourse of Búzurjmihr's on good words and good deeds.

NOTE

§§ 1 and 2. Sháh Kubád had left several sons, of whom Núshírwán was not the eldest, but he was the heir to the throne by his father's appointment, who appears also to have made some arrangement for his recognition as such with the Emperor Justin, or at all events to have suggested it. On Kubád's death his eldest son, Káús, claimed the throne, but the prime minister Mahbúd (Mebodes) was in a position to indicate what Kubád's wishes on the subject had been, and Núshírwán became Sháh. Another brother of his, however, Jam by name, was very popular but disqualified for the throne by a personal defect. In these circumstances a conspiracy was formed to overthrow Núshírwán and make Jam's son, Kubád, Sháh with Jam himself as regent, Kubád being still a child. The conspiracy, which had much influential support, was discovered, and a clean sweep—the usual course in such cases—made of the conspirators and all their male relations with the exception of Kubád, who ultimately escaped to Con-

stantinople and was well received by the Emperor Justinian. There is no account of the conspiracy in the Sháhnáma, but it has been mentioned here because the poisoning incident and the drastic vengeance that followed may have been transferred from it to the story of the fall of Mahbúd as given in the poem. The Western account of the fall of Mahbúd is entirely different.[1]

§ 1. Milk, which "turns" so easily, especially in a hot climate, would be regarded as more sensitive to evil influences than other foods. *Cf.* Burton's *Supplemental Nights*, vol iv. p. 243 and *note*.

§ 2. In view of Núshírwán's tardy repentance and his reparation to the kindred of Mahbúd it is interesting to find a Mebodes in high command in the Persian army in A.D. 578.[2]

§ 3. The account of the building of Súrsán is a doublet of that of Zíb-i-Khusrau.[3]

§§ 4–11. At this point the Turks come historically upon the scene under the leadership of their Khán, whom Tabarí calls Sinjibú. In A.D. 569 or 570 they threatened to invade Írán, and Núshírwán sent his son Hurmuzd against them. As Hurmuzd was the son of the daughter of the Khán it is evident that the alliance between Sinjibú and Núshírwán must have been entered into at a considerably earlier period. The object of the alliance was to crush the Haitálians, and this was done. Núshírwán occupied their territory up to the Oxus—the old traditional boundary of Írán—while the Khán annexed all to the north of that river, but, according to Persian accounts, withdrew on the approach of Hurmuzd. Firdausí does not mention Núshírwán's wars with the Haitálians, and represents them as being the aggressors. No doubt they would do their best to prevent friendly relations between their two formidable neighbours. Later on the Khán, as Tabarí tells us, hearing from the vanquished Haitálians that Írán had been tributary to them, wished to assert his claim to a similar payment and marched southwards, as mentioned above, with that object. He found, however, the frontier of Írán too well guarded and soon withdrew.[4]

§ 11. For the so-called tribute paid by Rúm to Írán see p. 187, and for the temple of Ázargashasp, p. 5.

§ 13. See p. 278. The formula of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds plays an important part in Zoroastrianism. One of the most beautiful passages in the Zandavasta, Yasht XXII,[5]

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[1] See NT, p. 147, *note*; GDF, v. 183; RSM, p. 377 *seq.*
[2] *Id.* p. 436. [3] See p. 259. [4] NT, p. 159 and *notes*.
[5] DZA, ii. 314 *seq.*

deals with the subject and may be paraphrased briefly and metrically thus :—

Once Zoroaster asked, so Text and Comment saith,
"How fares the good man's soul when he has tasted death?"
And this was Heaven's reply: "The soul still sits anigh
Its tenement of clay for thrice a day and night,
And chants the sacred hymns in uttermost delight.
It sings: 'Oh! happy he, the man whoe'er he be,
To whom the Great God grants all that he longed to see!'
And after that third night, at breaking of the dawn,
Mid lovely plants and scents that good man's soul is borne,
And from the South will come a perfume-laden air,
The sweetest breath e'er breathed; and then white-armed and fair,
Bright, beautiful, and young, a Maid will meet him there;
Whereat the good man's soul will question: 'Who art thou,
For never have I looked on loveliness till now?'
And she will make reply: 'Thy Conscience, youth! am I.
Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds, have made me thus to be,
And they were all thine own, and I grew thus through thee.'"

§ 1

The Story of Mahbúd, the Wazír of Núshírwán, and how Mahbúd and his Sons were slain by the Sorcery of Zúrán and a Jew

C. 1679 This matter ended, I proceed to tell
The story of Mahbúd, the minister.
Cease not from learning for a moment's spell,
And let not knowledge cause thy heart to err.
When thou shalt say: "My lust for wisdom I
Have satisfied and learned all needful lore,"
Fate playeth off some pretty trickery,
And putteth thee to discipline once more.
Now hearken to a rustic minstrel's lay,

Ta'en from the legends of a time long sped ; [1]
I questioned him of ages past away,
And this is what of Núshírwán he said :—
He had an upright minister, a man
Of vigilance, who was his treasurer,
Whose heart was full of wisdom and whose rede
Was right, whose sole ambition was fair fame.
This man so well disposed was named Mahbúd :
His soul and heart were full of good discourse.
He had two sons like jocund spring who served
Continually before the king, for he,
What time he was about to mutter prayer,
Or use the archimages' sacred twigs,[2]
Ate only what Mahbúd himself provided,
And trusted those two sons. He used to have
His kitchen in Mahbúd's house and demeaned
Himself as guest, and that good, famed man's sons
Themselves brought in the great king's meal. The nobles
Were wont to weep for envy of Mahbúd
At court. There was a magnate, one Zúrán,
Whose aspirations all were centred there.
He was an old man and Sháh's chamberlain,
Conspicuous at feasts and audiences ;
His visage ran with tears the whole year through C. 1680
In envy of Mahbúd and his two sons.
'Twas his endeavour to incense the Sháh
Against the doings of that holy man,
Yet failed to find an opening for slander
To set the monarch's mind against Mahbúd ;
But how should he—that man of wisdom—know
That he possessed an enemy at court
Since never had he cause to pale one whit
For all the words and practice of that knave ?

[1] Seven couplets omitted.
[2] See Vol. i. p. 80 *s.v. Báj* and *Barsam*.

A Jew, it happened, borrowed of Zúrán
One day some money to employ in trade.
He came and went, his influence grew, and he
Became that gloomy soul's associate.
Thus, as familiar with the chamberlain,
He came to be at home about the court,
And there one day conversed in confidence
Of spells, of court, the monarch of the world,
Of magic, necromancy, and black arts,
Of crookéd practices and villainy.
Zúrán, attending to the Jew's discourse,
And hearing of the secrets of his craft,
Told his own secret to the Jew, and said :—
" Discourse not of it save with me alone.[1]
Thou must perform a deed of sorcery,
And give the age its riddance of Mahbúd,
Because he hath attained to such high state
That he will dominate the age itself.
He careth not for any. Thou wouldst say,
To put it shortly : ' He is Núshírwán.'
Now he—the world-lord—will not take of food
Save only at the hands of this man's sons,
Who hath become so great through royal favour
That heaven kisseth evermore his skirt."

The Jew replied : " This cause need not increase
Thy grief. What time the Sháh and world-lord taketh
The sacred twigs mark well what meats are served,
And see if there be any milk therein.
Meet thou the serving-man and sniff the meats ;
'Twill serve if I but see the milk from far.
Then thou shalt see Mahbúd and his two sons
No more alive. Though he be brass or stone
That eateth he will perish instantly."

Zúrán attended to these words. His heart
Was freshened as he gazed upon the Jew ;

[1] Reading with P.

Whene'er he went to court the Jew went likewise ;
They had their secrets, joys, and feasts in common.
A season passed with matters in this stay :
The court was haunted by that evil teacher,
That court whereto each dawn Mahbúd's two sons
Were wont to turn their steps so joyfully.
Behind the curtains of their noble father
There was a pious dame and well advised,
Who, when Sháh Núshírwán desired some food,
Was wont to spread a golden tray for him,
And lay thereon three platters set with jewels ; C. 1683
The whole was covered with a golden napkin,
And used to come before the exalted Sháh,
Served by the two sons of the good Mahbúd.
The food consisted of rose-water, milk,
And honey. Núshírwán would eat and sleep.
One day it happened that the two young men
Were going with the tray to Núshírwán ;
It was conveyed upon a servant's head
To whom 'twas usual to entrust the food.
Zúrán, the chamberlain, beheld the tray
When coming to the palace of the Sháh,
And with a smile addressed the two youths thus :—
" Ye trusty lieges of Sháh Núshírwán !
Reveal for once the colour of these meats—
The Sháh's repast—because they savour well :
Withdraw the silken cover just this once."
The young men readily displayed the food.
Zúrán, who kept his distance, gazed thereon,
And in like manner did the Jew, who came,
When he had marked the colour of the meats,
And said thus to the chamberlain : " The tree
That thou hast planted cometh into fruit."
The two young men, both wise and vigilant,
Then carried in the tray to Núshírwán,
While after them Zúrán came quick as dust,

And thus addressed the Sháh, that noble man :—
" O Sháh, the just, the favoured by the stars !
Touch not these meats till they be tasted first.[1]
The cook hath mingled poison with the milk,
And may thine enemies partake thereof."
Sháh Núrshírwán, on hearing, turned his gaze
On those two youths whose mother was the cook—
A prudent dame affectioned of her kin.
They in their innocence and rectitude
Rolled up their sleeves. Howbeit when they ate
Some of that milk and honey thou hadst said :—
" Both have been stricken by an arrow." Both
Swooned on the spot and died there in the presence
Of Núshírwán ! The monarch of the world
Beheld, his cheeks like flower of fenugreek,
And gave commandment : " Let them raise in dust
The mansion of Mahbúd, respecting none,
Upon that dust let them cut off his head,
And may he and his cook both cease to be."
None in the palace of Mahbúd, and few
Among his kindred in the world, survived.
The Sháh gave all his goods, his women, children,
And hoarded wealth, to spoil. In that affair
Zúrán attained his wish, since Núshírwán
C. 1682 Was quit of that good man, and held the Jew
In high esteem who cloudward raised his head.
Heaven turned awhile with matters in this stay
While from the Sháh right hid its face away.

[1] Couplet omitted.

§ 2

How the Sorcery of Zúrán and the Jew in the Matter of Mahbúd was discovered, and how both were slain by Command of Núshírwán

The Sháh, the world-lord, purposed, as it chanced,
To hunt the wolf and bade that many a steed,
Used in the chase, should pass before his eyes,
Scanned them, and saw the brand-mark of Mahbúd.
His cheeks flamed at those Arab horses, love
Still had a place within him, and he burned.
He wept for pain and with heart sorely seared
Recalled to mind Mahbúd, and thus he said :—
" How much the wicked Dív made to transgress
That man of counsel and of high degree !
With that devotion and that rectitude
Why did his spirit seek the path of loss ? [1]
The Master of the world alone can tell
The hidden truth beneath the outward show."
He thence departed to the hunting-ground,
Seared at his heart and followed by his men.
Upon the route he talked with all and cheered
His heart with words. He took full many a minstrel,
And with their fascinations docked the way.
Now as the Sháh's chief minister and scribes
Were journeying with Zúrán in company
Their converse ran on spells and magic arts,
On witchcraft and pernicious Áhriman.
The king said to the archmages : " Trouble not
Your hearts concerning sorcery, but let
Your talk be all of God and of the Faith ;
Look not for marvels in black arts and magic."
Zúrán said : " Live for ever, and may wisdom
Feed on thy words. All that they say of witchcraft

[1] Reading with P.

Is true, though this is known but to adepts.
If food have milk therein they by a look
Can from a distance turn it into bane."

On hearing this a bygone time recurred
To Núshírwán. He thought upon Mahbúd,
And those two sons of his, and deeply sighed.
He looked upon Zúrán but held his peace,
And quickly urged his prancing charger on.
His mind was in a fume with thought because
Zúrán had been the foeman of Mahbúd.
C. 1683 He said : " I know not what this miscreant
Had done upon the day whereon I slew
Mahbúd, and that great house was overthrown.
Would that almighty God would make all plain,
And give my heart and brain tranquillity,
Because I spy this fellow's marks hereon,
And am fulfilled with sorrow for the past."

He journeyed on with sad and aching heart,
With lowering visage and with tearful eyes,
And, having reached the ending of the stage,
Set up his camp-enclosure by a stream.
Now when Zúrán had reached the tent they cleared
The place of strangers and the converse ran
Upon the means of witching milk and honey.
" It is my favourite subject," said Zúrán.

The Sháh then questioned him about Mahbúd,
And by what means his sons were done to death,
And heard the quaver in Zúrán's reply.
His crime became apparent. Núshírwán
Addressed him, saying : " Tell to me the truth,
Conceal it not and act not knavishly,
For knavery but causeth evil deeds,
And evil comrades will corrupt good hearts."

Zúrán told all the truth, revealed the secret,
Threw all the blame upon the Jew, and made
As though he were possessed by grief and anguish.

The great king, having listened, fettered him,
And sent to that enchanter of a Jew,
As swift as smoke, a rider with two steeds.
Whenas the Jew had reached the lofty court
The exalted monarch questioned him with mildness,
And said : " Inform me how the matter went,
And lie not to me touching this affair."
The Jew asked for protection from the world-lord
If he revealed the mystery of black art,
And then told what Zúrán had said with all
The matter of their secret conference.
The world-lord heard with wonder and convoked
The marchlords, potentates, and archimages,
And in their presence for the second time
Investigated every circumstance.
The evil-minded Jew told everything
Till naught was hidden from the chiefs. The Sháh
Then bade the deathsman rear two lofty gibbets,
From each whereof a twisted lasso hung,
Before the palace-portal in the presence
Of all the host. The executioner
Haled to the gibbets and suspended there
Zúrán on one, the Jew upon the other,
In savage wise. 'Neath showers of stones and arrows
They gave their heads up for bewitching milk.
Tread not the world for evil, for it will,
Past doubt, befall the practiser of ill.
The Sháh long sought for kindred of Mahbúd, C. 1684
If so he might find one that had escaped,
And found one damsel of unsullied name,
And three men eminent and excellent.
To these he gave all that Zúrán possessed,
As well as all the fortune of the Jew.
His soul kept burning on Mahbúd's account,
And in the night he wept till it was day,
Would pray to God for pardon and pour forth

His heart's blood on his bosom. He bestowed
Much largess on the mendicants and made
His tongue moreover prayerful unto God
That He might pardon what was done amiss,
And call him not tyrannic and unjust.
The worshipper of God, the pure of heart,
Will in no evil doings bear a part,
For though ill actions are not hard to do,
Yet in the end the heart is sure to rue.
Although thy heart shall be a flinty stone,
Yet in the end its secret will be known,
And low soever as thy voice may be
Time also will reveal the mystery,
While, even if the world shall not regard,
Good done in secret is its own reward.
If thou art innocent and pure of rede
A portion in both worlds will be thy meed.

§ 3

In Praise of the Wisdom of Núshírwán, and how he built the City of Súrsán

The matter of Zúrán and of the Jew
Is done, to wisdom now thy praise is due.
Just though thou art here is no tarrying ;
Thy fame will be thy memory, O king !
The unjust sovereign, when all is done,
Will have but sepulchre and malison,
But if in heart thou dealest righteously
Know that the world hath gained new grace by thee ;
So if, O chief ! thou wilt have praise in death
Let wisdom be thy leaf that flourisheth.
Thus, through my words, though Núshírwán is dead,
His justice hath achieved fresh lustihead.

As soon as all the world acknowledged him
He used his greatness only to win praise,
Both great and small reposed in peace while wolf
And sheep were watered at one fount. The mighty
Did service to him and were fain to have
His name upon their diadems, the neck
Had respite from the clasp of habergeon,
The warriors loosed their coats of mail, the shoulder
Had ease from sparth and sword, and naught was heard
But sounds of mirth. None strove against the world-lord,
The tribute and the taxes everywhere
Were paid. He took toil easily and loved C. 1685
The gear of chase and riding-ground. He sat
Within his palace arabesqued with gold,
And uttered counsel even in his cups.
He built a city on the road to Rúm
About two leagues in length. Within were mansions,
And halls and gardens, on one hand a river
And, on the other, heights. He built himself
A palace in the city with a hall
Of audience arabesqued with gold ; the vaulting
Was all in gold and silver, with the gold
Inlaid with divers kinds of precious stones.
He built a cupola of ebony
And ivory with figures of the same
And teak. Artificers from Rúm and Hind,
Whoever was a master in his craft,
And had inherited his master's skill,[1]
With all the illustrious artists of Írán,
As well as from the province of Nímrúz,
He gathered in that city, for it was
At once a great seat and a place of trade.
The prisoners of war brought from Barbar,
From Rúm, and from the parts laid desolate,

[1] Perhaps "Or had been recommended by his master."

He furnished with a dwelling-house apiece,
And made the city one of aliens.
The Sháh, the glory of the provinces,
Made of that city an attractive spot,
And, when complete, encircled it with hamlets.
The Sháh provided tracts of arable ;
The soil was fruitful and the trees bore well.
He settled there the hostages from Lúch,
Gílán, and other ravaged provinces,
Assigning occupation to each man,
And gave to each a helper if alone.
He furnished artisans, field-labourers,
And men to measure and survey the land,
Along with traders and with devotees,
With men of station and with underlings.
He decked that city as 'twere Paradise ;
The eye marked no unseemly spot therein.
He called the city by the name Súrsán,
For world-lords take delight in festivals.[1]
His only aim in public and in private
Was justice and the improvement of the world.
Since from the kingship time bare him away,
And made his crown another's to possess,
'Twill grant not thee an ever-during stay,
So purge thy heart of deeds of wickedness.
Know that this world is but a tricky show ;
Man keepeth nothing be it high or low.

§ 4

The Story of the War of the Khán with Ghátkar, the Prince of the Haitálians, the defeat of Ghátkar, and how they set Faghánish[2] *upon the Throne*

C. 1686 Hear how the Khán and the Haitálians fought,
And since a fight is toward take thy mace.

[1] Súr, a feast. [2] Faghâní (Chaghání ?) in original. *Cf.* p. 333.

Thus said the rustic bard, that noble one ;
Keep thou in mind what thou shalt hear from him :—
Of all the chiefs possessed of Grace and justice,
Of men of war, of treasure, and high birth,
Omitting Nushírwán, there was not one
To match the Khán of Chín in all the world.
All people from that realm to the Jíhún
Paid homage to him as their sovereign.
That chief with troops, with treasure, and with crown,
Was camped on the Gulzaryún upon
The further side of Chách. Reports had spread,
Among the great men and throughout the world,
Of Núshírwán, his manhood, knowledge, Grace,
His greatness and imperial usages.
Then was it that the Khán, that prudent man,
Desired to win the friendship of the king.
He sat awhile with his own counsellors,
And all the men of name were gathered there.
In his desire for amity he sought
The counsel of the nobles and the priests,
Got ready presents that exceeded count—
All keepsakes worthy of a king's acceptance—
Of Rúman chargers and brocade of Chín,
Of thrones and crowns and swords and signet-rings ;
He got him ready five-score camel-loads
Of sundry trinkets that the land produced,
And bade his treasurer provide as largess
A hundred thousand of dínárs of Chín.
He also brought and added to the present
Ten camel-loads of drachms out of his treasures.
He then chose out a man of eloquence
Among his chiefs—a wise and travelled man—
And called a scribe before him with command
To write a letter from the Khán of Chín
On silk, as was the custom of the country,
Profuse in courteous greetings to the Sháh.

The envoy's way lay through the Haitálians' land—
A route beset by shaft and battleax—
Before whose ruler stood a host whose lines
From Sughd extended down to the Jíhún.
That people's ruler hight Ghátkar the brave—
The most distinguished of their warriors—
Who when he heard of what the Khán had done,
And of his presents to the Íránian king,
Called from the host his veterans, discoursed
To them at large about the case, and said :—
C. 1687 " Ill hath befallen us from the stars. If now
The monarch of Írán and Khán of Chín
Negotiate and thus become good friends,
That friendship will hold menace for ourselves,
And this our state be wasted on two sides.
We needs must make a foray and deprive
The envoy of his life."
He chose among
The troops a man of name, of rank, and prowess,
Such as befitted, gave up all that wealth,
The camels and the steeds caparisoned,
To plunder and cut off the envoy's head.
One horseman of those warriors of Chín
Escaped. Now when the tidings reached the Khán
His heart was filled with grief, his head with vengeance.
He marched an army from Káchár Báshí ;
No chief was left in Chín or in Khutan.
He let no scion of Afrásiyáb,
Or of Arjásp, partake of rest and sleep.
They all marched forth to the Gulzaryún
With full hearts and with heads set on revenge.
The captain of the army of the Khán
Of Chín was Funj, who made dust reek to heaven.
At Chách the fury of the horsemen flushed
The waters of Gulzaryún rose-red.
Ghátkar heard of the doings of the Khán,

And chose an army from the Haitálians,
An army that obscured the sun, and called
For treasure, money, troops, and arms from Balkh,
Shaknán, Ámwí, the Zam, Khatlán, Tirmid,
And Wísagird ; he gathered troops from all sides ;
From mount and waste, from sands and places bare,
They seethed like ants and locusts. When the Khán
Had passed the mighty river with his host,
With drums and lusty elephants, he massed
His powers round Mái and Margh ; the sun became
As dusky as a falcon's plumes.[1] Bukhárá
Was all fulfilled with mace and ax; for there
The ruler of the Haitálians was encamped.
Ghátkár had come forth with a mighty host,
And gathered all the native chiefs. The troops
Advanced from every quarter to the war,
And left the wind no way. What with the flashing
Of chieftains' swords and play of massive maces,
Thou wouldst have said : " Now iron hath a tongue,
And air a mace for its interpreter ! "
A wind arose, rose too the army's dust,
And light departed from the sun and moon.
Men of Kashán and Sughd were gathered there.
Tears filled the eyes of all—men, women, children—
As to the issue of that battlefield, C. 1688
And whom the circling sun and moon would favour.
For one whole week those battle-loving hosts
Were opposites. On all sides lay the slain
In heaps, and dust and stones were cercis-like
With blood. So thick were spear, mace, sparth, and sword
That thou hadst said : " The clouds are raining stones ! "
The sun evanished in the reek ; dust filled
The eyes of eagles as they flew. It veered,

[1] Couplet omitted.

Upon the eighth day, 'gainst Ghátkar, the world
Was all bedarkened like night azure-dim,
The Haitálians were o'erthrown, irreparably
For years, the wounded scattered everywhere,
And all the march was full of slain and captives.
The living from their hearts invoked God's name,
And said to one another : " Ne'er have we
Seen such a stubborn fight. Good sooth ! yon host
Is not of men ; 'tis ill to look on them ;
They have the faces of wild beasts and dívs,
And heed not right and wrong. Thou wouldst have said :—
' They know not what it is to flee away
From scimitar and spear, from mace and sword.'
They all have dragon-faces and could pierce
A mountain with their spears, they all have claws
Like pards and hearts insatiate of war
And strife, ne'er take the saddle off their steeds,
And think a battle naught. Their chargers batten
On thorns, their riders sleep not but are watchful ;
They pass the nights in foray and attack,
And hazarding their persons in the flames.
They know not food or sleep. Would that the Dív
Would challenge them to fight ! We cannot strive
Against the Khán, and we must seek Írán.
If now Ghátkar will carry out our wishes
He will submit to Núshírwán, surrender
The Haitálians' land to him, and think no more
Of mace and sparth ; but if not we will choose
Some bold chief of the race of Khúshnawáz,
Some man acceptable to Núshírwán,
One that can make our state renew its youth,
To tell the Khán's proceedings to the Sháh.
The whole world praiseth Núshírwán, for he
Hath Grace, high bearing, destiny, and wisdom,
And wisdom is the cherisher of right.

He hath made Cæsar tributary. None
Can strive with Núshírwán."
The Haitálians—
Men, women, children—were at one herein.
There was a high-born warrior of Chaghán, C. 1689
Aspiring, youthful, fortunate, and just—
A man of wisdom, Faghánish by name,
Possessing troops and treasures of his own :
The chiefs and warriors [1] called him to the throne.

§ 5

How Núshírwán had Tidings of the Battle of the Khán with the Haitálians and how he led a Host against the Khán

Thereafter to the great king tidings came
About the Khán, who was a valiant chief,
The Haitálians and the warriors of that folk,
And how he had o'erthrown them in the fight ;
Moreover of the monarch of Chaghán,
Just seated by new fortune on the throne,
How he had taken that imperial seat,
And, while the brave and glorious warriors
Stood, one and all, before his throne, was ever
Engaged in consultation with his magnates.
The monarch of the world sat full of care
At these his wary emissaries' words,
Then in his palace had a hall prepared
For session, and the warrior-lieges came
With the high priest Ardshír, with Yazdagird,
The scribe, and with Shápúr. These counsellors,
And sages, all held session at the throne
Of Núshírwán, who said : " Ye archimages
Experienced and ye ministers of state !
I have discomfortable news—accounts

[1] Reading with P.

At once unpleasant and injurious—
About the Haitálians and what the Khán
Of Chín and marchlords of Túrán have done.
Troops gathered past all count from Chách, from Chín,
Khutan and Turkistán. They bore their helms
And vengeful scimitars for one whole week,
And never once unsaddled. In the end
The Haitálians were discomfited and most
Were slain or wounded. With renown like theirs—
A folk whose world is mace and partisan—
'Tis wonderful that they were worsted thus :
Defend me from a foolish general !
Had but Ghátkar had prudence and good sense
The sky itself had routed not his host.
The Haitálians, since their land is thus distraught,
Have sought a man descended from Bahrám Gúr,
Have placed him on the throne as their new king,
And done obeisance to him, one and all.
The Khán is posted on this side of Chách
In all his pride with treasure, host, and crown ;
C. 1690 He is descended from Afrásiyáb
And from Arjásp, and dreameth of Irán.
His triumph o'er the army of Ghátkar
Exalteth him in head above the sun.
It is not well for us that we should be
At one in such a story with the Khán.
Kashán, the land wherefrom this folk of Chín
Derive their strength, pertaineth to our realm.
Our subjects are oppressed by them and yield
To them their persons, boundaries, and treasure ;
What are your views herein, and how shall we
Deal with the Turkmans and the Khán of Chín ? "

The prudent magnates rose and made reply,
First praised the Sháh, and said : " O fortunate
And prescient Sháh ! all the Haitàlian march
Is very Áhriman, the folk thereof

Are double-faced and hostile to our coast.
They merit any ill that they may get,
Although the Sháh is right to speak them fairly.
Had we no grievance, nothing to avenge
In their case save the blood of Sháh Pírúz,
That noble man whom suddenly they slew,
And such a king—the lustre of the world!
May they joy not one day, for right from wrong
Resulteth never. Such is God's requital:
Ill cometh on the heads of all ill-doers.
Now if the Sháh referreth to the Khán
As one vindictive with an ancient grudge,
It may be that he hath ill counsellors—
Some tearful scions of Afrásiyáb.
Success too may have heartened him: no marvel
If thou dost fear him. As for the Haitálians,
And for Ghátkar's host, neither think nor trouble
Concerning them, but let thy shrewd mind turn
To what the kindred of Afrásiyáb
And of Arjásp, and what the Khán, who now
Is stablished on our bank, are doing. Thou art
The world's exalted king, both soul and wisdom
Derive their light from thee, and he is blest
Whom wisdom nourisheth. Thou art more wise
Than this great concourse and thou hast no need
Of sage or counsellor. The crown and throne
Become thee best of all the world, for thou
Hast Grace divine and might, thou fortunate!
Still if the Sháh shall go to Khurásán
He will have cause to tremble for his realm.
Hosts ever and anon will come from Rúm,
On seeing that our land is left unkinged,
Exact revenge upon the Íránians,
And leave not to Írán or field or fell.
None yet hath set his foot upon our land,
Or meditated evil on this realm,

Yet if the Sháh show fight the crocodiles
Will stir not in the streams for fear of him."

C. 1691 On hearing what they said of peace and war
That master of the world agnized full well
The feeling that those sages had at heart—
That none of them had any wish for war,
Preferring rather feasts and pleasuring—
And answered : " God be praised, whom I revere
In both worlds, that Írán through quiet, sleep,
And feasting, hath forgotten how to fight !
Preferring peaceful times and banquet-hall
Ye have become indifferent to war ;
Yet ease should follow toil, the body's travail
Hath treasure for its fruit ; so in God's strength
Will we at this month's end prepare to march.
I will lead forth a host to Khurásán,
Will summon troops from all the provinces—
The men of name and warriors—and bind
The drums upon the lusty elephants.
I will not leave Haitálian or Khán
To call down blessings on Íránian soil,
But I will weed the world of all the wicked,
And by my largess and mine equity
Regenerate the realm."
The nobles marvelled,
Applauded him, excused themselves, and said :—
" Triumphant Sháh, endowed with Grace and justice !
Oh ! may this age rejoice in thy commands.
We chiefs are all thy thralls and bow our heads
To thy behest and counsel. When the king
Shall bid us fight he will not find us wanting."
So when the Sháh sat with his counsellors
The conclave held debate a while thereon.
Thus was it till the new moon rose and sat
On its new throne. They saw the moon withal
Upon the Sháh's own face, and acclamations

Rose from his court. Whenas the shining Lamp
O'ertopped the mountains, and the earth resembled
A golden saddle-cover, thou hadst said :—
" They have set a topaz cup upon a robe
Of lapis-lazuli." A shout and blare
Of trump arose. They bound the kettledrums
Upon the elephants, the soldiers trooped
To camp, and with them went the tymbal-players.
Then Yazdagird, the scribe, came to the court
With counselling archmages and Ardshír.
They wrote a letter unto every province,
To every man of name and every chief :—
" The Sháh hath marched forth with the host to war,
So out of loyalty forgo your feastings."
The Sháh bade send a letter to the Khán,
He offered greetings too to Faghánish,
And marched an army forth from Madá'in
That covered all the world except the sea ;
Earth was all troops from mountain unto mountain, C. 1692
And at their centre was the world-lord's flag.
The monarch led forth to Gurgán a host
That hid the sun. He rested for a space
O'er mount and meadow to pursue the chase.

§ 6

How the Khán had Tidings of the Coming of the Host of Núshírwán to Gurgán and wrote a Letter in the Cause of Peace

The Sháh took counsel with his troops what while
The Khán abode at Sughd, which everywhere
Was like a sea with kinsmen of Arjásp
And of Afrásiyáb. The Khán said : " Earth
Will not support this host and throne of mine.
I will lead hence the army to Írán,

And onward to the cities of the brave,
Will bear the very dust away to Chín,
And set the heaven warring with the earth.
I will allow not any to possess
Crown, throne, or kingship, dignity or fortune."
Such was the language that he held awhile,
Ambitioning the world with troops and fame,
Until the tidings came about the Sháh,
How he had marched forth from Írán in state,
Of his victorious fortune and his might,
And how his army stretched from sea to sea.
The Khán was troubled when he heard the news
That stayed his purposed inroad, and he sat
In anxious conclave with his counsellors.
The great men of the army were assembled,
And he addressed his minister : " We cannot
Afford to blink these tidings. Núshírwán,
I hear, hath reached Gurgán and spread the realm
With troops. Good sooth, he hath not news of us,
Or hath a witless head. Mine army stretcheth
From Chín to the Jíhún, the world is 'neath
The glory of my crown. I needs must go
And face him in the fight. Delay will shroud
The lustre of my name. Himself he deemeth
The limit and that none is king but he.
Now shall he learn of mine own warriorship,
For I will face him with the cavaliers
Of Chín."
A wise man thus addressed the Khán :—
" O monarch of the earth ! think not to fight
Against the Sháh, and give not to the winds
Thy realm and host. None of the kings, unless
His heart and counsel lour, ambitioneth
C. 1693 The Sháh's seat, for none hath his Grace and fortune :
The moon in heaven hath not such a mien.
He claimeth tribute both from Hind and Rúm,

Wherever there is wealth or peopled land.
He is the lord of crown, the ornament
Of throne, the conquering master of the world,
And fortunate."
The Khán took fitting order,
On hearing this, and asked his shrewd adviser :—
" What aspect hath this matter to the wise ?
Two points confront us which we may not shun,
And cannot readily pass o'er in silence :
If war with him is toil and nothing more
There is no better course than spending treasure.
Dínárs can not be used to purchase raiment,
Or food or carpetings when war is toward,
But can procure peace, provand, fair attire,
And carpetings. Let all afraid of ill
Spurn drachms and be at ease."
Then from the host
He chose ten fluent speakers apt for parle ;
A learnéd man of Chín too wrote a letter,
All compliments, decked like his idol-houses,
And to the king's court those ten prudent horsemen
Set forth with much to say. Now when men brought
The news to Núshírwán he decked the palace
Of king of kings, then bade to raise the curtain,
And introduce the envoys joyfully.
The ten went in before the king, and took
With them the letter, offerings, and gifts.
The world-lord, when he saw, received them well,
Inquired about the Khán and made them sit.
They bent their heads before him to the ground,
And gave the message of the Khán of Chín.
There was a letter written in that tongue
On silk, and this the envoy laid before
The scribe. When Yazdagird began to read it
The company were filled with wonderment
Thereat. It first of all invoked the blessing

Of God, the All-just, upon the king of earth,
Next manifested forth the eminence,
Wealth, army, arms, and greatness of the Khán,
And thirdly said : " Faghfúr of Chín himself
Acclaimeth me, unasked bestowed upon me
His daughter, and his host is mine to bid.
'Tis for the presents that I sent the Sháh,
Which the Haitálians stopped upon the way,
That I came forth from Chách to take revenge,
To take the crown and treasure from Ghátkar,
So came from the Gulzaryún that all
The waters of Jíhún grew red with blood,
For when in Chín news reached us of the Sháh,
I praised the teller of his victories,
C. 1694 His manliness, his wisdom, modesty,
And learning, and in secrecy desired
All friendship with the monarch of the world."
Now when the Sháh discovered from the letter
The power, the might, and purpose of the Khán,
They made a lodging ready for the envoys,
Praised and made much of them. Whene'er the board
Was spread for feast and revelry the king
Invited them, and for a month they shared
With him the hall, the banquet, and the chase.
One day he held his court upon the plain,
The air was darkened with the horsemen's dust,
And all the marchlords with their golden girdles,
Men of Balúch and Gíl with golden bucklers,
Attended in a body at that court,
Attended to do service to the Sháh,
And brought three hundred steeds caparisoned
With gold, and scimitars with golden scabbards.
Swords, double-headed darts, and javelins glittered :
Thou wouldst have said : " Gold is compact with iron."
Upon one elephant, whose back was all
Housed in brocade, they set a turquoise throne,

Nile-blue, and bruit and stir filled earth and air,
Enough to deafen even the best of ears.
The ambassadors from Barda', Hind, and Rúm,
From every sovereign and peopled realm,
And from the spear-armed horsemen of the desert,
Went in a body to the king who thus
Proved to the men of Chín : " Mine is the sway,
Mine from the sun down to the Fish's back." [1]
Air was all stir and dust of horsemen, earth
All armature of war. They made mock-battle
Upon the plain whereon there sallied forth
The warlike cavaliers and wheeled awhile
In pride with sparth and arrow, mace and bow.
The plain was full of spear and javelin-men,
And here were foot, there horse. The envoys, sent
From every clime by every chief and ruler,
Astonied at his host and equipage,
His countenance, his glory, and address,
Held talk with one another, saying thus
In whispers : " This is an exalted Sháh !
He seeketh honour, showeth horsemanship,
Displayeth to the warriors of the host
His spear-point, and the skill that he hath shown us
We ought to lay to heart that on returning,
Each to our king, we may remember it,
And say : ' None, young or old, hath seen one like
Sháh Núshírwán.' "
They told to the world's king
The sayings of the ambassadors in private.
He bade his treasurer bring upon the field C. 1695
His battle-gear, had body-armour brought,
With helm and mail, and bade undo the buckles.[2]
No lusty warrior, though broad of breast,
Could lift the breastplate even from its place !

[1] See Vol. i. p. 71.

[2] " les boutons (qui joignaient le casque à la cuirasse) " (Mohl).

The Sháh alone had chest and neck to bear
The body-armour, mace, and morion.
There was no archer in the host like him,
And no such warrior among the nobles.
Like some fierce elephant he sought the field
With ox-head mace in hand and under him
A fiery steed ; his stature 'mazed the throng.
A shout rose and the blast of clarions,
While bells resounded from the elephants' backs,
And drummers with their cymbals led the way ;
Earth was in travail 'neath the horses' hoofs.
The king of kings, helmed on an armoured steed,
Wheeled to the left and right. The ambassadors
Applauded him and louted to the ground.
The world-lord sought his palace from the plain,
And all the chieftains followed in his train.

§ 7

How Núshírwán answered the Letter of the Khán

The Sháh then bade a scribe come with Ardshír,
The high priest, and the scribe drew up on paper
A royal letter in the olden tongue.
He bathed his pen's two cheeks with ambergris,
And first gave praises to the Judge of all—
The Maker of the sky, height, depth, and love :—
" We all are thralls, He is the King of kings,
And wisdom beareth witness to His might.
No breath can pass, no emmet tread the ground,
Unless by His command. Him have I prayed
To further, if He will, my benison
Upon the Khán. Now, first, for what thou saidest
About the Haitálians : ' They have girt up,
As I have told to thee, their loins for ill ;
They have shed blood unjustly, wantonly,

And have been taken in their proper toils : '
The evil-doer, though of lion's strength,
Must not be bold with God. Though these men bare
Themselves like leopards thou hast conquered them.
Again, for what thou said'st about thy treasure,
Host, puissance of Faghfúr, his throne and crown :
The sage is not at one with him that speaketh
Of his own greatness. Never hast thou seen C. 1696
The crown and throne of greatness, and the host
And march of Chách to thee are wonderful.
All greatness is a question of degree :
What star is higher than all other stars ?
Such is the language to be held with one
That seeth not treasure, army, march, or travail.
The mighty of the world have seen or heard,
If they have seen not, me, that I account not
The sea of Chín as water, and that mountains
Flee from my wrath. Earth is my treasury,
My care extendeth over sea and land.
Now, in the third place, thou wouldst be my friend,
And hast at heart to make with me a league.
Since thou art fain to feast I will not fight,
For no one e'er preferreth fight to feast,
And furthermore a wise man never seeketh
To fight against a man of high renown,
Still less with one compact of war, no laggard
Upon the day of battle, used to strife,
In battle-time requiring no instructor,
And one that in the fiercest of the mellay
Is as heart-calm as when enthroned and crowned.
May He that made the world be thine ally,
Thy crown and signet still continue bright."
They sealed this with the Sháh's seal, gave new lustre
To royal crown and throne, prepared a robe
Of honour, as the royal usage is,

And bade the envoys come before the Sháh,
Who gave them verbal messages withal
In further explication of the letter.
The envoys well content then left the palace,
Set forth with acclamations on their way,
And came with tongues all praise before the Khán.
That world-experienced one put all folk forth ;
His minister attended at his throne.
The Khán called in the envoys and inquired
At large of them concerning Núshírwán,
First of his sense, his knowledge, and his counsel,
His mien, his conversation, and his stature ;
And secondly : " How many troops hath he,
And who of them hath crown and signet-ring ? "
Inquired about his rule, if just or not,
About his realm, his treasure, host, and crown.
The spokesman of the envoys loosed his tongue,
And answered touching all that he had seen.
He told the Khán : " Account not Núshírwán,
O king ! as one inferior to thyself.
A hundred ages see but few like him
For leadership, for statesmanship, and favour.
At home, at feast, at war, and at the chase
We never looked on such a sovereign.
In height he is a cypress-tree, in strength
An elephant ; his hand is like the Nile
C. 1697 For bounty ; throned he is a trusty sky,
In battle-tide a baleful crocodile.
When he is wroth he roareth like a cloud ;
The mighty lion quaileth at his voice,
But gentle is it when he revelleth,
And his warm utterances ravish hearts.
In state and throne he is the blest Surúsh ;
He is a royal and fruit-bearing Tree.
The whole folk of Írán compose his host,
And are the adorers of his diadem.

What time he holdeth court upon the plain
The world itself containeth not his troops.
His mace-men all have golden belts and all
His ministers decore and Grace divine.
As for the steps up to his ivory seat,
His elephants, thrones, armlets, torques and crowns,
No one in all the world can estimate
His state except the almighty Judge of all.
Although his foeman were an iron mount
'Twould be a needle's eye before his wrath.
Let him that is aweary of his life
Wax fierce and counter Núshírwán in strife ! "

§ 8

How the Khán bethought himself and wrote offering his Daughter in Marriage to Núshírwán

On hearing this the Khán turned wan and like
The flower of fenugreek, his heart grew full
Of terror at the words, his brain was rent
By his solicitude. He sat in dudgeon
With his advisers, and he thus addressed
That noble company : " Ye men of wisdom !
What is our rede herein ? Who can be more
Concerned and hurt than I by this mischance ?
He must not conquer in the fight or all
Our fame will turn to infamy."
The sages
Took cognisance of all the affair and spake,
Suggesting divers lines of policy.
Then said the Khán : " Our policy is this—
To send a pledge of good faith to the Sháh,
To take a deeper view and to arrange
That he shall be affined to me. I have
Full many a daughter in my ladies' bower—
All crowns upon the heads of noble dames—

And I will wed one to the king of kings,
And thus cut short my cares in that regard.
If we make blood-relationship with him
None will advise him to our detriment.
On his side it will be a joy and honour,
While war with any other is a jest." [1]
The chiefs approved the counsel of the king,
And cried : " That is the course."
C. 1698 He chose three men
Of rank out of the host, men that could speak,
And grasp an answer. He unlocked his hoards
Of coin and said : " Why should we treasure jewels
Save to win fame, shun shame, or occupy
In largess, feasting, and expedient ? "
He had a gift made ready such as none,
Or great or small, e'er had beheld, and calling
A well experienced scribe declared his mind.
He first of all gave praises to the Maker,
All-wise, all-powerful, and all-sustaining,
The Lord of Saturn and of Sun and Moon,
The Lord of victory and mastery,
Who asketh from his slaves but righteousness,
And brooketh not that justice should be balked :—
" His blessing be upon the Íránian king,
The Lord of scimitar, of mace, and helm,
The Lord of understanding, crown, and throne,
And dowered by the God of victory
With fortune and content. The king of kings,
Of royal race, wise, weighty, learned, and just,
Is ware that men, albeit great and noble,
Fain would be dear in other men's regard.
Now when my sage ambassadors, the men
That are both mine associates and allies,
Had come back from thy court to mine and told me
At large about the Sháh—his justice, wisdom,

[1] Reading with P.

Good fortune, crown, pre-eminence, and throne—
His Grace divine caused to arise in me
A great desire to shadow 'neath his wings.
Now naught is dearer than our own heart's blood,
And prudent children and our hearts are one ;
So let him, if he will, demand of me
One of my stainless daughters—her that is
Most gentle, fair, discreet—and she in sooth
Shall profit him, the marches of Irán
And Chín shall meet, our worship be the more."
This was all written out on silk of Chín,
And carried with the seal to the wazír.
The Khán selected from among his kin
Three men of noble rank and eloquence,
And they departed from the exalted court
Írán-ward to the exalted Sháh who, when
He heard thereof, prepared his crown and sat
Upon his royal throne of ivory.
So those three men of prudence and high rank
Arrived before the exalted throne. They brought
Three turbans, of dínárs some thirty thousand,
And laid them as a gift before the Sháh.
The gifts of gold and silver, the brocade
Of Chín, made earth more brilliant than the sky.
Now when the envoys duly had been seated
They called down blessings in their native tongue,
And then the Sháh's chief minister prepared C. 1699
Fit lodging for them. Heaven revolved one night,
And when the bright sun rose above the mountains
The Sháh sat down upon the turquoise throne,
And set a crown of jewels on his head.
He ordered that the archmages and the chiefs
Should sit in conclave with the famous sages,
And said thus : " Bring and lay before the scribe
The letter writ on silk."

The nobles all

Sat round while Yazdagird drew near the Sháh,
And read the letter which amazed the throng,
Such good will, fair excuse, and compliment
Were patent in the utterance of the Khán.
All those illustrious and prudent chiefs
Began to praise the king: "Thanks be to God,
With whom our refuge is, that He hath set
Upon the state a Sháh endowed with Grace,
With victory, and majesty, a Sháh
Good, kind, and prudent, one that is in fight
A mighty, raging elephant, in feast
A gallant host. All foes are underlings
Of thine, if they be worthy of that title.
We all were fearful of this power from Chách,
And of the Khán, who hath both crown and treasure,
By the imperial Grace is now our friend,
And seeketh with the Sháh affinity.
One that is wise among the warrior-chiefs
Will tender peace and justice. Since the Khán
Is ware that he can not withstand the Sáhh
He seeketh for affinity to him.
There should be no delay in this affair,
For such affinity disgraceth none.
His troops extend from Chín up to Bukhárá,
And all the chiefs are under his protection."

Now when the Sháh heard what those sages said—
Those magnates and archmages shrewd of heart—
They cleared the hall of strangers and then brought
The ambassadors in haste before the Sháh.
The king of kings received them graciously,
And set them near the throne. Those chosen men
Of Chách beheld the chief in all his pomp
Of troops, wealth, crown, and gave their master's message,
Protesting that their words were true. The Sháh,
When he had heard the fervent words thus uttered

In gentle accents by the chiefs of Chín,
Replied : " The Khán is great, wise, worshipful,
Desireth kinship with us through his child,
And illustrateth thus his own good will.
The man whom understanding maketh wise
Will look upon affairs with wisdom's eye ;
We will take order, will advise us well, C. 1700
And make response to all that he hath said
On this condition—that the Khán of Chín
Shall give our heart the liberty of choice.
I will dispatch a wise man who shall look
On all his women-folk and shall select
The most illustrious and dear to him,
See what her own maternal grandsire was,
And her own quality of royal birth.
When what we name shall have been done the Khán
Will have performed his portion of the pact."
The envoys called down praises, saying thus :—
" The Khán of Chín rejoiceth in the Sháh,
And were his ladies' bower a cloud of jewels
He would withhold it not from Núshírwán.
Select among the sages one to go
Before the Khán whose ladies shall not fail
In that one's sight their faces to unveil."

§ 9

How Núshírwán answered the Letter, and sent Mihrán Sitád to see and fetch the Daughter, of the Khán

The king of kings heard what they said ; the age,
Outworn, revived for him. He called a scribe,
Spake of the Khán at large, and bade indite
An answer couched in choice and gracious terms.

He first gave praises to almighty God,
"The World-lord, Conqueror, and Nourisher.
The world is 'stablished by His ordinance;
He is our Guide to good. He giveth worth
To whom He will and from abasement raiseth
Such to high heaven, the while another man
Is left in luckless case because unfavoured
By Him to Whom I own that thanks are due
For every blessing, and of Whom my heart
Is fearful when I do amiss. I would
That life should cease within my heart if I
E'er should desist from hope and fear in Him.
The worshipful ambassador hath come,
And brought a gracious message from the Khán.
Heard have I what was said about a league,
And of the virtuous daughters of his house:
My heart would joy to be allied to him,
And in especial through his own chaste child.
Lo! I have sent to thee a prudent man,
A man whose mind esteemeth wisdom dear.
On coming he will tell thee all my views
As touching this alliance first and last.
C. 1701 Mayst thou for ever have a reverent mind,
Be happy-hearted and our warm friend still."
The writer, when the pen was out of work,
Embellished all the paper, rolled it up,
And, when the last tears of the pen were dry,
Affixed a seal of musk. The Sháh bestowed
A robe of honour on the ambassadors,
Such as amazed the company, and chose
A wise old chief, by name Mihrán Sitád,
And five score famed Íránian cavaliers,
All men renowned, discreet, and eloquent,
And said thus to Mihrán Sitád: "Go forth
Glad and triumphant, and with love and justice.
Be thine the fluent tongue of chiefs, be wisdom

Thy guide, thy heart all lovingkindliness.
Scan well the women's quarters of the Khán,
And throughly search out all their good and ill.
They must not fool thee with a mere display
Of countenance, of grace, and ornament.
The Khán hath many daughters stately, tall,
And crowned, behind his curtains, and of these
The offspring of his slaves are not for me,
Although they have a king to father them ;
Look thou for one that is both meek and good,
Whose mother is descended from the Kháns.
If she hath gifts according to her birth
She will rejoice the world and live in joy."

Mihrán Sitád, when he had heard, invoked
Much blessing on the crown and throne, and left
The portal of the world-illuming Sháh
At a propitious season on the day
Khurdád. News of his coming reached the Khán,
Who sent out troops to welcome him, and when
He reached the presence of the Khán he kissed
The ground and proffered praise. On seeing him
That world-aspiring king received him well,
Assigning him an honourable room,
But, being much concerned at the affair,
Withdrew to the apartments of the queen,
Declared to her the words of Núshírwán,
Spake of his treasures and his host, and "This
Sháh Núshírwán," he told her, "is still young,
And wary, and his fortune is young also.
Fain am I to bestow on him a daughter
To magnify our worship in his sight.
One such I have, concealed behind the veil—
A Crown upon the head of lady-hood,
The fairest of the fair throughout the world,
And many a chief hath sought her at my hands.
I love her so that never would I cease

To gaze upon her face. I have four others—
The offspring of my slaves, themselves both slaves
And handmaids, clever girls—and one of them
Will I bestow on him, and rest from warfare,
And from dispute."

C. 1702 The queen replied to him :—
"None in the world will oust thee, thou'rt so wise!"
In such discourse they passed the night away
Until the sun ascended o'er the mountains,
And then Mihrán Sitád arrived, drew near
The throne, and gave the letter. When the Khán
Had read he smiled upon the union
And goodly choice proposed, gave up the key
That oped his ladies' bower, and said : "Go look
On what is hidden there."
Four trusty slaves
Came to accompany Mihrán Sitád,
Who, when he heard the Khán, went with the key
And them withal. He oped the doors. They entered,
The slaves protesting to him : "Never star
And sun and moon have seen the sight that thou
Art on thy way to see!"
The ladies' bower
Was Paradise adorned—all Suns and Moons
And goodly havings—while upon the throne
Five fay-faced maidens sat crowned and arrayed
In treasures, save the daughter of the queen,
Who wore no crown or bracelet, torque or jewel,
But only had on her a well-worn robe,
And for a crown her musky locks divine.
Her cheeks were made not up : she only wore
What God had given her—a Cypress she,
Surmounted by a new moon that diffused
A lustre o'er the new throne where she sat.
Now when Mihrán Sitád came and beheld
He saw none like to her, and, being shrewd

Of heart and counsel, knew that king and queen
Were fooling him. The damsel used her hands
As kerchief for her eyes. Mihrán Sitád
Grew wroth anew and told the slaves : "The Sháh
Hath many a bracelet, crown, and throne, and I
Choose her that lacketh crown and ornament,
For these will make her still more beautiful.
I came to show discretion in my choice ;
I came not to procure brocade of Chín."
The queen replied : "Old man ! thou speakest not
One gracious word and art not well advised
If thou preferrest such a child as this
To these princesses who are gracious, fair,
And wise, have reached a marriageable age,
And kindle hearts—girls tall as cypress-trees,
With cheeks like spring and very well aware
Of all the worship that is due to kings."
Mihrán Sitád said : "If the Khán shall act
Unfairly in this matter let him know
That Núshírwán, the monarch of the world,
Will term me an old knave. The one that sitteth,
All unadorned by bracelet, torque, and crown,
Upon the ivory throne best pleaseth me ;
But, if your Highnesses will not consent,
With your permission I will go my ways." C. 1703
The queen observed his words. His policy
And conduct made her muse. The crafty envoy
Then left her, went back to the Khán, and told
All that had passed. The Khán saw him perturbed,
And knew : "This shrewd old man is great and apt
For delicate affairs."
The prudent king
Sat with his counsellors, put forth the throng,
And, when the place for conclave had been cleared,
The readers of the stars who bore in hand
Their Rúman astrolabes, the mighty men,

And all the chiefs, attended. Then the Khán
Commanded every loyal liege to mark
The aspect of the sky. The sages scanned
The stars to find out how the Khán should act,
And as to his alliance with the Sháh,
And at the last said thus : " Let not, O king !
Thy heart be vexed by evil any whit,
Because this matter can but end in good,
And time will count thy foemen's counsels ill.
This is the purpose of high heaven herein—
The horoscope and prosperous event—
That from the daughter of the Khán and from
The Sháh's loins a throne-gracing prince will come ;
The country of Írán,[1] the men of name
And worth in Chín, his praises shall proclaim."

§ 10

How the Khán sent his Daughter, escorted by Mihrán, with a Letter and Treasures to Núshírwán

The Khán, on hearing this, was glad of heart,
Smiled too the sunlike queen. When they had purged
Their hearts of artifice they set the envoy
Before them and told all that he should know
About the queen's child kept secluded thus,
Whom from her sire Mihrán Sitád received
On the victorious king of kings' behalf.
The deputy received, the Khán bestowed,
The only daughter that the queen had borne.
The handmaids came with gifts, came joyfully
Before the king, and afterwards a treasure,
Comprising goods of all sorts, was prepared—
Dínárs, gems, torques, and crowns, a turquoise litter,

[1] Reading with P.

An ivory throne, and one of aloe-wood
From Hind, with gold and divers jewelry
Inlaid, and with each throne a royal crown ; C. 1704
A hundred horses and a hundred camels,
The horses saddled and the camels bearing
Brocade of Chín, and forty tapestries
Of cloth of gold enriched with emeralds.
Of carpets too he laid a hundred loads
On camels, and brought forth three hundred handmaids,
And saw that all were mounted for the journey,
Each with a flag in hand—the use in Chín.
The Khán, victorious of fortune, bade
To set up on an elephant a throne
Embossed with gold and silver all incrusted
With gems unworn, and rear a flaunting flag
That made the ground all viewless with brocade.
It took a hundred men to carry forth,
And raise, that standard skyward from the plain.
A litter tricked out with brocade and gold
Contained the maiden Gem. Three hundred handmaids,
All blithe of heart and bright of countenance,
Accompanied that moon-faced one. He sent
His daughter to the Sháh with troops for escort,
And forty eunuchs to precede the slaves,
And march before her with rejoicing hearts.
The preparations over, came the scribe,
And brought with him rose-water, musk, and silk.
The Khán then wrote a letter like the Artang,[1]
All illustration, colour, scent, and beauty,
And first of all gave praises to the Maker,
Lord of the world, all-watchful and all-seeing :—
" He fashioned all things by divine decree
To guide His servants to predestined ends.

[1] Arzhang, another form of the same word, in the original. For Artang, see Vol. ii. p. 19 and *note*.

My crown is the Íránian king of kings.
Not for my daughter's sake have I desired
A league with him, but hearing from the wise,
The great men and the wary-hearted priests,
About his Grace, his majesty, and throne,
I sought for intercourse and league with him
Because so just a ruler girdeth not
His loins in all the world, or one so great
In manhood, victory, and mastery,
In Grace, mien, throne, and crown, while holy God
Sustaineth him with justice and with knowledge,
With Faith and wisdom. Lo! we have dispatched,
According to our rites, our very Eye
To Núshírwán the Sháh, commanding her
To serve him as his slave when she shall pass
Behind his curtains. From his Grace and insight
She will learn wisdom and acquire his ways
And usages. May wit and fortune guide thee,
Be majesty and knowledge thy supports."
They set the seal upon that musk of Chín,
And gave the letter to the ambassador
C. 1705 With compliments. The Khán prepared for him
A robe of honour past all precedent
As given by the great ones of the world
In public or in private to an envoy.
The Khán gave presents also to the suite,
And made them happy with dínárs and musk.
He travelled with his daughter and the goods,
The beasts and elephants caparisoned,
Until he reached the bank of the Jíhún,
And poured his heart's blood from his eyes the while;
He thence betook him homeward with full heart
And, in his daughter's stead, had pain for comrade;
Howbeit he delayed till they had crossed,
And reached dry land upon the further side.

When tidings came about Mihrán Sitád [1]
The folk presented gifts and offerings,
And all with one consent called blessings down
Upon the Sháh and on the chief of Chín.
With hearts rejoiced with largess and with gifts,
And all disposed for hospitality
And amity, the folk decked road and city,
And showered drachms upon the royal bride.
Toward Ámwí and Marv's unwatered ways
All earth was like a pheasant's plumes, and thou
Hadst said of all the journey to Bastám,
And to Gurgán : "The earth saw not the sky
For decorations and triumphal arches
In waste and town wherethrough the progress lay."
Men, women, children, from the palaces,
Met where that Idol brought from Chín would pass,
Showered on her escort drachms from overhead,
And sifted o'er them musk and ambergris.
The scents were mixed on salvers, and the world
Was full of din from trump and kettledrum.
The horses' manes were drenched with musk and wine,
And sweets and drachms were scattered under-foot,
While through the din of rebeck, harp, and pipe,
There was no room on earth for rest and sleep.
Now when the Idol reached the royal bower,
And Núshírwán had looked within the litter,
He saw a Cypress with the orbéd moon
Above it and upon the moon a crown
Of ambergris. There was another too
Of musky coils joined chain-wise, link on link,
The links entrammelled, plaited daintily,
And curiously entwined like civet ring-work
Upon a rose's petal, while beneath
The ring-work shone the planet Jupiter.

[1] Reading with P.

Sháh Núshírwán was all astound thereat,
And o'er her oft invoked the name of God,
Assigned her a fit dwelling for her own,
And they made ready for that Moon a throne.

§ 11

How the Khán withdrew, and how Núshírwán marched from Gurgán to Taisafún

C. 1706 When of Írán and of the Íránian king
News reached the Khán of Chín, and of the joy
Wherewith his child had been received, and how
The alliance caused good cheer and happiness,
He gave up Sughd and Samarkand and Chách,
And sent his crown on to Káchár Báshí.
Now when the hosts of Chín had left these states
The Sháh sent marchlords thither. He renewed
The world by equity, and old and young
Could sleep upon their backs. All everywhere
Called blessings down on him with hands upraised
To heaven : " O Ruler over space and time !
Keep in Sháh Núshírwán this justice still,
And turn the ills of fortune from his life,
For by his Grace divine and majesty
Both public ills and private have been banned.
What time he reached Gurgán to hunt none saw
The Khán's face smile ; the cavaliers of Chín
Forwent their food and sleep, and none off-saddled ;
Three hundred thousand Turkman troops dispersed
Instead of striving and of combating ;
There is no need to string the bow, for none
Of Chín, or small or great, remaineth here,
Such were the Grace divine and royal mien
Wherewith the savage Lion sought the chase ;

Such were his reputation and his star
That fortune was the comrade of his throne."
Then from the regions lying 'twixt Ámwí,
Chách, and Khutan, the nobles met and said :—
"These spacious regions full of pleasances,
Of riding-grounds, of palaces, and halls,
From Chách and the Tarak to Samarkand
And Sughd [1] are wholly waste—the home of owls.
They of Chaghán, Shiknán, Khatlán, and Balkh,
Have all experienced dark and bitter days.
Great are our pain and sorrow when we name
Bukhárá and Kharazm, Ámwí and Zam.
Once none gat rest and sleep, so tyrannous
And cruel was Afrásiyáb ! Howbeit
We found deliverance when Kai Khusrau
Came, and the world had peace from bickering.
Then when Arjásp gained lustihead these marches
Were filled with anguish and calamity,
But when Gushtásp marched from Írán to battle
Arjásp perceived no tarrying-place, and then
The world had quiet from his enterprises. C. 1707
May heaven ne'er befriend him ! Afterwards,
What time Narsí became the chief, these coasts
Were full of misery, but when Shápúr,
Son of Urmuzd, usurped, and when Narsí
Discerned not hand from foot, the world found justice,
And quiet, and the hand of Áhriman
Was stayed from evil. When the Khán bore off
The world from Yazdagird, and had acquired
Dexterity in ill, there came the world-lord,
Bahrám Gúr, to afflict and trouble him,
To make the states like Paradise with justice,
And scatter the unseemly and the foul.
So Khúshnawáz, what time Pírúz was Sháh,
Filled all the world with bloodshed, heat, and anguish,

[1] Reading with P.

And perish Faghánísh that son of his
With all his unjust kith and kin ! And now
The world-lord Núshírwán hath occupied
Our marches and hath made us rich indeed !
For ever may his policy endure,
And may the whole world be at one with him.
Now that the earth beholdeth justice we
Will contemplate no travail, shed no blood." [1]

Then from the Haitálians, Turkmans, and Khutan
The people met by the Gulzaryún
From every quarter where some shrewd priest lived,
Or other potentate good, learned, and wise,
While all the Turkmans that were well advised
Drew to the Sháh—a mighty company.
It was the policy of all these troops
To come before the Sháh with offerings,
And when they came before him, when they came,
All with one heart and tongue, the monarch's court
Was so fulfilled with people that they barred
The way to ant and gnat ! All louted low,
Called praises down upon the Sháh, and said :—
" O Sháh ! we are thy slaves and live to do
Thy bidding in the world. We all of us
Are nobles dight for war and rend the hides
Of leopards on the field."

The king of kings
Received their gifts, and then they left the presence,
Their leader Faghánísh. Behind him came
A troop of youthful warriors. When thus
They had found favour in the monarch's sight
The chamberlain went to the palace-gate
With formal greetings and with compliments,
And lodged them through the city. Afterwards
The king of kings, that worshipper of God,

[1] The historical reminiscences put into the mouths of dwellers beyond the Oxus and even the Jaxartes are of course valueless.

Passed from the audience-chamber to the dust,
And offered up thanksgivings to the Almighty :—
" O Thou above vicissitudes of fortune !
Thou gav'st me Grace, accomplishment, and counsel,
And art my Guide in all things good and ill,
For all that hear of me seek not thereafter C. 1708
The crown of majesty, but all submit
To be my lieges. None hath pluck to fight.
Birds on the mountains, fishes in the water,
Remain awake to watch what time I slumber ;
All the wild creatures are my sentinels,
The mighty of the world mine underlings ;
No abject he whom Thou dost choose who art
The world's sole Lord and giv'st me strength therein
That not an ant may sleep aggrieved by me."
'Twas thus he spake with many tears to God :
Canst find within the world a king like him ?
Then from his place of prayer he sought his throne,
And they prepared to quit Gurgán. The blast
Of trumpets and the din of brazen cymbals
Ascended from the court. He called to horse,
And loaded up, invoking the All-giver.
He took dínárs, brocade, crowns, belts, and treasures
Of drachms and gems, steeds, female slaves, and crowns,
The turquoise litter and the ivory throne.
The heart-alluring handmaids and the thralls
Of all descriptions mounted on the saddle.
The Sháh dispatched them all to Taisafún,
Preceded by the women-folk of Chín,
Who fared auspiciously and cheerfully
Surrounded by the eunuchs. As high priest,
Mihrán Sitád accompanied the queen,
The daughter of the Khán, and thus the treasures
And baggage went toward Taisafún. A band
Composed of warriors only—all the best

And noblest of the mighty men—approached
Afoot Ázar Ábádagán while troops
Came from each province, soldiers from Gílán
And Dílamán,[1] the mountains of Balúch,
And deserts of Sarúch, and warriors
From Lúch, all came with gifts and offerings
Before the tent-enclosure of the king,
Whereat the famous chiefs rejoiced and thought :—
" The wolf's claws grow too short to reach the sheep ! "
World without end strife with Balúch had raged,
And filled the cities with distress and anguish,
But by the Grace of Núshírwán the sky
Had changed its use and favour.[2] Wheresoever
The host was wont to pass it did not use
To harm a crop, to ask for bread and water,
But made its sleeping-quarters on its route.
The Sháh on this wise went about the world,
Surveying every place, both field and waste.
He saw that all the world was full of crops,
While sheep and oxen filled the hills and plains.
C. 1709 A region ne'er before inhabited,
Where none had looked on sowing and on reaping,
He now surveyed and found it bearing fruit,
Found too a family in every house.
The trees were laden through the Grace divine
Of that victorious master of the world.
At one stage of the progress of the Sháh
The ambassador of Cæsar came with presents,
With silver and withal a throne of gold,
And Rúman jewels and brocade—a gift
That covered all the surface of the ground :
So great a tribute ne'er had come from Rúm.
Ten ox-hides had been filled up with dínárs—
The tribute and the taxes of three years—
And with the presents Cæsar had dispatched

[1] =Dílam. [2] See p. 241 *seq.*

A letter to the famous king. They set
The envoy in the presence, and the Sháh
Was all attention while they read the letter.
'Twas full of warm expressions of good will
About the gifts that had been sent to him :—
" Hereafter will I send thee greater gifts,
For these are merely meant for largessing."
The Sháh received them, mounted on his steed,
And sought the temple of Ázargashasp.
When, still afar, he saw the place of worship
His cheeks were hidden by his tears. He lighted
Down from his steed and, sacred twigs [1] in hand,
Made prayer with bated breath ; [2] then drawing near
The Fire he worshipped and adored the Maker.
He gave the temple-bursar all the gold,
And all the many gems that he had brought,
And showered gold and silver on the archmages,
Bestowing on them likewise gems and raiment.
All were enriched by him and sought the Fire
To offer up their thanks in muttered tones,[3]
And blessed withal the righteous judge of earth.
He parted thence for Taisafún ; the host
Made earth a Mount Bístún. That righteous Sháh,
On reaching any city, used to give
Much gold and silver to the mendicants.
Through all the wealth that he disposed of thus
The realm was stuffed with treasure and with drachms.
From Taisafún he drew toward Madá'in,
For there he wont to keep his treasuries' key.
He took the Rose of Chín [4] and forty more
Withal. Mihrán Sitád fared on before.

[1] See Vol. i. p. 80, *s.v. Barsam.*
[2] *Id., s.v. Báj.* [3] *Id.* [4] Literally "Rose-garden."

§ 12

Discourse on the Justice of Núshírwán and how Mortals had Peace under his Usages

When Núshírwán ascended to his throne
In pomp, with his good fortune for his mate,
The world was decked like Paradise with justice,
C. 1710 With goodliness, and wealth, had rest from strife,
Inequity, and bloodshed, everywhere,
And was renewed by Grace divine. "They have,"
Thou wouldst have said, "bound both the hands of evil."
None knew of pillage, raid, or putting forth
The hand to ill; all came at his behest
From darkness and perverseness to the way.
If any dropped a drachm upon the road
A thief would shun that wealth! As for brocade
And for dínárs, on land and sea, by daylight,
And in the hours for sleep, the ill-disposed
Would look not to that quarter out of fear,
And through the justice of the Sháh, the world-lord.
The world was pargetted like Paradise,
And dale and desert were fulfilled with wealth.
Dispatches went to all the provinces,
To every man of name and potentate,
While from the Turkman merchants and from Chín,
Sakláb and every province, came such store
Of musk-bags and of silk of Chín, of trinkets
Of Rúm and of the land of Hind, as made
Írán like jocund Paradise; its dust
Was ambergris, its bricks were gold. The world
Turned toward Írán and rested from distress
And bickering. "The breezes shed rose-water,"
Thou wouldst have said, and men had peace from pain
And leech. The moisture showered upon the rose

In season, and the farmer was not sad
Through lack of rain. The world grew full of herbage
And cattle, plains and valleys were all flowers,
Rooftrees, and dwellings, all the streams seemed seas,
And roses Pleiad-like within the gardens.
Men learned to speak new tongues within Írán,
Illumed their souls with knowledge, and returned
Thanksgiving to their guide, the Sháh, for all
The traffickers that came from every march
And land, from Turkistán, Chín, Hind, and Rúm,
While cattle multiplied amid the herbage.
All learnéd men and ready speakers found
A place at court. The great, the men of lore,
And archimages were esteemed, the wicked
Shook fearful of calamity. What time
The sun adorned the world a proclamation
Would go up from the court : " All ye that are
The servants of the monarch of the world !
Keep not ill hidden, any one of you !
Whoe'er hath toiled at any task shall have
A treasure in proportion to his travail.
Prefer your claims before our chamberlain
That he may seek your recompense from us.
If any creditor shall come and ask
For payment from the poor, my treasurer
Will pay the debt because the destitute
Must not be troubled. Whosoe'er shall look C. 1711
Upon another's wife, and his accuser
Appeal to us, the offender shall see naught
But pit and gibbet, bondage in the pit,
And arrows on the gibbet. If men find
A horse at large, and any husbandman
Complain thereof at court, let it be slain
Upon that tilth, and he shall have the carcass
Who had the scath, the horseman shall be horseless,
And fare afoot before Ázargashasp

To tender his excuse, the muster-master
Shall strike his name off from the muster-roll,
They shall lay low his dwelling, and the offender,
Whate'er his rank may be, shall be degraded.
The Sháh can not be of one mind with such,
Will have the righteous only at his court,
And at our court God grant there never be
Those that approve not of our policy."

§ 13

How Búzurjmihr counselled Núshírwán and discoursed on good Deeds and Words

One day the world-lord, as he sat rejoicing,
Gave audience to the mighty men of wisdom.
He spake with smiles and open countenance,
And seated Búzurjmihr upon the throne,
Who offered to the king such praise as made
His heart like jocund spring, and thus he said :—
" O righteous judge so fresh of visage ! may
Fault-finders never find a fault in thee.
Blest king of kings, whose fortune prospereth,
The wise, triumphant master of the world !
I erst recorded in the olden tongue
Some thoughts upon a roll of royal paper,
Which I entrusted to thy treasurer
Till there might come a season when the Sháh
Would read it, but I see the mystery
Is one that laggard heaven will disclose not.
What though a man shall quit his seat at feasts,
And take his life within his hands in fight,
Shall sweep the earth of enemies and be
Secure against the toils of Áhrimans,
Shall be the great king over all the world,
And consummate his wishes one by one,

Shall win the wide world by his bravery,
Make rosary and pleasance, park and palace,
Shall lay up wealth, have sons surrounding him,
And reckon many days of happiness,
Shall bring together warriors and wealth,
Shall decorate his palaces and halls,
And, while the poor are toiling for his sake,
Amass on all sides treasure and renown,
Still willy nilly he but gathereth dust ; C. 1712
His lifetime will not last a century.
He will be dust, his toils will bear no fruit
For him, and all his wealth will be his foe's.
No children, throne or crown or royal hall,
Or treasury or army will be his,
And when he ceaseth to pursue the wind
None in the world will give a thought to him.
Of all his doings when his time is over
A good name will be his memorial.
In this world there are two things that endure,
And only two, the rest will last with none—
Choice sayings and good doings : these will last
Until the world shall end, auspicious Sháh !
Time's course is such that fame and honest speech
Spoil not through sun and water, wind and dust.
The modest man and virtuous is blest.
Avoid, O king ! with all thy might the faults
That shame the soul. Harm not but help ; thus Faith
And precedent prescribe. I leave behind me
Words that, I ween, ne'er will grow obsolete."

He oped the king's shrewd heart who questioned him
On many points : " Who is the glorious man,
Whose heart is glad, who sigheth not ? "

He answered :—

" The innocent, the man whom Áhriman
Hath caused not to transgress."

The Sháh then asked him

Concerning guile, the Dív's way, and the way
Of God, the world's Lord. Búzurjmihr replied :—
"To do God's will is best, for in both worlds
The Grace is His. The door of evil leadeth
To Áhriman who is the enemy
Of those that worship God. The high-souled man
Is blesséd in the world, for his adornments
Are holiness and modesty. Since knowledge
Safe-guardeth him his life is one of ease,
He hath nobility and righteousness,
And knocketh not upon the door of guile,
And loss. When he is dead his soul will be
A foe to what pertaineth to the body.
He is not negligent about them both,
But is concerned for either sword or scabbard." [1]

C. 1713 Then Núshírwán inquired : "Among the chiefs
What man attaineth to the highest standard ?"
Said Búzurjmihr : "The man that hath most knowledge,
And most controlment over his desires."
"Who is the man of knowledge," said the Sháh,
"For knowledge is a matter hid in men ?"
"The man that neither severeth heart from God,"
He answered, "at the bidding of the Dív,
Nor out of wantonness obeyeth one
That is the foe of souls and wisdom's snare.
Ten Áhrimans there are with lion's might,
Who lord it over wisdom and the soul."
"What then are these ten dívs," said Núshírwán,
"Since wisdom hath good reason to bewail them ?"
He thus made answer, saying : "Greed and Need
Are two o'erweening dívs and puissant.[2]
The rest are Anger, Envy, Strife, Revenge,
Backbiting, Treachery, and Faith Impure.
The tenth dív is Ingratitude to men

[1] Five couplets omitted. [2] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 146.

For benefits and Ignorance of God."
The Sháh said : " Of these ten dívs, ruinous
And black, which Áhriman is lustiest ? "
He answered Núshírwán thus, saying : " Greed
Is a tyrannic dív, the last to go.
Him never wilt thou see content in aught,
But ever labouring for something more.
All those that look on Need behold him blind,
And sallow with anxiety and pain.
The dív of Envy is the next, O king !
And is an ailment that no leech can cure.
His soul is pained to see one prosperous.
Strife is another dív and passionate,
For ever quick to put his hand to ill ;
Revenge, another, wrathful, turbulent,
And instant to arouse the battle-cry
In men, unloving and ungenerous—
A dív malignant and with frowning face ;
Another, Slander, knowing naught but lies,
And doing all his traffic in the dark ;
Another, Treachery, with double face,
Who feareth not the Master of the world,
But flingeth strife and vengeance 'twixt two men,
And toileth to break up alliances :
The last, Ingratitude and Ignorance—
A witless dív unconscious of all good,
Contemptuous of rede and modesty,
And in whose sight both good and ill are one."
The king then asked the sage : "How doth the Dív
Make war against the heart, and what hath God
Bestowed upon His servants so that they
May counteract the Dív ? "
That man of Faith
Replied : " Wise, glorious Sháh ! against the sword
Of dívs the coat of mail is wisdom ; that

Illumineth the sage's heart and mind,
C. 1714 Recordeth what is passed and nourisheth
The soul with knowledge. Oh! may wisdom be
The guider of thy mind because the way
Is long before thee, and if wisdom prove
A second nature, as the saying is,
So that the heart is fearless of the Dív,
The good heart will find pleasure in the world,
And not frequent the portal of desire.
Now will I utter words of hope to guide
The heart to joy: the sage is always hopeful,
And seeth naught but happiness from time,
Not for a moment meditateth ill,
And chooseth not the bow's path but the arrow's.
Moreover one contented doth not stretch
His hand to treasure or fatigue himself;
He that despiseth drachm and treasury
Will fleet his sum of days in happiness.
Moreover one that is devote to God [1]
In all will turn not from His ordinance
For toil or treasure or the fear of man;
He hath no strain of evil in his nature,
And by that token he is virtuous too
Because he will sell not God's way for aught."

Said Núshírwán: "Which is the royal way
Conducting us to good?"

He answered thus:—

"The way of wisdom doubtlessly surpasseth
All knowledge. Likewise being well disposed
Will keep a man in honour all his days;
While of the qualities the mightiest
Is in my view contentment with one's lot;
The most agreeable, which refresheth most
In travail, and the seemliest, is hope.
In greed I see the weariest of all,

[1] Reading with P.

For that is never satiate of wealth."
The Sháh said : " Which accomplishment is best,
The one whereby aspirants win to greatness ? "
He answered : " Knowledge, for the sage is greatest
Among the great as clutching not at treasure,
And holding of himself aloof from travail."
The Sháh then asked him : " How shall we proceed
To overcome the might of enemies ? "
" Ill-doing is the enemy," he answered,
" Alike of wisdom and the soul serene."
The righteous judge then asked the sage and said :—
" Is talent or is application better ? "
The sage made answer, saying : " Application
Is more than natural ability,
For application furnisheth the mind,
While talent only maketh talking easy,
And, when untrained, is wretched, vile, and weak,
But application strengtheneth the soul."
" How can the mind be polished," said the Sháh,
" And what accomplishments commend the body ? "
" Now," said he, " will I make a full reply, C. 1715
If thou wilt take it from me point by point :
Since wisdom is itself God's robe of honour
No thought can gain it and no evil touch it ;
So one accomplished but withal conceited
Should have no credit for accomplishments,
While no wise man regardeth with disdain
The merest peasant well-disposed by nature,
And though a sage join bounty to high birth,
Join knowledge, conduct, equity, yet will
His greatness, his addition, and uprightness
All suffer if his natural bent be vicious."
Then Núshírwán inquired : " Illustrious scholar !
Doth greatness come from toil or doth the world-lord
Get crown and throne from fortune ? "
He replied :—

"The fortune and accomplishment of men
Are mates allied and joined like soul and body,
The body visible, the soul concealed.
The body is man's instrument for toil,
When wakeful fortune shall bestir itself,
But by his travail ne'er will he attain
To greatness if good fortune guide him not.
Again, the world is all deceit and wind,
Or memory of a dream that vanisheth
When one awaketh, whether he beheld
A pleasant vision or a painful one."

A question then occurred to Núshírwán;
He asked the sage: "Who should be praised?"
He answered:—
"A king that doth adorn the throne and hath
His strength from fortune will, if he doth justly,
And is of fair repute, attain his end
In word and deed."
"What man is sorrowful,"
The Sháh said, "luckless, and unprofitable?"

The sage replied: "The wicked mendicant,
Who loseth both this world and Paradise."

"Who is the luckless one," rejoined the Sháh,
"For whom we must weep always bitterly?"

And Búzurjmihr replied: "The man of knowledge,
Whose face is sallow through his evil deeds."

The Sháh asked further: "Who is the contented,
And who is anxious to increase his store?"

He made response: "He that regardeth not
The revolutions of the turning sky."

Then Núshírwán: "What man best suiteth us?"
And Búzurjmihr replied: "The gentlest man."

"But who is gentle," asked the Sháh, "for why
The hasty give us cause to weep?"
He answered:—

"Mark him that shunneth converse with fault-finders;
That man hath modesty and gentleness,
With wisdom, counsel, and propriety."
The famed king asked him: "Who is hopefullest
Of men?"
"The most industrious," he said, C. 1716
"Whose ears are open unto knowledge most."
The monarch of the world inquired of him
Of privy rumour as to good and ill.
He thus returned reply: "It is the cause
Of ample chatter but an empty brain.
Say what they will the earth is still in place;
I know not how the other world doth fare."
Then Núshírwán: "What land most prospereth,
And how have we contributed therein?"
"The justice of the world-lord," he replied,
"Establisheth a land's prosperity."
Then Núshírwán inquired: "Inform me this:
What man is shrewdest, most approved, and prudent
Within the world because the adept increaseth
One's lustre?"
He replied: "An ancient sage
That hath been mindful of experience."
Said Núshírwán: "Who is the happy man
That liveth upright and right glad?"
He answered:—
"One free from apprehension and possessed
Of gold and silver?"
Núshírwán inquired:—
"Which of us best deserveth praise, and who
Is most approved by all?"
He answered thus:—
"He that can hide his need and can suppress
Strife, envy, greed, revenge, and jealousy:
That man will find approval in the world."

The Sháh inquired of the long-suffering,
Whose crown is patience.
Búzurjmihr replied :—
"That is the man grown hopeless, with heart dark,
And yet his counsel is sun-bright, or else
The man that hath but little time to live,
And yet hath entered on some vast employ."
The Sháh said : "Who hath grief so much at heart
That he is weary of his life through care ? "
And Búzurjmihr made answer thus : "The man
Fall'n from a throne and desperate of fortune."
The exalted king inquired of him and said :—
"Who of us hath his heart in sorry plight ? "
The sage replied : "The man that is not wise,
And rich man childless."
"Whose heart," asked the Sháh,
"Is sad through trouble and calamity ? "
He answered thus : "The upright man of knowledge
O'er whom besottedness is sovereign."
The Sháh said : "Who is fullest of despair
Although possessing power and reputation ? "
"The man that falleth from a lofty throne,"
He said, "retaining still his pride of birth."
Sháh Núshírwán inquired of him and said :—
"O man of foresight and of ardent soul !
Whom knowest thou unfamed and lustreless,
And yet deserving both of love and pardon ? "
He answered thus : "The man of many faults,
The culpable, the mendicant, and needy."
C. 1717 The Sháh inquired and said : "Now tell me truly :
Who is it that repenteth of the past ? "
He said : "The great king who, when he shall put
The black cap on upon his dying-day,[1]
Repenteth with a heart all terror-stricken

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 109.

Of all his life's ingratitude to God,
And he moreover who hath undergone
Abundant travail for ungrateful men."
The Sháh inquired : "O sage that dost combine
All excellence ! know'st thou of aught that maketh
The body profitable and is dear
To all men's hearts withal ? "
He made reply :—
"In health the heart will seek but happiness,
But when through suffering the life is failing
The body's one desire is then for health."
The Sháh rejoined : "Good man ! expound to me
Which is the strongest of the appetites ? "
Said Búzurjmihr : "The great are not exposed
To such solicitings and, since their bodies,
Which have no wish unsatisfied, fare well,
Have only need to seek their heart's desire."
The Sháh then asked his guide : "What is the heart's
Chief care ? "
"The sage," he answered, "would inform
His questioner that there are three chief cares—
First, apprehension of the evil day,
Lest ill then should befall the innocent ;
Next, of the practice of a treacherous friend,
Who fain would have brain, life and blood and skin ;
And thirdly, of a great but unjust king,
Who knoweth not the worthless from the good.
How happy is the course of time with him
That hath a prudent friend and counsellor !
A bright world and a great king who is just—
Thou'lt get from heaven no greater excellence."
The Sháh next asked of Faith and right—the means
Of banning fraud and falsehood. He replied :—
"Incline, O Sháh ! to one of Faith whose mind
Is filled with thoughts of God—the man averse

From guile and from the Dív's way through his awe
Of holy God, the Master of the world,
And hearkening to His law. None such will barter
The Faith."

The Sháh then asked concerning kings,
Whose rule is o'er the holy : " Which of them
Is of victorious fortune and throne-worthy ? "
He answered thus : " The just possessed of wisdom,
Of counsel,[1] modesty, and excellence."
The Sháh then questioned him about old friends,
Such as are one with us in ear and speech.
He made this answer : " Magnanimity
And generosity are good in them ;
They will wish thee no ill to please another,
But aid and succour thee in thy distress."

C. 1718 Said Núshírwán to him : " Who hath most friends
That are to him as his own blood and skin ? "
He thus gave answer : " Save the faithless man
All would be joined to him whose heart is good,
And all the more the kinder that he is,
The more obliging, and conformable."
The Sháh inquired : " Who hath most enemies
And most antagonistic ? "

Búzurjmihr
Returned him this reply : " The insolent,
For he incurreth many a malison,
And also any one that speaketh harshly,
Is ever frowning, and is close of fist."
Then said the Sháh : " Who is the constant friend,
One who will weep for pain of severance ? "
He answered : " 'Tis the friend that faileth not,
Is never vexed, and feareth not to suffer."

[1] Reading with P.

"What lasteth," said the Sháh, "and doth not waste?"

He made reply: "A benefit conferred
Is ever present to a worthy friend."

"What hath the chiefest lustre," said the Sháh,
"And is a crown upon the head of all?"

He said: "The sage's mind which mastereth
His passions."

Said the Sháh: "O lord of love!
What is there wider than the turning sky?"

He answered: "First, a king with open hand,
And next, the heart of one devote to God."

The Sháh inquired: "What is the goodliest way
Wherein a wise man may exalt his head?"

"O great king! ne'er bestow," he made reply,
"Thy treasure on unholy men. For thee
To deal with the unthankful is to fling
Bricks unbaked into water."

Said the Sháh:—
"What toil diminisheth man's greed for treasure?"

Then Búzurjmihr replied: "O king! for ever
Be thy heart like young spring. For very travail
The servant of a king of evil nature
Will cease to care for person, life, and wealth."

The Sháh inquired: "What wonder hast thou seen
Than which a greater cannot be conceived?"

And Búzurjmihr made answer to the Sháh:—
"The turning sky is always wonderful.
Thou seest one possessed of mastery,
With crown exalted to the darksome clouds,
Who cannot tell his left hand from his right,
Or fortune's gain from loss discriminate;
Another man will read the lofty sky,
And tell the why and the wherefore of the stars,
Yet heaven still will lead him into straits,
And evil fortune be his only lot!"

"What thing know'st thou, as heaviest," asked the Sháh ?
He thus returned reply : "The weight of sin."
The Sháh inquired : "Of matters most unseemly,
Including in the question words and deeds,
C. 1719 Which is the greatest cause of shame and blame,
So that all folk pronounce it done amiss ? "
He thus made answer : "Harshness in a king ;
The persecution of the innocent ;
The nearness practised by the man of wealth
That is a niggard as to dress and food ;
In womankind the loud and strident voice
Of those whose modesty is forfeited ;
The infamy of men that do oppression,
And are high-handed with the indigent ;
While falsehood in a king or in a man
Of no account is ugly, foul, and vile."
Of all things in the world, apert or secret,
"What is that goodly one," said Núshírwán,
"Whereof the sage will fashion him a breastplate,
And therewithal illuminate his soul ? "
The sage made answer : "Earnestness of Faith
Will have but approbation from the world,
And secondly thanksgiving unto God
Characterth a wise and holy man."
Said Núshírwán : "What is it best for kings
And mighty men to do and to avoid ?
What is there better than to rule, possess,
And look on others as inferiors ?
From what do we do wisely to refrain,
And what is good to seize upon and keep ? "
The sage replied : "Safeguard thy wrath as knowing
That other folk will keep their eyes on thee ;
Next, let thy soul be ever on the watch,
And do thine utmost to abstain from ill.

The soul of him that will forgo revenge,
And hope instead, will shine as doth the sun.
By means of sin thou wilt have many pleasures ;
Reject such pleasures and avoid the sin."

Thanks to the Master of the moon and sun
The parle of Búzurjmihr and Sháh is done.

PART IV

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GAME OF CHESS INTO ÍRÁN. THE LEGEND OF THE INVENTION OF THE GAME. THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK OF KALÍLA AND DIMNA

ARGUMENT

The Rája of Hind sends an envoy to Núshírwán with the game of chess, proposing certain conditions which the Sháh accepts and, with the help of Búzurjmihr, carries out. Búzurjmihr invents the game of nard, and the Sháh sends him with it to the Rája, proposing similar conditions. The poet then tells the legend of the invention of chess—how two sons of an Indian queen quarrelled about the succession to her throne, how one of them perished and how the other, to console his mother, invented the game. Lastly the poet tells how a prince tributary to Núshírwán was sent at his own request to Hind to find the herb that restores the dead to life, and returned bringing instead the Fables of Bidpai.

NOTE

§§ 1–3. Here, as in the case of the Yátkár-i-Zarírán [1] and the Kárnámak,[2] we are brought into contact with an extant Pahlaví Text—the Tshatrang Námak—which was undoubtedly one of Firdausí's indirect authorities. It was written, probably, about the seventh century A.D., and tells how the king of Hind—Déwasárm—sent an embassy to Núshírwán with gifts and the game of chess which he had invented. The chess-men were one half of emeralds and the other half of rubies. If the Íránians, he writes to Núshírwán, cannot explain the meaning of the game they must pay him tribute or *vice versâ*. None can find the meaning till Búzurjmihr, who has been keeping himself in reserve, appears on the third day, expounds the principle of chess,

[1] See Vol. v. p. 24. [2] *Id.* vi. 195.

and proceeds to win twelve games against Déwasárm's envoy. Búzurjmihr then invents nard, which is a form of backgammon, takes it to Hind, puzzles the sages there with it, and returns triumphant with double tribute. The similarity of the Pahlaví Text to the Sháhnáma therefore is obvious. Probably in the original story, no longer extant, the problem set was comparatively a simple one: "What did the board and pieces represent?" And the answer would be: "A battlefield." The misplaced ingenuity of later redactors, however, has added impossible details. A clever man of the time might guess by what the game had been suggested, but the greatest that ever lived could not have evolved the method of play from his inner consciousness, assuming of course his complete previous ignorance of the game. The Pahlaví Text gives the answer correctly and then proceeds to make Búzurjmihr win twelve games right off! In the Sháhnáma the Indian envoy himself gives away the whole thing by stating what the game represents, and then Búzurjmihr in retirement discovers the powers of the various pieces and the way in which they are manipulated—an impossible achievement. It will be observed that Firdausí describes two forms of the game —that introduced into Persia for a board of sixty-four squares, and that, which he considers to be the original, for a board of one hundred squares. The powers of most of the pieces have altered since those days. The tethered minister has changed his sex, become the king's better half, and has acquired as much liberty and preponderance as the most emancipated lady could desire, but the knight's ingenious move has passed unchanged through all vicissitudes.

The Persian word "nard" means a tree-trunk, and it seems not unreasonable to imagine that the game got its name from the resemblance of the pieces on the board to tree-stumps. The author of the Tshatrang-Námak, however, tells us that the game was named after the founder of the Sásánian Dynasty, Nau-Ardshír, which became contracted into nard. Like chess it is symbolical and represents human life as swayed or moulded by fate or fortune whose decrees are written in the aspects of the stars and planets. Thus the board represents the earth, the thirty pieces the days of the month, the colour of the pieces the nights and days, &c. Each throw of the dice too had its proper symbolism. The first represented the Unity of Urmuzd, the second the duality of heaven and earth, the third the triad of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, the fourth the four temperaments—dry, damp, warm, and cold, and so forth. Later Arabic writers

elaborated the symbolism considerably. The dice were taken to represent the heavens and their motions, and the markings on the dice the seven planets in as much as the numbers on the opposite sides added together always make up the number seven, one being opposite to six, two to five, and three to four. The result of a throw was the decree of fate, &c. Nard may be said therefore to surpass chess in sublimity of conception as much as chess surpasses nard in its demands upon the intellect.

Firdausí does not tell us how nard was played, and the introduction of the two kings, apparently on the analogy of those at chess, is quite beside the mark. The poet's whole story of the way in which chess was brought into Írán, and the invention of nard, is quite unhistorical. We have had already in this volume [1] an instance of one king propounding hard questions to another, and in the next volume we shall have the problem of the mysterious box, on the elucidation of which a wager depends as in the present case. According to Mas'údí, nard was invented before chess and before the days of Porus, and chess in the time of one of that king's successors, but he also states that the invention of nard has been attributed to Ardshír Pápakán.[2] Elsewhere Mas'údí tells us that Núshírwán had the book of Kálíla and Dimna, chess, and a black hair-dye, brought from Hind.[3]

§ 3. Sháhwí, Firdausí's authority for his story of the invention of chess, perhaps may be identified with the Máhwí who collaborated with four others in the work of putting the Bástán-náma into modern Persian in the tenth century A.D.[4]

§ 4. Shádán, son of Barzín, was, it would seem, another of the five above-mentioned collaborators.[5]

We appear to be here on much firmer historical ground than in the corresponding stories of the introduction of chess and the invention of nard. That the Fables of Bidpai were brought from Hind to Persia in the reign of Núshírwán, and translated from the Sanscrit into Pahlaví by Barzwí, seems to be admitted generally, though of course we need not accept all the details of Firdausí's version of the transaction. He is not very accurate in what he says with regard to the later literary history of the famous book. It was not translated into Arabic for the first time in the reign of the Khalífa Mámún (A.D. 813-833) but in the

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[1] See p. 102. [2] MM, i. 157 *seq.*

[3] *Id.* ii. 203. For the above generally see NPS, II, p. 20 *seq.*; HS, ii. 250 *seq.*

[4] See Vol. i. p. 67; NIN, p. 15. [5] *Id.*

previous century by Ibn Mukaffa.[1] Firdausí is correct, however, in stating that the Fables were translated into Persian verse by the first great modern Persian poet, Rúdagí, who enjoyed for many years the munificent patronage of the Sámánid prince, Nasr son of Ahmad (A.D. 914–943), and of the minister Abú-l Fazl, and died in A.D. 954. Unfortunately only fragments of Rúdagí's translation survive. The poet is said to have been blind.

To compare small things with great, the Fables of Bidpai rival the Romance cycle of Alexander in the extent of their diffusion. They are said to have been translated into thirty-eight languages.[2] It is not possible to enter into the subject here, but one illustration of the way in which the Fables passed from one language into another may be given. The earliest English version of them is that of Sir Thomas North—the translator of *Plutarch's Lives*, which Shakespeare put to such good account—and it was published in 1570 under the title of *The Morall Philosophie of Doni*. It comes to us as Sir Walter Blunt came to Henry IV,

"Stain'd with the variation of each soil"

through which it has passed, and its provenance is as follows: "It is the English version of an Italian adaptation of a Spanish translation of a Latin version of a Hebrew translation of an Arabic adaptation of the Pehlevi version of the Indian original."[3] In Sir Thomas North's version, owing, it is said, to a misunderstanding of the letters when the Fables were translated from the Hebrew, Núshírwán appears as Anestres Castri.[4] It is interesting to find that the wish expressed to Núshirwán by Barzwí[5] has been gratified. After all the vicissitudes through which the book has passed his name and the story of his discovery of the Fables still survive. In the English version he appears as Berozias.[6] We may add that apparently the Fables themselves may be traced back to the Indian Játakas or Birth Stories of Buddha,[7] and that the Jewish race, to which the world is indebted for at least three religions, was the chief agent in the wide dissemination of the fables and the scientific study thereof.[8]

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[1] For whom see Vol. vi. p. 17.
[2] JFB, p. xii.
[3] *Id.* p. xi.
[4] *Id.* p. xxxii.
[5] See p. 429.
[6] JFB, p. 34 *seq.*
[7] *Id.*, pp. xiii., xlix.
[8] *Id.* p. xxv.

§ 1

How the Rája of Hind sent the Game of Chess to Núshírwán

Since this discourse, which so delighted thee,
Hath reached its end let chess our next theme be.
Thus said the archimage : The Sháh one day
Adorned his throne with the brocade of Rúm,
And hung the crown above the ivory throne—
A throne compact of teak and ivory.
The palace seemed all throne, the throne all Sháh,
And all his court an army. All the palace
Was occupied by marchlords and archmages
From Balkh, Bukhárá, and from every side.
The monarch of the world received these tidings,
Brought by his vigilant intelligencers :—
C. 1720 "The envoy of the king of Hind hath come
With elephants, with parasols, with horsemen
Of Sind and laden camels fifty score,
And seeketh to have access to the king."
The watchful Sháh, on hearing this, forthwith
Sent certain troops to go and welcome him.
The envoy of that famed and puissant prince,
On coming to the great king's presence, did
Obeisance, as the use of nobles is,
With praises of the Maker of the world,
And gave the Sháh abundant gems as gifts,
With earrings, elephants, and parasols.
These Indian parasols were decked with gold
With many sorts of jewels set therein.
He oped the bales within the court itself,
And brought their whole contents before the Sháh.
There were much gold and silver in the bales
With musk, fresh aloe-wood, and ambergris,
Gems, diamonds, and burnished Indian swords ;

The Rája had amassed from every hand
The products of Kannúj and Mái. They laid them
Before the throne. The prince of sleepless fortune
Viewed and dispatched to his own treasury
All that the Rája had so toiled for. Then
The envoy brought a letter which the Rája
Had written upon silk to Núshírwán,
And also, what had made a treasury void,
A chess-board wrought with cunning workmanship.
The man of Hind thus gave the Rája's message :—
" Mayst thou abide so long as heaven endureth !
Bid those much travailed in the quest for knowledge
To place this board, used in the game of chess,
Before them and set all their wits to work
To find out how that goodly game is played,
To find out what the name is of each piece,
The way to move it and its proper square,
To find out footman, elephant, and host,
Rukh, horse, and how to move wazír and king.
If they discover all this goodly game,
And prove themselves the betters of the wise,
Then, as the Sháh commandeth, I will send
Full tribute to his court with all good will ;
But if the nobles of the Íránian folk
Have not the knowledge to resolve the point,
Then, since their knowledge is no match for ours,
Let them not seek for tax and tribute hence,
But rather pay a tribute unto us,
Since knowledge is of all famed things the best."
Both heart and ear gave Núshírwán to him
That on this wise discharged his embassage.
They set the board and men before the Sháh,
Who looked upon the pieces for a while.
Half of the set was made of ivory
And bright, the other half of teak. The Sháh,
Whose fortune never slumbered, then inquired C. 1721

About the pieces' shapes and that fair board.
The envoy thus replied : " 'Tis all, O king !
An emblem of the art of war, and thou
Wilt see, when thou hast found it out, the tactics,
The plan, and order of a battlefield."
The Sháh said : " I require a se'nnight's space :
The eighth day we will play right willingly."
They had a pleasant residence prepared
To lodge the ambassador, and then the chiefs
And archimages that were counsellors
All came before the Sháh and with the chess-board
In front of them considered it at large,
Examined it, tried every device,
And played with one another in all ways.
One spake and questioned, and another heard,
But none discovered how the game was played,
And all departed louring. Búzurjmihr
Came to the Sháh, perceived him vexed and troubled,
And saw ere he began the task its end.
" O great king," thus he spake to Núshírwán,
" World-lord and vigilant whose word is law !
I will discover all this goodly game,
Employing wisdom as my guide therein."
The Sháh replied : " Be this affair thy task,
And thine moreover health and happiness,
Else now the Rája of Kannúj will say :—
' The Sháh hath not a single counsellor,'
Which were a mighty slur upon the archmages,
Court, throne, and men of wisdom."
Búzurjmihr
Then took away with him the board and men,
And sat down with his thoughts intent thereon.
He tried to play the game in every way,
And sought to find the place for every piece.
He found the game out in one day and night,

Then hastened from his palace to the Sháh,
And said : " O Sháh whose fortune triumpheth !
These pieces and this goodly board have I
Well studied and I understand it all,
Helped by the fortune of the world's great king.
'Tis fitting that the king of kings should be
The first to see it played. Thou wilt declare :—
' It is indeed a battlefield ! ' Then call
The Rája's envoy and spectators also."
The king joyed at his words, saluted him
As prosperous and fortunate, then bade
The archimages, nobles, and famed sages
Attend. He called the envoy of the Rája,
And seated him before the famous throne.
Said Búzurjmihr, that man of eloquence :—
" Priest of the Rája of the sunlike face !
What were the words thy monarch said to thee
About those pieces ? Wisdom be thy mate."
" The illustrious Rája," he replied, " when I C. 1722
Was quitting him said thus to me : ' Convey
These teak and ivory pieces to the throne
Of him that is the master of the crown,
And say : " Assemble to thee thine archmages
And counsellors, and set before them these.
If they find how to play this clever game
In the approven way, and master it,
We will dispatch unto thee purses, slaves,
And tribute to the utmost of our powers.
The king's worth will arise from knowledge then,
Not from his treasures, men, and lofty throne ;
But if he and his wise men fail herein,
As being dark of counsel, then must he
Demand no tribute from us and no treasure.
His knowing soul then will regret past toils,
Since, realising our shrewd hearts and counsel,
He will dispatch still greater wealth to us." ' "

Then Búzurjmihr brought and set up before
The throne of him whose fortune never slept
The board and men, and said to archimage
And chief : " Ye sages pure of heart and wise !
Heed well his words and his shrewd lord's proposal."
The sage then fashioned him a battlefield,
Whereon he gave the kings the central place,
And drew their forces up to left and right,
The footmen eager for the fray in front.
Beside the king his prudent minister
Was posted to advise him in the fight.
The warrior-rukhs impetuous on their steeds
Were at the wings and fought on right and left.
Adjoining these the battle-chargers stood,
So that the great king proved the Rája's match,
And then the elephants of war arrayed
On either side both eager for the fight.
When Búzurjmihr had thus disposed the host
The whole assembly stood amazed thereat,
The ambassador of Hind was sorely vexed,
And marvelled at that man of sleepless fortune,
He marvelled at that warlock of a man,
And thus his musings ran while plunged in thought :—
" He never saw the board and game of chess,
Or heard about it from the adepts of Hind !
How hath he learned the fashion of the game ?
None else could take his office."

Núshírwán

So treated Búzurjmihr that thou hadst said
That fortune had unveiled its face before him.
The king thereafter gave commands to fill
A cup with royal gems. This and a purse,
Dínárs and steed with saddle on, gave he
To Búzurjmihr and praised him mightily.

§ 2

How Búzurjmihr invented Nard, and how Núshírwán sent it with a Letter to the Rája of Hind

The sage, upon returning to his home, C. 1723
Arranged a board and compasses before him,
Selecting first of all a darkened room
To make his wits more keen, then mused on chess
And Indian subtlety, and mustering all
His powers made wisdom wed his ardent heart,
And meditating thus invented nard.
He bade to make two dice of ivory
With dots the colour of teak-wood thereon,
Arrayed a field of battle as in chess,
And drew up the opposing hosts for war,
Arranging them in eight battalions,
All ready for pitch-battles or for sieges.
The ground was dark, the battlefield foursquare,
Two noble, clement kings were in command,
Who had a common movement on the field,
But neither sought the other's injury.
The troops arrayed beneath their leadership
For battle on both sides were keen for fight.
If two friends catch an unsupported foe,
The twain inflict defeat upon the one.
He made the two kings move about the field
In pomp surrounded by their several hosts,
Each wheeling round about upon the other,
And combating by turns on hill and plain.
On this wise till one side was overthrown
The armies of both monarchs kept the field.
'Twas thus that Búzurjmihr, as I have said,
Invented nard, then went and told the Sháh
How from the moves of those imperious kings
Came praise or blame, what powers the pieces had,

And how the armies fought ; these he set forth,
And showed in detail to the Sháh whose heart
Was all astound ; he needed all his wits,
And said : " O man of ardent soul ! mayst thou,
And may thy fortune, still continue young."
He bade the keeper of the camels bring
Two thousand to him and then loaded them
With contributions raised from Rúm and Chín,
The Haitálians, from Makrán, and from Írán,
And from the treasury of the king of kings.
The caravan departed from the court.
Whenas the camel-loads were all arranged,
And that concern was off the monarch's heart,
He called the Rája's envoy unto him,
And of his knowledge uttered many words.
C. 1724 He wrote a letter to the Rája full
Of learning, pleasantry, good sense, and counsel,
And in the first place gave great praise to God,
Who was his refuge from the lusty Dív,
Then " Rája, high renowned, of Hind," he said,
" Down from the river of Kannúj [1] to Sind !
Thy wise ambassador hath come to us
With parasols, with elephants, and escort,
With tribute and with chess, and I have heard
The Rája's embassage. The task is done.
We asked the Indian sage for time, we decked
Our soul with knowledge, and an archimage,
A very prudent sage of holy rede,
Hath sought and found out how the game is played.
Now that wise archimage hath come before
The exalted Rája at Kannúj and brought
Two thousand heavy camel-loads of things [2]
Acceptable—a keepsake for thyself—
And we have substituted nard for chess.

[1] *Cf.* p. 112, *note.*
[2] Reading with P.

What man now will adventure on this game ?
There must be many a Brahman well advised,
Who by his learning can discover it.
The Rája may consign to treasury
The riches that have been the envoy's care,
But if the Rája and his counsellors
Shall try to find out nard, and fail therein,
He must according to our covenant
Load up as many camels as we sent,
And send them back with ours and all their loads ;
Such is our pact and bargain."

Búzurjmihr,
What time the sun was radiant in the sky,
Departed from the portal of the Sháh
With baggage,[1] letter, and the game of nard,
His heart absorbed by thoughts of his campaign.
On coming to the Rája from Írán,
The Brahman acting willingly as guide,
He went before the Rája's throne, beheld
His head, his fortunes, and his diadem,
Praised him no little in the olden tongue,
Then gave the royal letter, and repeated
The verbal message of the king of kings.
The Indian Rája's face bloomed like a rose.
The message spake of chess, the Rája's pains,
His tribute, how the game of chess had fared,
The play, the pieces, and the king's right moves,
And those moreover of his counsellors.
It told withal the achievement of the sage,
Who had invented nard in rivalry,
And ended thus : " Now let the Rája read
The letter, act, and swerve not from the right."

The Rája's face grew pallid at the words,
On hearing that account of chess and nard.
There came a great official and assigned

[1] Reading with P.

A fitting lodging to the ambassador.
They had a jocund residence prepared,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
C. 1725 The Rája asked a space of seven days,
And all the Lights of learning came to him.
He gathered all the elders of the realm,
And laid the game of nard before them there.
For one whole se'nnight all the shrewdest men
Among the nobles, whether old or young,
Sought to discover out of emulation,
For fame and triumph, how the game was played;
But to the Rája at the se'nnight's end
A sage said: "No one can make aught thereof,
And wisdom must be wedded to his soul,
Who from these pieces can invent a game."
The Rája's heart was troubled at those sages,
His soul was sorrowful, his brow contracted.
Upon the ninth day Búzurjmihr arrived,
With eager heart and furrowed face, and said:—
"The Sháh accorded me no tarriance here,
And he must not be straitened in his heart."
The learnéd magnates went aside and owned
Their ignorance, while Búzurjmihr, on hearing,
Sat down, and all the sages gave good heed
While he set out the board of nard before them,
And told the movements of the various pieces,
Displayed the leader and his warlike troops,
The king's power and the order of the fight.
The Rája and his counsellors were all
Astound, the company in wonderment,
At Búzurjmihr, the chiefs all lauded him,
And hailed him as a holy sage. The Rája
Interrogated him upon all lore,
And he in each case gave a fit response.
Then from the sages, from the searchers out
Of knowledge, and the scholars rose a cry:—

" Behold an eloquent and learnéd man,
Not merely skilled in games like chess and nard ! "
The Rája had two thousand camels brought,
And laid on them the tribute of Kannúj,
Gold, camphor, ambergris, and aloe-wood,
As well as raiment, silver, pearls, and gems,
With one year's tribute, and dispatched it all
From his court to the portal of the Sháh.
The Rája had a coronet and robe,
That reached from head to foot, of his own wear
Brought from his treasury and then bestowed them
On Búzurjmihr, gave him much praise withal,
And to his retinue abundant gifts.
So from Kannúj departed Búzurjmihr
With head exalted to the turning sky,
With those two thousand camels brought by him,
And all the gifts and tribute in his charge.
No one had looked on such a caravan
Before, and never had been greater wealth.
He joyed at heart as bearing from the king
Of Hind a script in Indian characters
On silk : " The Rája and his mighty men
Attest for good will, not for fear, that none
Hath looked on any like Sháh Núshírwán, C. 1726
Or ever heard of one such from the priests,
Or met one wiser than his minister,
The treasurer of whose knowledge is the sky.
The tribute for the year was sent before,
And more shall be if thou demandest it,
While in the matter of the games the stakes
Have been sent likewise as agreed upon."
Now when the Sháh gat tidings of his sage :—
" He hath arrived well satisfied and glad,"
He was rejoiced at that intelligence,
And bade the chiefs of city and of host,
With elephants and kettledrums and tymbals,

To sally forth to welcome Búzurjmihr.
That honoured sage's entry of the city
Resembled that of some great conquering king,
And when that man of lore approached the throne,
And proffered praise exceedingly, the Sháh,
Lord of the world, embraced him and inquired
About the Rája and the weary way,
While Búzurjmihr told his experiences,
His sleepless fortune and the love of heaven,
Then brought the conquering Rája's letter forth,
And laid it down before the throne. The Sháh
Then gave command for Yazdagird, the scribe,
To come before the knowledge-seeking king,
And when he read the Rája's letter all
The company were in astonishment
Both at the wit and rede of Búzurjmihr,
And at the fortune of his sun-faced Sháh,
Who spake on this wise, saying : " God be praised
That I have such a wise and holy sage.
The great are servants of my crown and throne,
And love of me hath filled their hearts and minds."
Thanks to the Lord of sun and moon, for He
Bestoweth victory and mastery,
That which I next shall utter will appear
A tale more strange than that of Búzurjmihr,
Whom heaven with such intelligence did bless :
I tell the legend of Talhand and chess.

§ 3

The Story of Gav and Talhand, and the Invention of Chess[1]

Thus spake Sháhwí, the ancient sage, so be
Attentive to the tale of old Sháhwí :—
Once on a time there lived a king in Hind,

[1] This heading is taken from P.

One puissant in treasure, troops, and arms,
And everywhere renowned, Jamhúr by name,
And passing Fúr himself in fame for valour.
Such was this king, of such an ardent spirit,
So vigilant and prudent, that from Bust
And from Kashmír down to the march of Chín C. 1727
The chieftains homaged him, and all the world
Was in his grasp, so mighty was his prowess.
He had his dwelling-place at Sandalí;
Here was his throne, his treasures, and his troops,
Here were his signet-ring and here his crown.
Jamhúr was worshipful, a man of lore,
Pre-eminent in knowledge and distinction,
And all his lieges, whether of his court
Or of his city, joyed alike in him.
He had a worthy wife, a prudent dame,
Accomplished, learned, and one that injured none.
One night a son was born to him just like
His sire, who when he saw the youthful prince
Bade call him Gav, but soon and suddenly
The monarch sickened, told the queen his will,
And died bequeathing unto Gav a world,
Where justice ruled, though yet he was unfit,
By reason of his infancy, for throne,
For crown and girdle. All the chieftains' heads
Were full of dust, their hearts were sorrowful
By reason of Jamhúr, and all the world
Still kept in mind the memory of his bounty,
His feasts, and justice. Troops and citizens—
Men, women, children—met and thus took counsel :—
"This little infant wotteth not of host,
Of justice, rigour, throne, and crown. The sway
Will suffer if the ruler be not great."
The monarch had a brother who was wise,
And fitted for the throne : his name was Mái.
The dwelling-place of that idolater

Was at Dambar, and all the veteran chiefs,
In looking for a king, turned to Dambar
Their face from Sandalí, while of Kashmír
The potentates up to the march of Chín
Did homage to him as their sovereign.
The exalted Mái came from Dambar and set
His feet upon the throne of majesty,
Placed on his head the crown worn by Jamhúr,
And ruled with justice and with bounteousness.
He took to wife Gav's mother, cherished her,
And held her all as dear as his own life.
The fay-faced dame became with child by Mái,
And that illustrious lady bare a son,
Whom Mái, that mighty monarch, named Talhand,
And loved with all his soul. Now when the babe
Was two years old and Gav was seven, and grown
A lusty warrior dowered with Grace and stature,
Mái ailed, his glad heart was espoused to care.
He languished for two se'nnights' space, then died,
And passing left the world to other's hands.
C. 1728 All Sandalí was sorrowful and wept,
And burned with pain of heart because of him.
They spent a month in mourning for the king,
And at the end thereof the whole host met,
The great men and the warriors of the state—
All that had part in wisdom. Much talk passed
In that assembly on all points. At length
A wise man thus addressed the counsellors :—
" This lady, who was once spouse to Jamhúr,
Hath kept herself at all times from ill-doing,
In both her marriages hath sought the right,
And followed after justice all her days.
The lady is of noble lineage,
Just, upright, and inspireth confidence.
'Tis best that she should be our queen, for she
Remaineth—the memorial of two kings."

The assembly all assented thereunto,
And then the sage addressed the wise queen thus :—
"Take thou the throne of thy two sons, for this
Will make for greatness, and there is no choice.
When they grow worthy of the throne resign
To them the majesty, the wealth, and host,
And be from that time forth their counsellor,
Companion, minister, and best of friends."
The lady—fortune's favourite—at these words
Gave lustre to the crown and graced the throne,
Grew kinder, more considerate, and just,
And all the realm rejoiced in her. She chose
Two men wise, holy, travelled, and accomplished,
And to their charge entrusted both her sons—
Those princes of high lineage and wise.
Withal she never left them for a day,
And found her happiness in seeing them.
Now as they grew in lustiness and lore,
Becoming mighty men in that regard,
One or the other used to come alone
To his good mother, ever and anon,
And ask : "Which is the fittest of us twain,
Most high of heart, most likely, and most shrewd ?"
And thus the mother would reply to both :—
"That I may know which is more excellent,
Show prowess, counsel, self-control, and Faith,
Fair speech, and an ambition to be praised ;
For wisdom, modesty, self-governance,
And justice, are required since ye are both
Of royal birth."
When one of them would come
Alone at whiles before her and inquire :—
"Which of us twain will have the sovereignty,
Which of us have the treasure, throne, and crown ?"
Then would she answer him : "The throne is thine,
For wisdom, counsel, fortune, are thine own."

She said the same thing to the other also
Until the saying grew inveterate,
And thus she made the heart of each expectant
Of throne, wealth, host, fame, fortune. They attained,
C. 1729 Each with a baleful tutor for his guide,
To man's estate, and through their mutual envy
Both suffered, both were hot for crown and treasure,
The whole realm and the host were rent in twain,
While good men's hearts grew fearful. Both the sons,
Impassioned by their baleful tutors' talk,
Came to their mother, crying : " Which of us
Is best and meekest under good and ill ? "
That prudent lady made them this reply :—
" First it is needful for you both to sit
In counsel with the sages pure of heart,
And solve this question in content and peace,
And after do ye and your tutors ask
The great men most renowned throughout the state,
All those possessed of counsel as their portion,
As to your right procedure in this case.
Whoever seeketh crown and throne hath need
Of wisdom, treasure, counsel, and a host,
For when a tyrant hath the sovereignty
He filleth all the world with heat and ruin."
Shrewd Gav made answer to his mother thus :—
" Seek not to parry so my questioning.
If I am not the lustre of this realm,
Say so, but say not aught that is untrue.
Deliver to Talhand the throne and crown,
And I will be a loyal liege to him,
While if as older, wiser, and by birth
Sprung from Jamhúr, I am to be the king,
Forbid him in his folly to attempt
Strong measures for the sake of crown and throne."
His mother answered : " Act not hastily :
Thou shouldst push not these matters to extremes.

Whoever sitteth on the throne must have
His two hands open and his girdle girt,
Must keep his pure soul guarded too from evil,
And walk with knowledge in the sage's way,
Must too be wary of the foe in fight,
And heed what maketh for his reputation.
The Master of the sun and moon will judge
His acts just and unjust to state and host,
And if the king oppresseth but a gnat
His spirit will be left to mourn in Hell.
The world is more obscure than night itself,
And hearts must be more subtle than a hair
To keep the soul and body [1] free from evil,
And recognise that guile will profit not.
When one is crowned and sitteth on the throne
Of justice all the world will joy thereat,
Yet is his end a couch of brick and dust,
Or else cremation in the funeral pit.
Of such a stock as this Jamhúr was sprung,
Whose counsels were remote from deeds of ill.
He died before his natural time to die,
And left his younger brother as the heir
To all his world. Great Mái came from Dambar, C. 1730
Still young, shrewd-hearted, and a counsellor.
All Sandalí went out to welcome him
With full hearts and all eager for a king.
He came and sat upon the throne of power
With girdle girded and with open hands.
He sought me as his spouse, and we were wedded
That so state-secrets might be secrets still.
Now since thou art the elder of the twain,
The elder both in wisdom and in years,
Strive not to vex thy spirit for the sake
Of eminence, of treasure, and of crown.
If I choose one of you the other one
Will be fulfilled with pain and with revenge

[1] Reading with P.

At me. Shed no blood for the sake of crown
And treasure, for this Wayside Hostelry
Abideth not with any."

When Talhand
Had heard his mother's words he liked them not,
And thus replied : "Thy sentence is for Gav,
Because he is the elder, but although
My brother is mine elder as to years
Still every elder is not better too.
Within this host and realm is many a man
As ancient as the vultures of the sky,
And yet such never sought for place or host,
Or diadem or treasure, throne or crown.
My father died when young and did not give
The throne of majesty to any. I see
Thy heart in foolishness disposed toward Gav,
And that thou wilt give him the preference,
Though I could make as good as him from clay !
God grant that ne'er I shame my father's name."

His mother sware a solemn oath and said :—
"May I forgo the azure vault of heaven
If ever I desired of God to make
Gav king or ever set my heart thereon.
Think with all charity concerning this,
And rail not at the process of the sky,
Because it doeth good to whom it will :
So look to God alone and trust none other.
I have advised you to the best I could,
But if my counsel be of no avail
Consider what is better and that do :
Strive and make that the provand of your lives."

The queen thereafter summoned all the wise,
And laid before them all that she proposed.
She brought the keys that oped the treasury
Belonging to those two kings wise and good,
Displayed the wealth therein reposited

Before those men of much experience,
Gave both her sons an equal share and sought
To satisfy the claims of both of them.
Thereafter Gav spake to Talhand and said :—
"Thou, good of heart but bent on novel schemes !
Jamhúr, as thou hast heard, was greater far
Than Mái, alike in counsel and in years.
Thy sire, that virtuous and noble man, C. 1731
Showed not the least ambition for the crown.
It was no shame to him to be a subject :
He sought no kind of lordship o'er the lords.
Mark if the just Judge will approve that I
Shall gird myself before my younger brother.
Our mother spake but justice, wherefore then
Should thy heart joy in that which is not just ?
Now summon we the leaders of the host,
Wise men and well acquainted with the world,
And having listened to the sages' words,
Assent to their decision and advice ;
We shall learn knowledge from them and illume
Our hearts with understanding."

Those two sages—
Men of good counsel—met and much talk passed.
Gav's sage required that Gav should be the king
In Sandalí and take the foremost place ;
The other, who was tutor to Talhand,
And wisest of the wise, spoke up for him ;
They wrangled till the princes were at odds.
Within one hall two thrones were set whereon
Those princes of victorious fortune sat,
Each with his lusty sage upon his right,
And covetous of his inheritance.
They summoned all the nobles to the hall,
And seated them to right hand and to left.
Then those two sages loosed their tongues and said :—
"O ye illustrious and famous men !

Of these two chiefs of glorious lineage,
Who keep the customs of their sires in mind,
Which will ye have as ruler over you ?
Which youth do ye esteem the holier ? ”

The priests, the nobles, and the wise men shrewd
Of heart, were lost in wonderment thereat.
The two young princes sat, each on his throne,
While those ill-omened sages both harangued,
And citizen and soldier knew full well
That only war and strife could come of it,
That all the empire would be rent asunder,
The wise man left in travail and dismay.
Then from the company one raised his head,
Rose to his feet, and said : “ How dare we speak
What profiteth before two famous kings ?
Assemble we to-morrow and discuss
The case among ourselves without reserve,
And then announce our sentence to them both :
It may be that they both will be content.”

They left the hall with murmurs and in dudgeon,
Sighs on their lips and sorrow in their souls,
And said : “ This business hath grown troublesome
Beyond the handling of experienced men.
We never saw two kings confronted thus,
With two bad ministers upon the dais.”

C. 1732 All night their faces had a careworn look,
And when the sun arose above the mountains
The great men of the state, the wise, assembled,
On all sides Sandalí was filled with clamour,
And every man spake that which liked him best.
One warrior was the partisan of Gav,
Another for Talhand was advocate.
Tongues tired of talking, there was no accord.
At length that great assembly was dissolved,
And citizens and soldiers went their ways,
One to give in adherence to Talhand,

And utter malisons on Gav, another
To go to Gav with mace and sword, and cry :—
" I will begrudge not life to serve the king."
Confusion filled the realm of Sandalí
Through honest partisanship. Saith the sage :—
" When two command within one house 'twill fall."
Then tidings came to Gav and to Talhand :—
" Each quarter hath a leader of its own,
Who layeth waste the city at his will :
The princes must not suffer it."
The news
Filled both of them with fear, and they kept watch
Both night and day, and thus it came to pass,
One day, that both young princes chanced to meet
Without their paladins or any escort.
They set their tongues loose, each against the other,
Frowns on their brows and warlike thoughts within.
The noble Gav was full of lamentation,
The tidings moved him deeply, and he said
Thus to Talhand : " My brother ! act not thus,
Because for us the thing hath passed all bounds,
But be content and follow not mad schemes,
For they have no allurement for the wise.
As thou hast heard, Mái, while Jamhúr still lived,
Was as a slave before him. When he died,
And left me still a miserable babe,
They could give not the throne to one so young.
The world had grown so just beneath his rule
That no one dared to seek to fill his place.
His brother was as body is to soul
To him, and all wished Mái to be their king.
If then I had been fitted for the throne
None ever would have looked at him. Let us
Ensue the precedents of kings of yore,
And hear the wise on points of right and wrong.
I am thy better both by years and father.

Thou sayest : 'I am both the chief and better.'
But say not so. Seek not unworthily
The throne of kingship, or fulfil the realm
With strife."
Talhand thus answered him : "Enough !
None ever compassed power by subtleties.
This crown and throne received I from my sire,
Received it as the seed that he had sown,
C. 1733 And henceforth I will guard the sovereignty,
The host, and treasure, with the scimitar.
Prate not to me of Mái and of Jamhúr :
If thou wilt have the throne then fight for it."
They turned away with heads fulfilled with strife,
And went within the city to prepare.
The soldiers and the citizens all keen
For war betook them to the princes' courts.
One faction was in favour of Talhand,
The other favoured Gav. The battle-cry
Rose at the princes' doors. No standing-room
Was left within the city for the throng.
Talhand was first to arm him for the fight,
Because his courage would brook no delay.
He oped the portal of his father's hoards,
And served out helm and mail to all his troops.
The state was rent asunder, and the wise
Were full of fear at heart, and thus they said :—
"What is the end that heaven purposeth,
And which of these young men will lose his life ? "
News of both kings was bruited through the realm,
And from all sides hosts gathered troop on troop.
Talhand was first to put his armour on,
And bathe his hands in blood. Gav also donned
His coat of mail and helmet, and invoked
The spirit of his sire. Embittered thus
They both took action, housed the elephants,

And saddled them. Thou wouldst have said : "The earth
Is eager for the combat." All the city
Was filled with din of gong and Indian bells,
All ears were charged with blare of clarions.
These two young kings departed to their camps,
And every one took his own life in hand.
That battlefield filled heaven with amaze,
And eyes were darkened by the dust of hosts.
The flourish of the trumpets and the clash
Of brazen cymbals went up from both lines.
The wings were drawn up to the right and left,
And thou hadst said : "Earth is all mountain-like."
The armies' fronts extended o'er two miles.
Those two great kings rode each his elephant.
Their standards waved above their heads. One bore
A tiger, one an eagle, as device.
The footmen were in front equipped with spears
And bucklers, and all ready for the fight.
Gav looked upon the field and saw the air
Streaked like the markings on a savage pard.
Each throat [1] was full of dust, the plain all blood,
And midst the dust the lances led the way.
Gav, though Talhand had angered him, and wisdom
Had stitched not up the lips of his ambition,
Yet chose him out a man of fluent speech—
The chiefest of his nobles—and thus said :—
"Go to Talhand and say to him : 'Ensue not
War with thy brother in this unjust fashion,
Since thou wilt suffer in the other world C. 1734
For all the blood shed in this strife of ours.
Give ear to Gav's advice and err not thou
Through what an evil counsellor may say.
In this conjuncture ne'er must this reproach
Remain as our [2] memorial—that this realm

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id.*

Of Hind is desolate, the lurking-place
Of lions and of pards. Forbear this war
And strife, and wantonly to shed this blood
Unjustly. Joy my heart with peace and save
Our necks by making use of wisdom's net.
Stretch out thy rod from this march unto Chín,
And let whate'er thou wilt of earth be thine.
I will esteem thy love as mine own soul,
And set thee as a crown upon my head.
Share we the kingship as we shared the wealth ;
Throne and tiara are not worth such pains ;
But if thus wholly thou art bent on strife,
Injustice, and the scattering of the flock,
Now gathered, in this world thou wilt be blamed,
And judged in that to come. Incline not, brother !
To wrong ; it cannot stand against the right.' "

Now when the envoy came before Talhand,
Came with the prudent embassage of Gav,
Talhand returned this answer : " Say to him :—
' Employ not so much subterfuge in warfare.
I call thee neither brother nor a friend ;
Thou art not, brain or skin, akin to me,
And wilt but make the empire desolate
By thus assailing these my gallant troops.
The knaves are with thee and are thine Urmuzd
Upon Bahrám's day.[1] Thou art guilty too
In God's sight as ill-famed, misgot, and curst.
For all blood shed by thee in fight henceforth
The curses will be thine, the blessings mine.
Thou said'st moreover : " Let us share the realm,
The land, the worship, and the ivory throne,"
But treasure, power, and kingship all are mine,
Mine from the sun down to the Fish's back.[2]
As long as thou dost play the king, dost share

[1] *i.e.* thy leaders on the day of action. *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 287.
[2] See Vol. i. p. 71.

The land with me, and wouldest be my mate,
I wish my body and my soul may part
Or ever I shall look on throne and crown.
My host have I arrayed, and even now
The air is like brocade all shot with gold ;
So many are the arrows, darts, and spearheads
That none can tell his stirrups from his reins.
Heads will I scatter on the battlefield,
Will bring a wail of woe from all Gav's troops,
And in such fashion lead my host to fight
That I will sate with war that Warrior-pard.
I will lead Gav himself with bounden hands,
His troops shall see the dust of overthrow,
Their leaders shall be lifeless by my sword, C. 1735
Their wounded men shall writhe in misery,
For none of them from bondslaves up to prince
Shall don again his breastplate for the fight.' "

The prudent envoy having heard his answer,
Returned and gave it word for word. Gav's heart
Was sad at hearing it because he saw
No knowledge in Talhand, and full of care
Called his own sage, discoursed of the response
At large, and said : " Suggest a remedy,
Thou seeker after wisdom ! for this case.
The desert is all blood and trunkless heads,
And souls pass to the Judge of all the world.
This battle must not bring, when all is done,
Ill fortune on us."

Said the sage : " O king !
Thou needest not a teacher to teach thee,
But if thou wilt have mine advice herein. . . .
In fighting with thy brother be not fierce,
And send him yet another messenger,
A man of high rank, learned, and eloquent,
To give yet one more message. He still may
Abate hostility. Resign to him

The treasures gathered by the toil of others,
Preferring thereunto thy brother's life.
Since both the crown and signet-ring are thine
Forbear to wrangle with him as to pelf,
For I have seen from heaven's processes
That his time endeth shortly, and that none
Of all the seven planets favoureth him.
Moreover he will perish on this field
Of strife. Thou hast no need to press him. Give him
Whatever he shall ask of steeds and wealth,
So that thou mayst repent not at his death,
The royal signet, crown, and throne excepted,
For fear the troops may call thee faint of heart ;
But thou if king and fortune's favourite
Art versed yet more in heaven's purposes."

The prince, when he had heard his tutor's words,
Made yet a new endeavour. With wet face,
Through anguish for his brother's sake, he chose
One favoured by the stars and eloquent,
And said to him : " Go to Talhand and say :—
' Gav is fulfilled with trouble and with pain
As touching heaven's purpose and this fight,
And prayeth that the almighty Judge of all
Will stir up love and prudence in thy heart,
So that thou mayest yet renounce this strife
Against thy brother. If 'tis through thy sage,
Who haunteth thee, deceiving thy dark soul,
That thou art grown so fierce and quarrelsome
Still thou canst not escape the course of heaven.
Ask the twelve signs and seven planets how
C. 1736 This unjust work will fare. Foes compass us,
And all the world is full of wicked men ;
Moreover by the monarch of Kashmír,
And by Faghfúr of Chín, who even now
Are pressing on our realm, we shall be flouted
On two sides, and by other warrior-chiefs.

How they will say : " Why are Talhand and Gav
Contending for the sake of throne and crown ?
Are they not then of common stock by birth,
Not each the offspring of a holy sire ?
And yet when counsellors of evil heart
So prompt them they must put their hands to blood ! "
If thou wilt leave thy host and visit me,
And so illume this darkened soul of mine,
I will bestow on thee dínars, brocade,
Steeds, treasure ; I would have thee all untroubled.
Thou shalt have also jewels, province, signet,
And crown, with armlets and an ivory throne.
These from an elder brother are no shame,
And I desire not battle, but if thou
Wilt hearken not my rede thou wilt repent
At last.' "

The envoy, speeding torrent-like,
Came to Talhand, the dark of soul, and told
What Gav had said to him and added more
Concerning kingship, wealth, dínárs, and goods.
Whenas Talhand had heard the envoy's speech,
His wisdom, and his prudent policy,
He would assent not to his brother's words,
Because the heaven purposed otherwise,
But made this answer, saying : " Say to Gav :—
' Be thou a schemer still, and may thy tongue
Be severed by the scimitar of ill,
Thy body burnt up in the Magians' fire !
Thy crude proposals have I heard and see
That all thy stock-in-trade is subterfuge.
How wilt thou give to me the royal treasure,
For who art thou amongst this mighty people ?
Good sooth ! thy life must be nigh o'er since thou
Displayest such prolonged anxiety !
The armies' ranks extend two miles, the world
Is full of men, of steeds, and elephants.

March forth and set the battle in array :
Thou camest forth to fight ; why dally then ?
Thou'lt see such prowess from me that the stars
Will have to tell the total of thy days.
Thou knowest naught but practice, craft, and lies,
Perceiving that thy downfall is at hand.
Thou art afar from counsel, crown, and throne,
And no wise man will call thee fortunate.' "
The envoy came charged with these blustering words,
And told the prince's answer. Thus, until
Dark night displayed its face, the envoy fared
Between the twain who, camping on the field,
Dug out a trench before their several hosts.
C. 1737 The outposts went their rounds. Thus passed the night.
Now when Sol rose in Leo, making earth
As 'twere a sea of splendour, and, all golden,
Enrobed the dome of lapis-lazuli,
From both the camp-enclosures rose the blare
Of clarions and the roar of kettledrums,
The flags of both young princes were displayed,
And both the hosts deployed to right and left,
While at their centres those exalted princes
Were stationed, each with his sage minister.
Gav bade his to proclaim thus to the chiefs :—
" Raise ye your standards, every man of you !
Let every one draw forth his blue steel sword,
But not a warrior advance a step,
Or any of the foot-men quit his post,
For none is sober, wise, and well advised,
That is impetuous on the day of battle :
I would take note of how Talhand deployeth.
The counsel of all-holy God alone
Prevaileth from bright sun to darksome dust,
And I am hopeful that Almighty God

Will grant to us a glorious destiny.
Tried have we counsel and in loving fashion
Have pleaded, but Talhand is still averse.
If now our host shall be victorious,
And if the process of the sun and moon
Afford us fruit, shed ye not blood for spoil,
Because ye shall receive a treasure-hoard ;
And if some famous warrior of our host,
Who chargeth on their centre, shall perchance
Confront Talhand in fight he must not cast
The dust upon him. Praying as we go,
And with our girdles girt, confront we now
Yon mighty elephants."
The soldiers shouted :—
" We will perform thy bidding and will make
Thy counsel the adornment of our souls."
Upon the other side Talhand harangued
His troops and said : " Ye warders of the throne !
That we may be victorious, and the star
Of our good fortune bring forth fruit for us,
Draw, all of ye, your swords, confide in God,
And slay the foe. When ye have ta'en Gav captive
Ye must not kill him or address him harshly,
But take him from yon raging elephant,
And bring him to me with his hands in bonds."
Thereat the blaring of the clarions
Rose in the court before the royal tent.
At all the neighing of the steeds, the dust
Raised by the chiefs, and whirl of massive maces,
The hills and streams re-echoed. " Circling heaven
Recoileth," thou hadst said. At all the shoutings, C. 1738
And crash of axes, " No one," thou hadst said,
" Knew head from foot." The sun withdrew its skirt
From those bright arrow-heads and eagles' plumes.
Earth seemed a sea of blood where heads and hands

Were pebbles in its depths. The royal princes
Came from the centre, like huge elephants,
And from them both a shout arose: "Avoid
The wind of my two-headed javelin.
O brother! be not forward in the fight,
And guard thee from my sword."
Thus shouted they,
Each to the other, while the earth seemed all
A sea of blood, The valiant swordsmen wheeled
About the field, and streams of blood and brains
Ran from the blows of those two warlike princes.
Thus till the sun had left the sky the strife
Surpassed all bounds. Then from the field a shout
Rose, and the voice of Gav cried: "Combatants,
And youthful warriors! exact not vengeance
On those that would have quarter at our hands.
Know that my brother shrinketh from the fray,
And may abide not, being left unaided."

Then many chiefs asked quarter, many more
Were slaughtered on the field, Talhand's whole host
Was scattered, and the flock was shepherdless,
The shepherd flockless. When Talhand was left
Alone upon his elephant, Gav called
To him and said: "Go to thy palace, brother!
And have regard to that and thine own court.
Good sooth! thou shalt not suffer in thy person
From me or at the hands of this famed host
Of swordsmen. Know that all good is from God,
And give Him thanks so long as life shall last
That thou hast left this battlefield alive. . . .
But 'tis no time for counsel or delay."

Now when Talhand had heard his brother's words
He writhed with shame, his face ran tears, he left
The battlefield for Margh. Troops flocked to him
From every side. He oped his magazines,
And gave supplies. His host was well equipped,

Content, and glad. He gave a robe of honour
To each that in his eyes so merited.
When all the soldiers had received their pay,
And when his warlike heart was freed from dudgeon,
He sent to Gav a message : " Thou that art
To throne as weed to garden ! thou shalt burn
Anon, thy spirit shall be stricken, thine eyes
Sewn up. Thou deem'st that I can harm thee not,
But girdle not thy heart with self-deceit."

Gav, when he heard that savage message, washed C. 1739
Affection for his brother from his soul.
His heart was filled with dudgeon, and he said
Thus to his sage : " Behold this monstrous thing ! "

The sage replied : " O king ! upon the throne
Thou art the memory of thy sire, more learned
Than seekers after lore, and mightiest
Of kings. I told my lord the truth, as vouched
By circling sun and shining moon, that till
This famous prince be overthrown, and snake-like
Writhe on the darksome dust, ne'er will he rest,
Or turn away from strife. In this contention
Thy policy is to affect delay.
Reply not harshly, seek the way for union
And peace with him. All his endeavouring
Is to work evil. What is he to do ?
It is God's will. If he shall fight again,
We too will fight. He is in haste while we
Can wait."

King Gav then called the messenger,
Held talk with him at large with courteousness,
And said to him : " Go to, say to my brother :—
' Be not so brutal and so violent,
For violence becometh not a king.
Thy sire was noble ; thou art noble likewise.
I see this clearly that thou dost reject
My counsels and alliance, yet am fain

To have thee fair renowned and well disposed.
Now will I show thee all my heart and tell
The matter that my mind is purposing.
Thine evil minister hath sundered thee
From quiet, good advice, and wisdom's way.
Speak not but what is just because the world,
My brother! is but mockery and wind.
Incline to peace that I may send thee all
The wealth in full and loyal lieges also
Forthwith, and thy misdoubting soul will see
That there is naught but justice in my heart.
May every one be joyful in thy life!
My purpose is according to my words,
If thou, self-willed one! wilt attend thereto.
Howbeit if thou art intent on war,
And overtures for peace and pact are vain,
I will array my warriors for battle,
And they suffice to occupy a realm.
Let us go forth beyond these peopled lands,
And lead our two hosts onward to the sea.
Dig we a trench about them there to shut
Our warriors in, then fill it with sea-water,
And urge them to the fray, so that the worsted
May not escape by reason of the trench,
C. 1740 While he of us that is victorious
Shall shed not blood upon that straitened spot,
But take the foemen captive. God forbid
That we should use our scimitars and arrows.'"
The envoy went his way and came like wind.
He told Talhand the words of Gav. The prince,
When he had listened to that embassage,
Bade summon to his presence all the men
Of leading in his host and seated them,
Each one in due accordance to his rank,
Repeated to them Gav's response, disclosed
The matter, and thus said: "What are your views

On this new-fangled battle by the sea
Proposed by Gav ? How shall we deal therewith,
And shall we turn his fancy into fact ?
If ye are one with me then not a man
Will draw back for a moment from the fight.
What matter whether it be sea or mountain
When we seek battle in the ranks of war ?
If ye will be my comrades in the strife
The leopard shall fear not the fox's voice.
All those of us that seek for high renown
Shall win their chief ambition from the world.
The aspirant rather should be slain with fame
Than live to grace the triumph of the foe.
Whoe'er shall bear him stoutly in the fight,
His bearing shall not disadvantage him,
For such shall have of me unstinted wealth
With servants and with steeds caparisoned.
Then from Kashmír down to the sea of Chín
The folk in every state will homage us ;
I will bestow their cities on my troops
Or ever kingship, crown, and throne are mine."
In answer all the chieftains bowed their faces
Before him till they touched the ground, and said :—
" Our choice is fame, and thou, who art our king,
Shalt see a turn of fortune."
Then a shout
Rose from the portal of Talhand, and all
The province was astir with troops. He led
His whole host toward the sea, the troops of Gav
Appeared on their side, and the two kings lighted,
Confronting, for they each would be avenged
Upon the other. Round the hosts they dug
A trench and, when 'twas deep, let in the water.
Both armies drew up face to face, and foam
Was on the horsemen's lips. The wings were ranged
To right and left, the baggage was bestowed

Anigh the sea, and those illustrious kings,
All dudgeon and vindictiveness, then saddled
Two elephants, each at his army's centre
Took up his station, and assumed command.
The earth grew pitch-like, heaven azure-dim
With all the spears and silken bannerets,
C. 1741 While air was ebon with the armies' dust.
What with the trumpet's blare and tymbal's din
Thou wouldst have said : "The sea is all a-boil,
The crocodiles therein call out for blood ! "
While at the thud of battle-ax, of mace,
And sword, a red reek went up from the deep,
And as that veil was drawn athwart the sun
The world's face vanished from the eyes of men.
Thou wouldst have said : "The air is raining swords,
And planting tulips in the dust ! " The world
Was heaped so with the fallen that the vulture
Durst fly not overhead. Some lay within
The trench, which ran with blood, while other some
Were flung down headless on the field. The sea
Rose with the wind, and still the hosts advanced,
Troop after troop, while all the plain was filled
With livers, brains, and hearts. The horses' hoofs
Were clogged with gory mire. Talhand looked forth
Upon his elephant and saw the earth
O'erflowing like the Nile ; the wind withal
Was in his face, and he had need of meat
And drink, but saw no peace and no escape
From wind and sun and trenchant scimitar,
And, swooning, died upon his golden saddle,
Resigning all the realm of Hind to Gav.

When loss betideth one, whose eyes are set
On gain, how great his passion and regret !
And since both gain and loss must pass away
Enjoy, old sage ! the pleasures of to-day,

For howsoever much may be thy gains
The world's whole treasure is not worth the pains.
Gav looking from the centre failed to spy
The prince's flag, so sent a cavalier
To wheel before the elephants, and search
The foemen's front for miles, to find out whither
Had gone the bright red banner that had shadowed
The horsemen's faces, "for the fight is stayed
Unless mine eyes are blinded by the dust."
The horseman came, looked everywhere but saw not
The standard of the chief, howbeit he saw
The foemen's centre all confuséd cries,
And all the horsemen looking for their prince.
Thereat he turned away, came quick as dust,
And told the news to Gav. That general
Alighted from his elephant and went
Two miles afoot and weeping bitterly.
Whenas he looked upon the dead Talhand,
And saw the soldiers' faces woebegone,
He keenly scanned the corpse from head to foot,
But saw not any wound on breast or skin.
Then that exalted monarch wailed aloud,
Sat grieved and heavy by the corpse, and said :—
"Alack! thou youthful warrior! thou hast gone
Fulfilled with anguish and with wounded soul,
Slain by the process of thine evil star, C. 1742
Else had the cruel blast not smitten thee.
Thou didst reject the counsel of thy teachers,
Hast gone, and darkened is thy mother's heart.
Much did I warn thee in all kindliness,
But yet my counsel could avail thee naught."
Now when the sage of Gav arrived and saw
Talhand, the world-aspirant, dead, his brother
Bewailing him on that wide plain with cries
That pierced the sky, he likewise wailed and wallowed

Before Gav, saying: "Woe for thee, young world-lord!"
Addressing then his lips to give advice
He said to Gav: "Exalted king! what profit
This grief and mourning? He hath passed away;
What was to be hath been. Thou mayst thank God
In one regard—that thy hand slew him not.
I told my lord all that would be as vouched
By Mars and Saturn, sun and moon: 'This youth
Will bear him so in fight that he will end
His days,' and now his work is as the wind,
And he hath gone through ignorance and haste,
While all this mighty host is full of grief
And anger, and all eyes are fixed on thee.
Content thyself, make us contented too,
And thus contenting do what wisdom would;
For when the soldiers shall behold their king
Afoot and weeping on the way for grief,
His lustre will be minished in their eyes,
And e'en the basest will wax insolent
Toward him, for the king is like a cup
Filled with rose-water: may the blast not strike him!"
Gav hearkened to that prudent sage's rede.
A proclamation went forth from the host:—
"Ye men of name and warriors of the king!
Let no one tarry on the battlefield,
For yon host is disjoined not now from this;
Both must be one in act and in acclaim.
Be all 'neath my protection and preserve
For me the memory of my high-souled brother."
Then called he all the chiefs, on his eyelashes
Let fall his own heart's blood, made for Talhand
A narrow coffin out of ivory
And gold, of turquoise and teak-wood, and swathed
His brother's face with glossy silk of Chín.
Thus passed away that famous chief of Hind.

They sealed the coffin-lid with gums and pitch,
With musk and camphor. Then Gav marched away
In haste and tarried at no stage for long.
The princes' mother slept not, rested not,
And fasted after they had chosen their field
Of battle. Ever on the road she kept
A watch and passed each day in bitterness.
So when the host's dust went up from the road C. 1743
The wakeful watchman saw it from the look-out,
And thence too saw the flag of Gav appear,
While all the realm's face was o'erspread with troops.
He gazed from two miles off in hope to see
The elephant and standard of Talhand,
But failed to recognise them mid the host.
He hurried off a horseman from the look-out
To say: "The army cometh from the mountains,
And Gav is there with all his company,
But I see not Talhand, his elephant,
Or flag, or yet his chiefs with golden boots."
His mother poured down blood, which drenched her breast,
From her eyelashes. When news came: "That Light
Of empire is bedimmed, the atheling,
Talhand, hath died on saddle-back and left
To Gav his seat upon the throne of kingship,"
She hurried to the palace of Talhand,
And ofttimes dashed her head against its walls.
She rent her raiment, tore her cheeks, flung fire
On hall and treasury, and burnt up all
The palace and the throne of majesty.
Thereafter she upreared a mighty pyre
To burn herself, as is the use of Hind,
And by her sorrow illustrate its Faith.
When tidings of his mother came to Gav
He urged his speedy charger on and came,
Embraced her closely, and entreated her,

With blood upon his eyelids, saying thus :—
" O loving mother ! hearken to my words,
Because we have transgressed not in this fight.
It was not I or my companions,
Or warrior of this noble host, that slew him.
None durst breathe harshly on him : he was slain
Beneath the process of his evil star."
His mother answered him : " Thou wicked man !
On thee will come high heaven's malison ;
Thy brother hast thou slain for crown and throne,
And no good man will call thee fortunate."
" O loving mother ! " thus he answered her,
" Thou oughtest not to think such ill of me,
But be content and I will tell thee all
The case of king and host and battlefield,
For who would dare to go to fight with him ?
Who ever contemplated such dispute ?
Now by the Judge that fashioned sun and moon,
Night, day, and all the process of the sky,
The signet-ring and throne, the steed and mace,
The sword and crown, shall see me never more
Unless I clear this matter up, and turn
Thy heart from harshness into tenderness,
By proving to thy clear soul that the hand
Of none hath put a period to his life.
What man in all the world can 'scape from death,
Though he be clad upon with steel and helm ?
C. 1744 For when the bright lamp faileth none may count
Another breath however brave he be.
If what I prove to thee content thee not,
By God, the Lord of all, my purpose is
To burn my body in the fire and gladden
My foemen's souls."
On hearing this, his mother
Had ruth upon his form majestical,
Lest that young hero should consume in fire

His body barely handselled of its soul,
And therefore said to him : " Show me the way
That prince Talhand died on his elephant.
Unless the matter be made clear to me
My fond heart still will burn."
Gav sought his palace
In sorrow, summoned his experienced sage,
Told what had passed and how his mother's words
Had angered him until he swore to burn.
They sat down and took counsel by themselves.
The sage spake thus : " My gracious sovereign !
We cannot by ourselves achieve thy wish.
Call we the famed and wise, both old and young,
Among the shrewdest seekers of the way
From every side—Kashmír, Dambar, Margh, Mái."
Gav sent off cavaliers to every quarter,[1]
Wherever there was any sage of leading.
They all came to the portal of the king,
Came to that famous court. He held a session
Of wise men and of magnates learned and shrewd.
Gav's sage described the battlefield and how
The prince and host had fought. They all conversed
With that sharp-witted man about the sea,
About the trench and letting in the water.
That darksome night not one among them slept,
But all held talk together. When the din
Of kettledrum ascended from the plain
Those men of wisdom called for ebony,
And two of them—ingenious councillors—
Constructed of that wood a board foursquare
To represent the trench and battlefield,
And with both armies drawn up face to face.
A hundred squares were traced upon the board,
So that the kings and soldiers might manœuvre.
Two hosts were carved of teak and ivory,

[1] Reading with P.

And two proud kings with crowns and Grace divine.
Both horse and foot were represented there,
And drawn up in two ranks in war-array,
The steeds, the elephants, the ministers,
And warriors charging at the enemy,
All combating as is the use in war,
One in offence, another in defence.
The king was posted at the army's centre,
With at one hand his loyal minister.
C. 1745 Next to the twain were placed two elephants,
Supporting thrones the hue of indigo.
Next to the elephants two camels stood,
Whereon two men of holy counsel sat.
Next to the camels there were placed two steeds,
With riders valiant on the day of battle,
And each wing ended in a warrior-rukh,
His liver's blood a-foam upon his lips.
The footman's move was always to advance,
That he might be of aidance in the fray,
Till, having passed across the battlefield,
He sat—a minister—beside the king;
The minister might quit not too in battle
His king by more than by a single square,
While o'er three squares the noble elephant
Could move and for two miles survey the field.
The camel likewise moved three squares and raged
And snorted on the field of fight. The horse
Made too a three squares' move, but in the move
Alighted on a square of diverse hue.
The warrior-rukh might traverse every way,
And charge across the battle at his will.
They all contended in their proper lists,
And each observed the limits of his move.
When one of them beheld the king in fight,
Then would he shout and say: "Avaunt, O king!"
Whereat the king would change his square till he

Was straitened where he stood. When rukh and horse,
And minister and elephant and troops,
Had blocked the way for him on every side
The king would look forth o'er that field foursquare,
And see his men o'erthrown, their faces lined,
Escape cut off by water and by trench,
With foes to right and left and front and rear,
And being moveless and fordone would die,[1]
For so the process of the heaven decreed.
King Gav, the great and good, affected much
The game of chess suggested through Talhand ;
His mother studied it. Her heart was filled
With anguish for that prince. Both night and day
She sat possessed by passion and by pain,
With both her eyes intent upon the game.
Her whole desire and purpose centred there ;
Her mind was full of anguish for Talhand.
She kept for ever shedding tears of blood,
With chess to medicine her sufferings,
And thus she fared and neither ate nor stirred
Until her life had reached its period.
So now my tale is done that I heard told
With other stories of the days of old.

§ 4

How Núshírwán sent Barzwí, the Leech, to Hindústán to fetch a wondrous Drug, and how Barzwí brought back the Book of Kalíla and Dimna

Mark what Shádán, son of Barzín, revealed— C. 1746
A matter that till then had been concealed :—
When Núshírwán was king of kings, and may
His fame endure throughout eternity,
He sought for sages learnéd in all lore

[1] Sháh mát (check mate).

To give a greater lustre to his court.
The whole world was beneath his sovereign rule—
The great men and the much experienced chiefs,
The doctors, with the eloquent and brave,
The interpreters, proved leaders, and withal [1]
A famous chief, the wearer of a crown.
This was Barzwí, the eloquent physician,
An orator and stricken well in years,
A man proficient in each branch of learning,
And for each branch acclaimed throughout the world.
One day Barzwí at audience-time drew near
The famous king, and said : " O Sháh, the friend
Of knowledge, apt to seek it and retain !
I scanned with heed an Indian scroll to-day,
And there within 'twas written : ' On the mountains
Of Hind there is a herb like Rúman silk,
Which if the expert shall collect, prepare
According unto knowledge, and then strew
Upon the body of one dead, the corpse,
Good sooth, forthwith will speak.' Now if the king
Permit I will adventure this hard journey,
And, with much lore to guide me on my way,
Achieve perchance this wondrous enterprise.
'Tis fitting that the dead should come to life
When Núshírwán is monarch of the world."

The Sháh made answer : " Hardly this may be,
But ne'er the less the endeavour should be made.
Convey my letter thither to the Rája,
And look upon the attractions of that land.
Seek for a comrade in the enterprise,
As well as wakeful fortune's comradeship.
Thou wilt reveal some wonder to the world,
Because the words are enigmatical.
Bear to the Rája worthy offerings,
For doubtless he must furnish thee with guides."

[1] Reading with P.

Then Núshírwán unlocked his treasury,
And of the havings that are fit for kings[1]—
Dínárs, brocade, silks, beaver-skins, and signets,
Crowns, musk, and spicery, with armlets too, C. 1747
With royal jewelry, and torques and earrings—
He had three hundred camel-loads made ready.
The envoy left the presence and, on reaching
The Rája, gave the letter, and unpacked
The bales before him, who, when he had read
The letter of the Sháh, said thus: "Good sir!
Hath not my wealth been given by Núshírwán?
Our persons, troops, and royal treasuries
Are one. 'Twere not strange if the pious world-lord,
By reason of his justice, throne, and Grace,
His splendid fortune and his high achievement,
Should raise the dead. The Brahmans on the mountains
Are all at thy dispose. My minister,
An idol-worshipper of high degree,
My noble treasurer and hoarded wealth,
With Hindústán and all its good and ill,
And all my power o'er great and small, are thine."
They lodged the envoy with magnificence
Hard by the Rája as his rank required,
Providing him with provand, tapestries,
With dainty raiment and with carpetings.
All night the Rája held talk with the priests,
The great men of Kannúj and with the sages,
And when the daylight showed above the hills,
And when the world-illuming Lamp appeared,
He called the learned physicians and all those
Best qualified by knowledge to advise,
And bade them wait upon the learned Barzwí
To hear his statement. All the erudite,
Adept in leechcraft, went to him and, when

[1] Reading with P.

He set forth to the mountains, fared with him.
Barzwí roamed all the mountain-tops afoot,
Companioned by his learnéd guides, and culled
The divers herbs—the dry, the succulent,
The withered, and the flourishing, He brayed
Herbs succulent and dry of every kind,
And spread them on the dead, but none revived
For any herb, and verily it seemed
That all the virtue had gone out of them.
The company roamed all the heights afoot,
But had no fruit from travail, and Barzwí
Then understood : "This task is for the King
That liveth and that reigneth evermore."
Thoughts of the Sháh, of those illustrious chiefs,
And that long journey, moved his heart to shame.
He thought too of the wealth that he had brought,
And was concerned at all his senseless talk.
He was chagrined about the scroll and said :—
"Why did that ignorant and stupid man
Write in his folly and his levity
That which produceth travail and foul words ?"
C. 1748 Thereafter he addressed those sages thus :—
"Ye chiefs experienced and worshipful !
Know ye of one more learnéd than yourselves,
One eminent in every company ?"
The troop of sages said with one accord :—
"There dwelleth here a very ancient man,[1]
Surpassing us in wisdom and in years,
And in his knowledge besting every chief."
Thereat Barzwí said to those men of Hind :—
"Ye men of high renown and ardent soul !
Exert yourselves yet more on my behalf,
And point me out the way to him. Perchance
That eloquent old sage may succour me
In this affair."
They led Barzwí to him,

[1] Reading with P.

Full of solicitude, with much to say.
Now when Barzwí, that man of eloquence,
Approached the sage and told all his own toils,
About the writing that he had discovered,
And of the experts' words, the ancient sage
Replied, informing him at large, and said :—
" We in those writings found the selfsame thing,
We too were instant in the same desire.
Now will I tell thee our discovery :
The noble heart must hear to understand.
The herb then is the sage, the mountain knowledge,
As being ever distant from the throng ;
The corpse the man whose knowledge is to seek,
Because the unwise are kill-joys everywhere.
In sooth 'tis knowledge that doth make men live ;
Blest is the constant toiler for its sake.
When men are stupefied through ignorance [1]
Kalíla [2] is the herb, and understanding
The mountain. In the monarch's treasury,
On making quest there, thou wilt find a book
Of knowledge that will point thee out the way."
Barzwí, when he had heard, rejoiced thereat,
And all his travail seemed like wind to him.
He blessed the sage and sped back to the king,
Like fire. Arrived he praised the Rája, saying :—
" Live thou while Hind shall last. There is a book,
O potent Rája ! that in Indian
Is called Kalíla.[3] It is under seal,
And fondly treasured in the monarch's hoards—
A guide-book both to knowledge and to counsel.
Kalíla is the herb in mystic parlance ;
So now, O king of Hind ! be thou mine aid,

[1] Reading with P.
[2] Being, like the sage, a teacher of knowledge.
[3] Reading with P.

And, if I be not troublesome, command
Thy treasurer to hand the book to me."
The Rája's soul was sad at that request,
He writhed upon his throne and answered thus
Barzwí: "No one has sought of us this thing
In times of yore or in these latter days.
However if the world-lord Núshírwán
Shall ask of me my body or my soul
C. 1749 I will withhold not from him aught that is
In being whether high or low; albeit
Thou shalt peruse it not save in my presence,
That spirits ill-disposed to me may say not
Within their hearts: 'Some one hath copied it.'
So read and learn and mark it every way."
Barzwí made answer thus and said: "O king!
Thou hast expressed my whole intent herein."
The Rája's minister then brought Kalíla;
Barzwí perused it with a sage's help,
And, as he read each chapter of the book,
He spent the day in learning it by heart,
For, having read as much as he could learn,
He read no further till the morrow came,
But, writing to the monarch of the world,
Sent privily a chapter of Kalíla.
The Indians' book by this expedient
Was introduced to royal Núshírwán,
What while Barzwí continued hale and happy,
By laving thus his ardent soul in knowledge,
Until the answer to his letters came:—
"The Sea of Lore hath come to hand for us."
Then from his palace he approached the Rája
To ask for leave to go. At that request
The Rája graciously entreated him,
And had prepared an Indian robe of honour—
Two valuable armlets and two earrings,
A torque of jewels worthy of a king,

An Indian turban and an Indian sword,
Whereof the blade was watered steel. Barzwí
Came from Kannúj, rejoicing, having gained
Much knowledge there. On his return to court
He went before the Sháh and did obeisance,
Then told about his converse with the Rája,
How knowledge had been found instead of herbs.
The Sháh replied : " O man approved in all !
Kalíla hath restored my soul to life.
Take from my treasurer my treasury's key,
And make thy choice according to thy needs."
So to the treasury the sage departed,
But gave small trouble to the treasurer.[1]
There drachms and jewels lay to left and right,
And yet he chose him but a royal robe,
Put on that costly raiment and went forth
Back to the court of Núshírwán in haste.
When he approached the throne he did obeisance,
And praised the king, who said : " O man of toils !
Why hast thou left the treasury and brought
No purses with thee and no royal gems,
For treasure is the meed of them that travail ? "
Barzwí replied : " O thou whose crown is higher
Than sun and moon ! the wearer of king's raiment
Hath access to the crown and throne of might,
And furthermore, when people shall behold C. 1750
Mine own unworthy self in royal robes,
My foes' hearts will be strait and overcast,
My friends' cheeks keep their lustre and their bloom.
Still there is somewhat I would ask the king
That I may leave my memory in the world—
Let Búzurjmihr, when copying the book,
Show favour to Barzwí's endeavourment,

[1] Reading with P.

And give account of me in Chapter One,
By order of the conquering king, that so,
When I am dead, my travailing may be
Forgot not by the sages in the world."
"A great thing this to ask!" the Sháh replied,
"And one beyond the licence of a liege,
And yet thy labour hath deserved as much,
Although thy standing warranteth it not."
Then said the Sháh to Búzurjmihr: "This wish
Of his is not to be ignored."
So when
The fashioning of pen from kex was done
The scribe wrote of Barzwí in Chapter One.
As for the royal book which thus was writ
'Twas in the script of bygone centuries;
Among the royal hoards men treasured it,
But 'twas beheld not by unworthy eyes.
It was perused not, till the people took
To Arabic, save in the ancient tongue;
But when Mámún had made earth fresh and young
He dealt in other fashion with the book,
For he had clerkly lore, was politic
In kingly wise, and learned in every way.
'Twas then translated into Arabic,
Just as thou mayest hear it read to-day.
In Arabic, till Nasr was king, it stayed;
Then noble Abú'l Fazl, his minister
And, in respect to lore, his treasurer,
Gave orders, which were readily obeyed,[1]
For folk to speak in Persian and Darí.[2]
Thereafter precedent and policy
Conducted Nasr in wisdom's way when he
Was fain by whatsoever means might be
To leave within the world his memory.

[1] "mais son pouvoir fut de courte durée" (Mohl).
[2] The more ornate Persian used at court.

They held a session with interpreters,
Who read the whole book out to Rúdagí.[1]
That poet linked the scattered words in verse,
And threaded [2] thus those pregnant pearls, that he
Who is a scholar might new graces find,
And one unlearnéd more facility,
For words in prose escape us, but combined
In metric guise possess the brain and mind.
Life to Mahmúd, the world's great potentate!
May earth and time as slaves before him wait,
How it would joy the heart if but the bad
From Sháh Mahmúd less free allowance had!
Yet be not thou concerned thereat. Anon,
Since life is far advanced, thou must be gone.
Thou hast thine ups and downs from day to day, C. 1751
At whiles assistance and at whiles dismay;
But neither of them will for aye remain
With thee; the hope of tarriance here is vain.

[1] Rúdakí in the original. [2] Literally "pierced."

PART V

THE FALL AND RESTORATION TO FAVOUR OF BÚZURJMIHR, AND THE WISDOM OF NÚSHÍRWÁN

ARGUMENT

Búzurjmihr, while in attendance upon the Sháh during a hunting-expedition, has a premonition of coming trouble and immediately afterwards falls under the Sháh's displeasure, and is disgraced. Conscious of his own rectitude he refuses to own that he is in fault and is treated with increasing rigour till the Sháh has need of his services to expound a problem proposed by Cæsar, but with his sight greatly impaired by his sufferings.

The rest of the Part is taken up with an account of the wisdom of Núshírwán as shown in his replies to questioners and in his letter of advice to his son Hurmuzd.

NOTE

§ 2. We have other instances of such problems and "hard questions." See Vol. vii., p. 5.

§§ 3 and 5. On Persian Wisdom-literature see Vol. vii., p. 278 *seq.*

§ 4. It is manifest from the account in the Sháhnáma, and it is probably true historically, that Núshírwán did his best to provide himself with a worthy successor.[1] In addition to this letter of counsel we have in Part VI. the account of the examination that his son Hurmuzd had to pass,[2] and some final exhortations.[3] Unfortunately

> "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
> Gang aft a-gley."

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[1] *Cf.* NT. p. 252 and *note.* [2] p. 57. [3] p. 61.

§ 1

How Núshírwán was wroth with Búzurjmihr and ordered him to be put in Ward

Consider now the case of Búzurjmihr,
Who from the dust rose to the circling sphere,
Which will exalt one to the clouds on high,
Then bring him down in sorry dust to lie![1]
It happened in those days that Núshírwán
Went forth from Madá'in to hunt. He chased
Along the wilderness the mountain-sheep
And the gazelles. The mountain-sheep dispersed.
The Sháh was left behind with Búzurjmihr,
Who followed both from duty and from love.
Then from the waste the monarch reached a meadow,
And saw trees, grass, and shade. The weary Sháh
Alighted from his steed to rest his eyes
Upon the grass. He saw no followers;
The one of goodly face remained, no more.
The Sháh reposed awhile upon the mead,
His head right lovingly upon the lap
Of Búzurjmihr. It was that wise king's wont
To wear a jewelled armlet. As it chanced
This clinging armlet snapped upon his arm,
And fell beside his couch. A sable bird
Swooped from the clouds to where he lay, looked round,
Beheld that armlet, brake the thread whereon
The gems were strung, then ate them each in turn,
The lustrous pearls and topazes alike,
Flew from the monarch's couch, and disappeared.
At that adventure Búzurjmihr aghast
Mused at the process of the turning sky.

[1] Two couplets omitted.

He understood: "My fall, my day of wrath,
My season of dismay, are hard at hand!"
The Sháh awoke, marked how he bit his lips,
Scanned his own arm, beheld the jewels gone,
And seeing no one of his escort there[1]
Conceived that while he slumbered Búzurjmihr[2]
Had gulped the armlet down, and said to him:—
"Thou dog! who said to thee: 'Tis possible
To hide one's natural bent?'"[3]
But Núshírwán C. 1
Fatigued with many words his tongue in vain;
He got no answer but a deep, cold sigh,
While Búzurjmihr stood withered by the Sháh,
And by the process of revolving heaven.
That wise man marked at once the ominous sign
Of downfall and remained struck dumb by fear.
The escort of the Sháh had gone about
The mead while Núshírwán was in its midst.
He mounted on his charger's back in wrath,
And noticed no one on his journey home,
But bit his lip at Búzurjmihr the while,
And muttering much alighted from his steed,
Bade smite the sage's face as 'twere an anvil,
And to imprison him in his own palace.
So Búzurjmihr abode there and beheld
A frowning sky. He had a kinsman, brave
And young, attending on Sháh Núshírwán
Within the palace day and night on terms
Of intimacy. Búzurjmihr one day
Asked that dependant of the sun-faced Sháh:—
"How dost thou wait upon him? Let me know
So that thou mayest be more serviceable."
"Chief of archmages!" said the servitor,
"It chanced this very day that Núshírwán

[1] Couplet inserted from P.
[2] Reading with P.
[3] Couplet omitted.

Looked so on me, his bondslave, that I said :—
' There is an end for me of food and sleep ! '
I poured the water for him after meat,
Transgressing with the basin in the act,
And when the world-lord was offended at me
I let the basin fall."
Then said the sage :—
" Arise ! Fetch hither water and pour out
As thou wouldst pour it o'er the Sháh's own hands."
The young man brought warm water which he poured
Upon the sage's hands with gentleness,
Who said : " Pour thus when he requireth it,
Avoiding any awkwardness, and when
The water shall perfume the basin's brim
Forbear to pour."
The servitor took heed,
And on the next occasion, when he brought
The salver, poured the water as the sage
Enjoined with neither tardiness nor haste.
" O thou whose love increaseth ! " said the Sháh,
" Who told thee this ? "
He answered : " Búzurjmihr,
For he it was that taught to me the mode
Marked by the Sháh, the master of the world."
The Sháh said : " Go and say thus to the sage :—
' With all that high estate of thine and lustre
Why didst thou seek the worse and not the better
Through thine ill nature and misgovernance ? ' "
The attendant heard and coming quickly sought
The palace eagerly with stricken soul,
Gave Búzurjmihr the message of the Sháh,
And privily received this answer back :—
1753 " My station both in public and in private
Far bettereth the monarch of the world's."

The servitor returned with this response,
But counted as he went the grains of dust.
The answer made the Sháh exceeding wroth.
He had the sage bound in a dismal dungeon,
And asked the servitor the second time :—
" How beareth that insensate one his lot ? "
The messenger came with a tearful face,
And told the words to Búzurjmihr who thus
Made answer to that faithful friend of his :—
" My days are passed more lightly than the Sháh's."
The messenger turned back, came like the wind,
And told the Sháh that answer, which enraged him ;
He was as 'twere a pard and bade to make
A narrow iron cage, then studded it
With spikes and nails inside, and set thereon
Withal an iron lid. Thus Búzurjmihr
Could neither rest by day nor sleep by night.
Thus for the fourth time to the servitor
The Sháh said : " Take this message and bring back
His answer. Say to him : ' How far'st thou now,
Environed as thou art by piercing nails ? ' "
The attendant came and gave the message sent
By that imperious prince. Thus Búzurjmihr
Made answer to the youth : " My days are better
Than those of Núshírwán."
Now when the man
Returned with this reply the Sháh's face grew
All livid at the words. Out of the palace
He chose a truthful man and capable
Of comprehending what the sage should say,
Dispatched too with the messenger a swordsman,
Who acted as the executioner,
And said : " Go to this bad, ill-fortuned man,
And say : ' If thy reply give pleasure, well ;
If not the deathsman with his trenchant sword
Shall show thee Doomsday in that thou hast said

That jail and nails and cage, and pit and bonds
Are better than the throne of Núshírwán.' "
The envoy came apace to him and told
The words of Núshírwán. Said Búzurjmihr
To that good envoy: " Fortune ne'er hath shown us
Its face. None of us is exempt from change,
And verily all good and ill will end.
Enthroned and rich or grievously oppressed,
We have no choice, we all must pack and part.
To pass from durance is an easy thing;
The quaking is for them that wear the crown."
That wise man and the executioner
Returned and, coming to the exalted Sháh,
Narrated everything that they had heard.
The fear of evil fortune came upon him.
They bore that righteous guide from that strait cage
Back to his palace with the Sháh's consent,
1754 And heaven turned awhile with matters thus,
While wrinkles filled the face of Búzurjmihr,
His heart grew more oppressed and worn, and both
His eyes were darkened by anxiety,
While since his travailing surpassed his gain
He wasted with his care and pined with pain.

§ 2

How the Ambassador of Cæsar came to Núshírwán with a locked Casket and how Búzurjmihr was set at large to declare its Contents

Now in those days it chanced that Cæsar sent
An envoy with a letter to the Sháh,
With gifts, with presents, and a padlocked casket,

And said : " O king of warriors and chiefs !
Thou hast no lack of holy archimages,
So let them tell, not tampering with the lock,
What is concealed therein. If they say right
We will send tribute and our wonted gifts ;
But if thy clever archimages' hearts
Fail in this knowledge indispensable
The Sháh must not ask tribute at our hands,
Nor send an army to invade our realm.
Such is the message that hath come from Cæsar :
Make answer as it seemeth good to thee."

The monarch of the world said to the envoy :—
" This thing is not a mystery to God,
And by His Grace divine I will achieve it,
Convoking holy men to give me aid.
Abide here for a se'nnight, cheered with wine,
Make merry in thy heart and be at ease."

The matter proved perplexing to the Sháh :
He called to him the great men and the wise,
Who all examined it in every way
To find a means whereby to loose that coil,
Examined, as did all the archimages,
That casket and that lock whose key was lacking,
But could not tell and owned their ignorance.
Now when that concourse proved of no avail
The heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh, was grieved.
He said : " The intellect of Búzurjmihr
Will search this secret of the turning sky."

The king of kings, in sore embarrassment,
Gave orders to his treasurer to provide
A change of raiment from the treasury,
And had a choice steed saddled royal wise.
He sent them to the sage. " Thou must forget,"
He said, " the hardships that thou hast endured
Because high heaven above us so ordained
That thou shouldst have affliction at our hands.

C. 1755 Thy tongue excited my displeasure: thou
Hast been the author of thine own oppression.
I am confronted with a thankless task,
The elders' hearts have been perplexed thereby,
For Cæsar hath dispatched to us from Rúm
A famed priest of that land and therewithal
A casket with a tightly fastened lid
Padlocked and sealed with musk. The envoy saith:—
'Thus said my lord: "Reveal this hidden thing,
And let the sages and the princes say
What lieth in this casket."' So methought:—
'No one will see through this veiled mystery
Unless it be the soul of Búzurjmihr.'"

When Búzurjmihr had listened to those words
His pain and former trouble were renewed;
He left the prison, bathed his head and body,
And first approached in prayer the Lord of all.
Albeit innocent himself he feared
The Sháh, the wrathful world-lord's, tyranny.
He watched that day and night alike and pondered
According to the message of his master.
What time the sun was brilliant in the heavens
He mused upon the aspects of the stars,[1]
He laved his heart's eyes in the stream of wisdom,
Chose out a trusty man among the sages,
And said to him: "My market hath been spoiled,
My vision ruined by my sufferings.
Observe upon the road the passers by,
Address them, have no fear, and ask their names."

Forth from his house went Búzurjmihr and met
A woman hasting, beautiful of face.
That wise man vigilant informed the sage
Of all things that were hidden from his eyes,
And he as feeling for his way rejoined:—

[1] Couplet omitted and reading with P.

" Ask if this Moon be wedded."
Said the lady :—
" I have a spouse and child withal at home."
The sage on his white roadster, when he heard
Her answer, started. Then another woman
Appeared and, seeing her, his agent asked :—
" O woman hast thou got a child and spouse,
Or, being single, only wind in hand ? "
" I have a husband if no child," she said,
" Thou hast mine answer, suffer me to pass."
Just then another woman came—the third.
Her too the friend approached. " My Fair ! " said he,
"What mate hast thou who hast such goodly carriage
And daintiness ? "
" I never had a husband,"
She said, " I would not one should see my face."
Now mark the inference of Búzurjmihr
On hearing these replies. He hurried on
With anxious mien. They brought him to the Sháh, C. 1
Who ordered that he should approach the throne,
But was exceeding troubled in his heart
Because he missed the sage's piercing glance,
And heaved full many a deep and chilling sigh,
Excused himself for having wronged the guiltless,
Then talked of Cæsar and of Rúm, and spake
Of casket and of padlock. Búzurjmihr
Made answer to the monarch of the world :—
" Be lustre thine so long as heaven shall turn.
Now must we hold a session of the wise,
Of Cæsar's envoy, and the archimages,
And have the casket laid before the Sháh,
Before the Great, the seekers of the way ;
Then in God's strength, who gave me intellect,
And made the right the business of my soul,
I will declare the casket's whole contents,

And lay no hand on it or on its lock.
Although mine eyes be dim my heart is bright;
The breastplate of my soul withal is knowledge."
The king joyed at the words. His heart grew fresh
As roses in the Spring. Anxiety
Bent him no longer, and he called for envoy
And casket, summoned all the archimages
And mighty men, and seated many a sage
With Búzurjmihr, then told the ambassador:—
"Repeat thy message and demand an answer."
The Rúman, hearing, loosed his tongue and thus
Told Cæsar's words: "From the victorious world-lord
We look for wisdom, knowledge, and renown,
And thou, O master of the world! hast Grace,
And stature, greatness, lore, and might of hand.
The wise archmages—seekers of the way—
The chiefs and heroes that attend upon thee,
Are either all assembled at thy court,
Or are thy lieges still where'er they be.
If these shrewd-hearted sages shall behold
This casket with its lock and seal and stamp,
And state distinctly what is there concealed,
So that their statement shall accord to wisdom,
Then by this token I will send to thee
The tribute that my realm can well afford;
But if in any wise they fail herein
Ask not for tribute from our land again."
Whenas the sage had heard the speaker's words
He loosed his tongue and offered praise and said:—
"Oh! be the world's Sháh Sháh for evermore,
May he be eloquent and fare with fortune!
Praise to the Master of the sun and moon,
Who showeth to the soul the path to knowledge,
And knoweth all things manifest and hidden;

I covet knowledge, He is past all need.[1]
Within the casket are three lustrous pearls, C. 17
And greater coverture than I have said.[2]
One pearl is pierced, the second is half pierced,
The third hath had no intercourse with iron."
The Rúman sage, on hearing, brought the key
To Núshírwán who looked. Concealed within
There was a pyx, and in the pyx a veil
Of painted silk, and in the silk three jewels,
Just as the wise man of Írán had said,
Because of those three gems the first was pierced,
The second half pierced and the third intact.
Then all the archimages praised the sage
And showered gems on him. The king of kings
Became of joyful countenance and filled
The mouth of Búzurjmihr with lustrous pearls.
His conduct in the past oppressed his heart,
He writhed, his face grew furrowed: why had he
Dealt so oppressively with Búzurjmihr
From whom he had experienced love and faith?
The sage, when he beheld the Sháh's shrunk face,
And grief-pierced soul, revealed what had been hidden,
Declared all that had passed to Núshírwán,
Told of the armlet, of the sable bird,
The liege's care, the slumber of the Sháh,
And added: "This was doomed to come to pass,
And sorrow and remorse will profit not:
When heaven is intending good or ill
What are Sháh, archimage, or Búzurjmihr?
God hath implanted in the stars the seed,
And we must write the sentence on our heads;
So let the heart of Núshírwán, the Sháh,
Rejoice exempt from pain and grief for ever.
Exalted though the Sháh be yet his state

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id.*

Is made more gracious by his minister.
The chase, war, pleasure, largess, justice, feast,
These are the business of the king of kings.
He knoweth what Sháhs did in days of yore,
So by that token let him do the same.
To gather treasure, to provide the host,
To chide, speak, hear the suppliant, and take thought
For rule and treasure, these things are a care,
That, heart and soul, the minister must bear."

§ 3

Discourse on the Responses of Núshírwán

Thus was it at the time of Núshírwán:
He was at once the Sháh and paladin,
At once a warrior and archimage,
The Fire-priest and the captain of the host.
He had his emissaries everywhere,
And trusted not the world to ministers.
C. 1758 None could conceal from him in great or small
The good and evil of the world's estate.
One day a loyal archmage of his agents
Took on himself to put this to the Sháh:—
"One time without reproof thou passest by
A fault. Another time the same offender
Is hung howe'er much he excuse himself!"
The Sháh replied: "When one doth own his fault
I am as leech, he is as wretched patient
That would avoid the dose and sheddeth tears;
If that dose fail I leech his soul no more."
Another archmage said to him: "Be blest,
And sheltered from all ill on every side!

The captain of the host went from Gurgán
With privacy, and entering a wood
There for a while he slumbered. The Gurkíls
Bore off his baggage! He was left unfurnished,
And, further, turneth back on that account!"
The Sháh made answer thus: "We do not need
That militarist. How can he guard troops
Who cannot guard himself?"[1]
Another said:—
"Live happy evermore with archimages
To sit, to banquet, and repose with thee!
There is a famous chieftain present here,
Whose treasure passeth thine!"
The Sháh replied:—
"Yea, rightly, for he is our empire's crown.
I tender both his treasures and his life,
And toil to magnify him."
Said another:—
"Great king! live ever and unscathed by ill!
Among the captives carried off from Rúm
Are many babes unweaned."
He gave this sentence:—
"The little ones must not be reckoned captives.
We will dispatch them glad and in good case
To their own mothers."
People wrote to him:—
"A hundred wealthy Rúmans offer ransom."
"If they are doing it through fear," he said,
"Sell each chief for a cup of wine and ask
No more because we do not lack their goods.
I will require their jewels, purses, slaves,

[1] Mohl translates:—"Le Sipehbed est sorti un jour de Gourgan en secret, est entré dans un bois et y a dormi pendant quelque temps; ses bagages étaient sur un autre steppe, il n'avait rien avec lui et fut obligé de s'en revenir pour rejoindre ses bagages." Nouschirwan répondit par cette sentence: "Je n'avais pas besoin d'une escorte; celui qui veille sur l'armée ne s'inquiète pas pour lui-même."

And gold and silver with the scimitar."
They told him: "Of the rich men of the city
There are two merchants and they keep folk waking
The best part of the night with shouts of revel,
And twanging of the rebeck and the harp."
He made them this reply: "No hardship this,
And do ye others that are wealthy too
Live like these twain in mirth and jollity;
Be inoffensive and live unaggrieved."
C. 1759 One day they wrote to him: "Mayst thou be happy!
Far from thee ever be the evil eye!
The monarch of Yaman observed at court:—
'When Núshírwán doth ope his mouth to speak·
He talketh so much of the dead that those
Alive have their glad lives made sad thereby!'"
He answered thus: "All wise and high-born men
Speak of the dead: the friendship is not sound
Of any that would purge the heart of them."
Another said: "O Sháh! thy youngest son
Doth act not with the justice of his sire.
He buyeth an estate at such a rate
As to aggrieve the seller!"
Said the Sháh:—
"This is not well, so let the seller keep
Both price and land."
"O Sháh," another said,
"Imperious, far from blame and from reproach!
Thy heart was gentle once: why hath it grown
So overbearing and so choleric?"
He thus made answer: "I had no teeth then,
And fed on milk because I could no other,
But since my teeth came, and my back grew straight,
My quest is flesh because I have grown strong."
Another said: "I own that thou art mighty,

Our better both in counsel and in knowledge,
But how hast thou surpassed the kings of kings,
And made the whole world watch thy policy ?"
"My wisdom is a thing," he thus replied,
"That is beyond their ken. Sense, knowledge, counsel—
These are my ministers, my treasury
Is earth, my treasurer thought."
Another said :—
"O king ! thy hawk in chase hath bound an eagle ! "
Thus said he : "Beat its back ; why should it fall
Upon its better ? Gibbet it on high
To suffer in its turn, for e'en in fight
The subject may not seek to conquer kings."
Another chief—one of the emissaries—
Said thus : "O monarch of the world ! Barzín
At morn departed with the host and met
A reader of the stars who prophesied :—
'None will behold again this haughty chief,
This mighty army, and its equipage,
When once their backs are turned upon the king ! ' "
The Sháh replied : "Revolving heaven hath shown
Barzín's designs a loving countenance,
And stars and sun and moon will not destroy
That chieftain with his treasure and his host."
Another archmage said : "The king, one day,
Bade choose a man, illustrious by birth,
To make the circuit of the sovereignty
Both for the sake of justice and to send
Reports concerning matters great and small, C. 176c
And good or evil, to the court. Gashasp
Is both illustrious and old : 'twere well
That justice be administered by him."

The Sháh replied: "Gashasp, though far from want,
Is still possessed by greed. Choose some one else,
Who toileth not upon his own behalf,
And is possessed of treasures of his own,
One of experience, upright and austere,
Whose first concern is for the poor."

One said:—

"The chief cook hath a grievance 'gainst the Sháh
And chiefs, and saith: 'I dress his favourite meats,
And serve them at cross roads. He savoureth not,
Nor toucheth, them!' That loyal servant quaketh."

"Too much food may disgust," the Sháh replied.
Another said: "All thoughtful people blame
The king of kings because he goeth forth
Without an ample escort, and the hearts
Of all his friends are full on that account
For fear some enemy with ill designs
May suppliant-wise contrive to get at him."

He made this answer: "Equity and wisdom
Protect the great king's person. Right sufficeth
To guard the just judge though he be alone."

Another said: "O wisdom's mate! the prince
Of Khurásán said on the riding-ground:—
'I know not why the king recalled Garshásp.'"

The Sháh made answer: "He hath left undone
My bidding and ignored my purposes:
I ordered him to ope for good or ill
My treasury's portal to deserving folk.
The man that is a niggard in his gifts
Concealeth all the monarch's Grace divine."

Another said: "The great king is a magnate
With all men, and munificent and holy.
What hath Mihrak, that ancient servant, done
To have his pay reduced, his visage wan?"

The Sháh replied: "Mihrak hath grown too bold,
Relying on his former services.
He came to court and took his seat bemused,
And he was never save with wine in hand."
An archmage of the intelligencers said:—
"The Sháh, when marching to encounter Cæsar,
Called only the Iránians to the war,
And so Írán became hard pressed by Rúm."
He answered: "This hostility is innate,
'Tis war with Áhriman."
Another time
One ventured to observe: "The Sháh selecteth
Troops differing from those of former Sháhs.
What look'st thou for in charger-riding Lions,
Expert of hand, upon the day of battle?"
He thus replied: "The cavalier of war C. 17
Ne'er must be satiate of combating.
Feast and the field of battle must be one
To him both by bright day and darksome night.
He never faileth in the hour of need,
And few or many make no odds to him."
Another said: "O Núshírwán, the Sháh!
Live ever joyful and with youthful fortune.
A man was at the gateway from Nisá—
A servant and a trusty officer—
Who at the reckoning at the taxing-office
Was found short by three hundred thousand drachms.
He pleaded: 'All are spent.' Chiefs, archimages,
And tax-collectors are concerned."
The king,
On hearing how the archimages claimed
The money from the officer, commanded:—
"Press not for what is spent: give him too somewhat
Out of the treasury."

Another said :—
" A gallant cavalier was hurt and long
Disabled. Cured he charged the ranks of Rúm,
Fell, and hath left behind him little ones."
The Sháh commanded : " Be four thousand drachms
Assigned to them out of the treasury,
Because when any one is slain in war,
And leaveth babes as his memorial,
Whene'er the scribe shall read out from the roll
His name, his children must have drachms, so pay
A thousand thus to them four times a year."
Another said : " Be happy all thy days.
At Marv the captain of the host hath gathered
Much wealth in money but he spendeth not,
And people are abandoning the march."
He thus made answer : " Give that wealth—the cause
Whereby the land is made depopulate—
Back to the folk from whom it hath been taken.
Make proclamation of the fact in Marv,
And bid erect a gibbet at his door,
In sight of all his province and his troops,
And hang alive the tyrant on the gallows,
Head-downward, that hereafter nobody
Among our paladins may turn aside
In heart and spirit from our ordinance.
Why must he bleed the poor to get him wealth,
And joy his body to his soul's destruction ? "
Another said : " God-fearing Sháh ! thy subjects
Throng in thy court, extol thine equity,
And praise the Maker for thee."
He replied :—
" Thank God that we inspire alarm in none.
Be it ours to tender yet more carefully
Both innocent and guilty."

Said another :—

" O Sháh endowed with Grace and understanding !
The world is full of joy, delight, and sweets,
And lord and liege are dizzied in their heads C. 17
At night-fall with the din."

" In us," he answered,
" May small and great rejoice throughout the world."

Another said : " O Sháh of power supreme !
Detractors speak with blame of thee and say :—
' He squandereth vast treasures but he never
Hath felt the labour of amassing them.' "

He thus returned reply : " If I withhold
The wealth laid up within my treasury
From those deserving of it all my gain
Will turn to loss at last."

Another said :—

" O thou exalted king ! God grant that scath
May never come upon that soul of thine !
The Jews and Christians are thine enemies,
Are double-faced, and worship Áhriman."

He answered thus : " A brave Sháh is not great
Save he be tolerant."

" Mardwí[1] hath spent,"
Another said, " three hundred thousand drachms,
Famed king ! out of thy treasury and more
On mendicants, and chiefly on himself."

He said thus : " Such withal is our command :
' 'Tis well for thee to give to the deserving.' "

Another said : " O Sháh that toilest not !
Much largess hath made void thy treasury."

He thus returned reply : " The open hand
Doth start a man afresh, both leaf and bough.
The world-lord, when a worshipper of God,
Hath at his disposition all the world,

[1] Reading with P.

But we have seen it niggard to the mean,
And greed and harshness tempt not me."
" O king ! "
An archmage said, " shrewd Kurákhán hath wrung
From famous Balkh three hundred thousand drachms,
And handed them to us who laid them up
Among thy treasures."
" We," he made reply,
" Require not drachms through others' sufferings,
So give them back to those from whom they came,
With somewhat also from the treasury,
Because the world-lord that adoreth God
Hath no desire to vex his subjects' hearts.
Raze Kurákhán's fine palace and enrich
His roofs with clay. His palace shall be waste,
His profit toil and, after toil, distress
And malison. Take from our roll his name,
And hold of no account his likes at court."
Another said : " O Sháh of glorious race !
Thy converse turneth greatly on Jamshíd
And on Káús."
Thus Núshírwán replied :—
" Oh ! may our knowledge keep them ever young !
I speak of them that mine own head and crown
May be remembered after I am dead."
" Why hideth," asked another man, " the Sháh
His secrets from the illustrious Bahman ? "
1763 The Sháh replied : " He turneth him from wisdom,
And eateth of the fruit of his own lusts."
One said : " O Sháh that tendereth thy subjects ?
Why hast thou recently become remiss ? "
He thus made answer : " I associate
With sage and archimage, for when the voice
Of Áhriman is at our ears our hearts

Grow void of counsel and our brains of sense."
An archmage asked the monarch of the earth
To speak concerning kingship and the Faith,
And said: "A man of wisdom will allow
A faithless better than a kingless world."
He thus made answer: "I have said the same,
And holy men have heard my words. The world-lord
Ne'er saw a faithless world though every one
Hath his own Faith. One man adoreth idols,
Another's Faith is pure. One said: 'A curse
Is better than a blessing,' but mere words
Will never wreck the world, so speak thy mind.
But when the great king too is void of Faith
No one will bring down blessings on the world.
Faith and the sovereignty are like the body
And soul; the twain support the world."[1]
"O Sháh
Of joyous nature! thou hast oft observed,"
One said, "before the chiefs: 'What time the throne
Is destitute of king then Faith and wisdom
Are worthless.' Once thou saidest: 'I am fortune,
And fortune's pretext both for good and ill,
And when one uttereth praises in the world
The crop in secret cometh back to me.'"
He answered: "Yea, 'tis well. The great king's head
Is fortune's crown. The world is as the body;
Kings are its head and crowned accordingly."
Another said: "O Sháh, the people's friend!
Be thine the sovereignty and length of days!
Five days have passed, O lustre of the soul!
Since last the high priest came before thy presence."
He answered: "I am not concerned thereat,
For he is occupied on mine affairs."
One said: "O Sháh of sunlike Grace to whom

[1] *Cf.* Vol. VI. p. 250.

Time will bring forth no peer! we see a suitor
Attending court each morn, and that affairs
Are wrong with him, but wot not of his grievance."
He answered: "In Hijáz[1] thieves plundered him
Of countless goods. That he may not be troubled
I have replaced them from the treasury,
And keep him at the court on this account
To see if he can recognise the thieves."
Another said: "O Sháh of glorious birth,
The lord of bounty and the lord of justice!
V. 1764 Down from the time of Gaiúmart till now
No Sháh like thee hath filled the royal throne."
He said: "I give thanksgiving unto God
That matters are as He would have them be."
The sentences of Núshírwán are past,
The world is old but ever young my care;
My genius hath not blossomed to this last
Though keen it grew, such fire in eld was there![2]
For many a year I told this history
Though hidden 'twas from Saturn, moon, and sun,
But since Mahmúd's name crowned my poetry
Its commendation through the world hath run.
The idolators of Hind he bringeth down
With sword whose sheen, like silk of Wash,[3] is bright.
Oh! may the age fare well through his renown,
And in his diadem the heaven delight.

[1] Reading with P. In A.D. 575 the Persians overthrew the Axumite power in Arabia and conquered Yaman. The Hijáz would come to some extent within their sphere of influence.

[2] Couplet omitted.

[3] "son épée damasquinée comme une broderie." Mohl. Wash is the name of a city in Turkistán, famous for its silk.

§ 4

Núshírwán's Letter of Counsel to his Son Hurmuzd

Now read the letter of Sháh Núshírwán,
And muse upon it in thine ardent soul.
He said : " This letter grateful to the heart,
Instructed, learned, well counselled, and abstruse,
Is from the Sháh exalted and sun-faced.
Great is he, heaven inclineth to his wish,
The world-lord he, just and beneficent,
Without reproach, the lavisher of treasure,
Increaser of Kubád's renown and throne,
Transmitter of the crown of state and justice,
Possessed of Grace and stature, fame and conduct,
And all that he could wish for from the crown
Of greatness, to Hurmuzd, our own pure son,
Who heartily accepteth all our counsels,
And is through God glad and victorious,
For evermore a world-lord crowned and throned.
This lucky month upon the day Khurdád,
With fair stars and world-brightening presages,
We set upon thy head the crown of gold,
As we ourselves received it from our sire,
And give thee too the blessings which Kubád,
The glorious, bestowed upon our crown.
Be vigilant and master of the world,
Be wise and noble and without offence,
Increase in knowledge and incline to God,
Because He is the Guider of thy soul.
We have inquired of one of good discourse,
One ancient both in wisdom and in years :—
' What man of us approacheth nearest God ?
Who goeth by the straitest path to Him ? '
He gave reply : ' Choose knowledge as thou wouldst
That people should bless thee because the sage

C. 1765 Deriveth not addition from the dust:
Make thy pure spirit then approved by knowledge.'
Through knowledge doth the Sháh adorn the throne:
Mayst thou be sage and of victorious fortune.
God grant thou never be a promise-breaker,
For promise-breakers have the dust for shroud.
See that thou punish not the innocent,
Or listen to the words of slanderers.
Let every ordinance of thine be just,
For justice will delight thy spirit. Seek not,
As thou wouldst be the lustre of thy throne,
To compass falsehood with thy tongue. Secure
A subject in the enjoyment of his wealth,
For others' havings are no friends of thine:
Joy in the wealth that thou hast earned thyself.
'Tis thine to be the asylum for all folk,
For overlord and underling alike.
Reward the man that acteth uprightly;
Oppose withal the evil-doer. Although
Thou mayst be held in honour in the world,
Forget not travail, misery, and loss;
Be what one may this is a Wayside Inn
Wherein it booteth not to feel at home.
Seek worth and be associate with the wise
If dost wish that fortune shall commend thee.
By knowledge bind the hands of tyranny,
As thou wouldst scape the evil of mishap,
And dearly tender him who in thy presence
Hath trodden under foot thy foeman's life.
The great men and the merchants of the city
Must have their share of justice. When thou settest
The crown of king of kings upon thy head
Discern the worse way from the truly great.
Keep ever in thy presence some wise man,
And hold him as thy body and thy soul.

In matters great and small pay no regard
To any save the accomplished and well born.
Give not the worthless battle-gear for when
Thou seekest it 'tis not to hand. Thy friend
Will yield thee to the foe; a double task
Both difficult and wretched will be thine:
He will bring down thy weapons to the field,
And one day will employ them on thyself.
Be generous to persons in distress,
Avoid ill-doing, fear calamity,
Discern the hidden motives of thy heart,
Make no mere outward show of good and right,
Be not unmeasured in beneficence,
And hear the counsels of the experienced.
Lean toward religious men but watch religion,
Because it causeth bitterness and wrath.
Proportion thine expenses to thy means,
And be not careful to augment thy store.
Observe the precedents of former Sháhs,
And be a righteous judge in everything;
The Sháh that doth unjustly is accursed; C. 176
Approve but justice then and court not curses.
Where are the crowned heads of the kings of kings?
Where are the great men and the ministers?
Their fame is now their sole memorial;
This Wayside Inn abideth not with any.
Command not to shed blood, or urge the host
To battle, lightly. Heed this weighty letter.
Set not thy heart upon this Hostelry.
Herein have I but sought thy good and decked
Thy heart with knowledge by the rede of Him
Who ruleth sun and moon; by Him keep off
The influence of the Dív. Have thou before thee
This letter, day and night. Let wisdom rule
Thy heart. If thou dost make a memory here
Thy name will never want for majesty.

Now be the Maker of the world thy refuge,
May time and earth affect thee. May high heaven
Turn but at thy desire and in the world
Be none aggrieved by thee."
He placed the letter,
When written, in the treasury and abode
With fear and trembling in this Wayside Inn.

A king of kings well counselled, wise, and just,
Will strive to make his modesty unite
With strength of hand and gallantry in fight,
Be of pure Faith and put in God his trust.

See what man of these virtues is possest
And, seeing, him his meed of praise prefer,
Seek one that is as bright as Jupiter,
Aspiring, armed with sword, with mail on breast;

Who taketh from idolaters the sway,
Who with brocade of Faith his heart hath bound.
Yea verily the man himself is found:
Mahmúd is monarch of the world to-day.

The quest of battle and of banqueting
Are one to this world's lord. Abú'l Kásim!
God grant the age joy in the sight of him,
That open-handed and victorious king.

§ 5

How an Archmage questioned Núshírwán and how he made Answer

There was an elder versed in our old speech,
And antiquate with action and discourse,
Who from a volume in the ancient tongue

Saith that an archmage asked of Núshírwán :—
" In what way should the worshipper invoke
In secret prayer the Master of the world
That He may give an answer and bestow
Withal fair fortune on his suppliant ?
A man, with arms outstretched toward the sky,
May make request before the Lord of time,
Yet gain not his desire for all his prayers, C. 176
And hath but tearful eyes and furrowed face."
The conquering Sháh replied : " Be moderate
In thy requests to God ; when they pass bounds
A heart o'ercharged will come of that desire."
The archmage asked : " What man deserveth good,
And who is worthiest of the name of ' Great ? ' "
The Sháh replied : " He that amasseth treasure
Without exertion, and bestoweth not,
Is unfit for the throne ; from time to time
His fortune will grow dark, but well is he
That giveth. Give, if wealth be thine, and hoard not."
" What is the base of wisdom ? " asked the archmage,
" And who rejoiceth in its boughs and leaves ? "
" The sage rejoiceth," Núshírwán replied ;
" So doth the modest man of noble birth."
The archmage asked : " Who profiteth by knowledge,
And who is witless and calamitous ? "
The Sháh replied : " The cherisher of wisdom
Will cherish life which profiteth thereby
When it aboundeth, but its lack entaileth
Grief, care, and loss."
The archimage inquired :—
" Is knowledge better than the Grace of kings,
For Grace and majesty adorn the throne ? "
" A sage possessed of Grace," replied the Sháh,

Will take the whole world underneath his wing.
Thou needest wisdom, Grace, renown, and birth;
With these four heaven will keep thee still in mind."
"In kingship who illustrateth the throne?"
The archmage said. "Who is unfortunate?"
And Núshírwán made answer: "One that seeketh
First for the aidance of the King, the World-lord,[1]
For bounty, knowledge, and right usages
Will make him tender toward the suppliant.
Next let him give authority to those,
Who merit such distinction by their worth.
Then let him see that nothing in the world
For good or evil is concealed from him.
He should distinguish, fourthly, foe from friend:
'Tis well that kings should be without offence.
When he hath Grace and wisdom, Faith and fortune,
Then he is worthy of the crown and graceth
The throne, while if thou findest such things lacking
Good sooth! thou wilt behold him lustreless;
He after death will leave an evil name,
And win not jocund Paradise at last."[2]
C. 1768 The archmage asked: "How many modes of speech
Are there and what are they, because o'er some
One needs must weep while others are crown, treasure,
And reputation, those grief, these content?"
Said Núshírwán: "The sage hath classified
The modes of speech and thought the matter out.
First, profitable speech; the sweet-voiced sage
Saith that it is the harmless. Secondly,
That which thou callest the deliberate
Know to be that of shrewd and fluent men,
For they speak[3] largely to the point and leave

[1] Reading with P. [2] Five couplets omitted. [3] Reading with P.

Their memory in the world. Next is the speech
Of one ambitioning the word in season ;
He will abide in honour all his years ;
And, fourthly, that of one called by the sage
Delectable—the competent reciter,
Who uttereth all, both new and old, in verse ;
While, fifthly, is the warm deliverance
Of one of sweet tongue and harmonious voice,
Who when he hath impleached his web of words
Attaineth verily his heart's desire."

The archmage said : " In spite of all thy lore,
And thou hast kindled all thy soul with knowledge,
Yet thou still questionest the little worth !
Dost say then : ' How shall knowledge have an end ? ' "

The Sháh replied : " From all that I have learned
I have attained my soul's desire and wisdom.
Avoid wrong-doing then and look to knowledge—
A thing more precious than the crown and throne."

The archmage said : "I have seen none so praised
And eminent for lore that one could say :—
' Such is his eminence that no wise man
Can teach him any further.' "

Thus the Sháh
Replied : " Can treasure satiate a man
Until he lieth underneath the dust ?
The way of knowledge is more glorious
Than wealth, more precious in the sage's eyes.
Our words remain as our memorial :
Compare not wealth with knowledge."

Said the archmage :—
" What with their learning and remembering
The sages cannot be but ancient men."

The Sháh replied : " Although the man be old
His knowledge faileth not to keep him young.
Thou wilt prefer him to the foolish youth,

Whose dust is only valued for its tomb."
The archmage asked: "It was thy wont to speak
About the fortune of the kings of kings
Before the Great,[1] and more than ever now
Thou namest them but with a deep cold sigh?"
The Sháh said: "It was never in my heart
That I should praise a process such as this—
To govern this world with the scimitar
Of justice, then pass on and vilely die."
C. 1769 "Thy usage," said the archmage, "in the past
Was this—to speak to all in nobler words.
Now thou despisest them and sayest naught
About the past or present."
Núshírwán
Made answer saying: "I have talked enough,
And now I purpose to depend on deeds."
The archmage said: "Thy prayers in former times
Before the Fire were not so long as now.
Thy praises too are longer than they were,
Thy plaints and supplications more profuse."
He gave this answer saying: "Holy God
Exalteth from the dust His worshipper,
Doth favourably dispose the sky toward him,
And maketh all the world to be his slave.
If this slave faileth to appreciate,
Let him not scape from hardship and distress."
The archmage asked: "Since thou becamest king
What greater cause for thankfulness hast thou
Toward thy Maker? Hath that eminence
Increased thy joy and filled thy foemen's hearts
With blood?"
He answered thus: "Thanks be to God,
Our fortune hath been good. None in my presence
Hath ever sought for the supremacy,

[1] Reading with P. and T.

But at my chastening washed his hands of ill.
My foemen have grown feeble in the fight
When they beheld mine onset and my mace."
The priest went on: "When warring in the West
Thou wast both quick of clutch and valorous,
But when thou wast campaigning in the East
Thou wast long-suffering and deliberate."
And Núshírwán made answer thus: "The youth
Accounteth not of pain and toil of mind,
But when a man hath come to sixty years
He must assume a gentler attitude.
Thanks to the World-lord who is all-providing,
The Author of the good and ill of fortune,
That I had prowess in my youthful days,
And recked not if my luck were good or bad.
Now knowledge, treasure, generosity,
And rede, accompany my days of age,
The world is 'neath my rule and usages,
And circling heaven my breastplate in the fight."
Said the archmage: "The Sháhs of long ago
Desired to hold discourse on all affairs;
Thy words are briefer and thy secrets more,
Yet thou surpassest those famed men of old."
He made this answer, saying: "Every king,
That doth believe in Him who giveth all,
Is not concerned about himself for He,
Who made the world, still watcheth over it."
"I see the kings who should be glad of heart,"
The archmage said, "most anxious in our times."
And Núshírwán replied: "The man of sense
Hath ever at his heart the fear of loss."
The archimage rejoined: "The Sháhs of old
Allowed not care and fight to mar their feasts."
He made this answer saying: "In their cups
They ever grew forgetful of their fame,
But fame hath triumphed o'er the cup with me,

My spirit is beforehand with the time."
The archmage said: "Sháhs used to tend themselves,
Employing drug and leech and remedy,
Lest they should have to soil themselves with tears."
"A man, whose time is not yet come," he said,
"Not yet o'ertaken by the turning sky,
Will stand secure, and drugs will profit naught,
Because the chance of time protecteth him,
But when the hour for passing is at hand
Then no precaution will avert his fate."
The archmage said: "Thou praisest much and prayest
The Maker, yet at heart thou art not glad
The while, but ever hast a soul all care."
"There is no care at all," said Núshírwán,
"The Sháh's heart is at one with turning heaven;
I fear that those who offer praise to me,
And shower benedictions on my Faith,
Affect a greater fervour than they feel:
Mine object is to read my subjects' hearts."
"Why joy we in our children," asked the archmage,
"And why do we desire a family?"
"The man that leaveth children in the world
Will not become forgotten," he replied.
"If he have children he will relish life,
And for that reason will abstain from vice,
While if he pass away the pang is slight,
Because a child's eyes watch his paling face."
"Who liveth at his ease," the archmage asked,
"And who repenteth of his own good deeds?"
He thus replied: "The wórshipper of God
Will take the reins of fortune in his hands
And, seeking no addition, is at ease,
Who if he sought it would be full of fear.

Then as for what thou said'st about good deeds,
And secret inclinations to do good,
Know, no one is more mortified than he
That meditateth good for thankless folk."
" The evil-doer dieth," said the archmage,
" The world removeth from the roll his name.
The righteous man will likewise pass away,
And destiny account his every breath.
What need is there for praising excellence
Since death is here to reap both good and bad ? "
And Núshírwán made answer thus : " Good deeds
Will find a ready market everywhere.
He that doth good deeds dieth not though dead,
But resteth, giving up his soul to God ;[1]
He that doth fail therein will have no rest,
And leave behind an evil memory."
The archmage further said : " No ill is worse C. 17
Than death. If so, then what is our resource ? "
The Sháh replied : " On leaving this dark earth,
The life which then thou wilt have gained is pure.
Whoe'er lived here in fear and care must needs
Bewail that life but, whether Sháh or subject,
Thou wilt be quit of this world's fear and pain."
The archmage asked him : " Which is worst of these
In filling us with anguish and chagrin ? "
The Sháh made answer : " Reckon mountain-heavy
The troubles that descend on us in troops,
And what is fear except the fear of troubles,
Than which there is naught stronger in the world ? "
" How can we 'scape from these ? " the archmage asked,
" For this world's doings give us cause to weep ?"
He thus made answer : " Knowledge is the way:
The sage is ever cheerful."

[1] Couplet omitted.

"Which of us,"
Inquired the archmage, "hath most store of treasure?"
The Sháh made answer: "He that hath least toil."
The archmage asked: "Which is the foulest fault,
One alien most from worth and Paradise?"
The Sháh made answer: "In the case of women
A strident voice and lack of modesty;
But, in the case of men, to be a fool,
And thus to spend a lifetime as in prison."
The archmage asked: "Who hath most confidence?"
"He that hath least remorse," replied the Sháh,
"And goeth soiled in body, and with heart
Black with iniquity, before his God."
The archmage said: "Who is the upright man,
Whose heart is proven by his soul and wisdom?"
The Sháh thus answered: "He that toileth on
Through gain and loss and compasseth no ill."
The archmage asked: "Who is the best of men,
The crown upon the head of all mankind?"
"The meek to whom a crown availeth naught,"
The Sháh replied; "not one intent on profit,
Not even though he be of lofty aims;
Next, he whose greatness is its own reward—
The generous man whose heart is purged from darkness—
And, thirdly, he that hath a zeal divine,
Proceeding from integrity and wisdom."
"What," said the archmage, "is the heart's chief dread?"
"The troubles that we bring upon ourselves,"
The Sháh replied.
"What giving is the best,"
The archmage said, "so that the man who giveth

May be exalt and great ? "
" In gain and loss,"
The Sháh rejoined, " keep naught from the deserving."
The archmage asked concerning this world's doings :—
" Declare its process open and concealed.
Whate'er the manner of that action be,
For loss or profit, shall we acquiesce ? "
" The All-knowing," thus the Sháh replied, " is C. 1
greater
And higher than this ancient sky although
It knowing be and mindful ; He is Lord
Of this world's lords. Become not then perverse,
Avoid disaster, and attribute not
Good fortune and misfortune to the sky.
Know that both ill and good proceed from Him
That hath no peer—the One eternal Cause,
Whose word is ' Be ' and what He willeth is,
Who was and is and will be evermore."
" The body is the hostel of the soul :
Which of them feeleth pain ?" the archmage asked.
The Sháh replied : " Our mortal bodies suffer
So long as they have brains, but when the soul
Hath filtered through they lose their consciousness,
And when it hath departed are dissolved."
The archmage questioned him on self-control :—
" In what way can we hide our greed and need ? "
The Sháh replied : " 'Tis fitting that the sage
Suppress them, yet thou ever wilt be vexed
By greed because ne'er satiate of treasure."
The archmage asked : " Among the kings of yore,
The men of sense, rede, faith, and precedent,
Whom knowest thou as subject of our praise,
When he is dead, O monarch of the earth ? "
" That great king," this was Núshírwán's reply,

" Who is a worshipper of God and pure,
And thankful to the righteous Lord of all,
Who filleth none with fear of tyranny,
Who giveth to the good a hopeful heart,
And to the bad a heart of fear and pain,
Who furnisheth his troops from his own treasures,
And turneth on malignants their own ill,
Who questioneth the sages of the world,
And keepeth from his foes his bad and good."
The archmage asked : " Wherein consisteth worship,
And who approacheth to God's holiness ? "
" The subtle will direct," the Sháh replied,
" His soul as by fine hair-breadths and first know
The being and the unity of God,
Which small instruction will make evident,
And he will offer thanks for mercies given.
While putting trust in God and fearing Him,
Who is thy terror when thou seekest ill,
Thy trust when thou dost well. If thou art sound
Of Faith and seek'st the Way all will esteem thee,
While if thou art malign and ill-disposed
Thy soul hath forwarded its packs to Hell.
Feel not at home with this world for 'twill hold
Its secrets from thee. Tend to works of Faith ;
Thy good choice will not injure thee. Let wisdom
Instruct thy heart and let not fortune fool thee.
Again, thou shalt consort not with the guilty
C. 1773 In wrong and strife. Loathe secretly at heart
This world because of that which is to come.
Let thy seat ever be among the sages,
A devotee of everlasting joys,
For what we have on earth will pass away,
And reason counteth them no joys at all.
Mayst thou incline to sense and rede. Let wisdom
Guide thee to God. Speak not unmeasured words,
For thou'rt new-fangled and the world is old.

Be drunk not with the pleasures of the day.
Choose not the company of wicked men.
Refrain thy heart from what can never be,
And give such largess as 'tis fit to give.
Withhold not from a friend aught that thou hast,
Though he should ask thine eyes, thy brains, and skin,
And if two friends would take account together
No daysman should be needed for that task.
If thou associate with a foe so act
That he may not obtain a hold upon thee.
When one doth seek the path of right his need
Is parts, humility, and gentleness.
Let not thy tongue exaggerate thy merits,
For falsehood is no merit with the just,
Who hold one's high estate a thing of naught,
Another's poverty no mark for scorn.
If some malicious person talk with thee
Let not his malice anger thee, and then,
When, being well assured that thou art weak,
He useth language that is past all bounds,
Reply to him in measured terms and speak
Words goodly and well-liking. If it be
That thou canst bring him to himself by kindness
He will repent his former speech. Devote not
Thy leisure to indulgence. Idleness
Is naught if thou art wise. Be diligent
In all thine undertakings and give ear
To knowledge. Enter on no enterprise
Whereof the end will cause remorse or anger.
Have pity on the sad in his distress;
Bring not his heart to anguish and disaster.
The sage that traineth his own heart to patience
Is not held worthless in the World-lord's eyes,
But knoweth what he meriteth with Him,
And compasseth all actions with discretion

For increase from a friend is laudable,
And greatness and integrity will bring
Addition. Furthermore that man of God
Will not begrudge the scattering of treasure,
But turneth him from waywardness and loss,
And maketh right and service his profession—
A stem with boughs whereby God's worshipper,
The virtuous saint, hath proved victorious.
There is but one injunction and one way—
Incline to God and let Him shelter thee."

C. 1774 If thou, O monarch ! art of just intent
Good will remain to be thy monument
As it doth with Sháh Núshírwán whose flesh
Hath turned to dust although his fame is fresh.
Himself unseen his fame is plain to all ;
His words survive as his memorial,
And through the righteous deeds that he hath done
His fame past doubt will live while time shall run,
And on his soul shall be, while earth and sky
Abide in place, the sages' eulogy.

PART VI

THE SHÁH'S LAST YEARS

ARGUMENT

The poet tells of the last war of Núshírwán against Rúm and of the Sháh's transaction with a shoemaker, the appointment of his son Hurmuzd as his successor after that prince had been questioned by Búzurjmihr, the Sháh's testament and last counsels to his son, his dream of the advent of Muhammad, and the death of the Sháh and of Búzurjmihr.

NOTE

§§ 1–3. After ten years of peace war again broke out between the Persian and Roman empires in A.D. 572. The Sháhnáma is correct in representing that the latter was to blame for the renewal of hostilities. The Emperor Justin II., who had succeeded his uncle Justinian in A.D. 565, wanted war. The scene of operations covered much the same ground as on the previous occasion. The Persians made a raid into Syria, recorded in the Sháhnáma by the mention of Halab (Chalybon-Beroea, Aleppo), and an unsuccessful attack on Antioch. The Romans, under Marcian (Bátarún), the prefect of the East, besieged Nisibis, held by the Persians ever since its cession to Sháphúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II.), by Jovian in A.D. 363. Núshírwán raised the siege, drove the Romans into the stronghold of Dárá on the foot-hills of Mount Masius, and besieged them there. After a gallant defence the fortress fell late in A.D. 573.[1] Mount Masius seems to be the Mount Sakíla of the Sháhnáma, the scene of one of Gushtásp's exploits during his exile in Rúm.[2] Justin on this resigned the direction

[1] For Dárá see GDF. v. 86 and *note*. [2] See Vol. iv. p. 342 *seq.*

of affairs to Tiberius who to gain time purchased a temporary suspension of hostilities from the Persians. This is represented in the Sháhnáma as the conclusion of peace and as a triumph for Núshírwán but historically the war was still in progress at the time of his death four years later, and the Great King, shortly before the end of his reign, had to make a somewhat hasty and ignominious retirement to Ctesiphon.[1]

§ 2. We have already met with the cobbler or shoemaker, introduced as characteristic of a type, in the Sháhnáma.[2]

§§ 4–6. See p. 3.

§ 7. P. omits this section which of course comes from Muhammadan sources. Though interpolated into Persian story it does not seem to be an interpolation in Firdausí's Sháhnáma for there appears to be no good reason for supposing that the passage was written by a hand other than that poet's. A similar account appears both in the Persian and Arabic Tabarí.[3]

The ascent of two score degrees is intended to indicate that Muhammad was forty years old when he received his " call."

Muhammad, having been challenged by idolaters to divide the moon in twain, is said to have pointed his finger at it, on which it was at once divided into two parts, one of which remained stationary while the other was concealed behind a mountain. Another tradition says that Mount Hirá intervened between the two halves. Travellers from a distance when questioned reported that they had observed the same phenomenon.[4] The passage in the Kurán on which the traditions are based runs as follows :—" The hour hath approached and the MOON hath been cleft :

But whenever they see a miracle they turn aside and say,
This is well-devised magic."[5]

The Súra in which the quotation occurs is known as " THE MOON."

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[1] RSM, p. 437
[2] ZT, ii. 235, NT, p. 253.
[3] See Vol. vii. pp. 24, 260.
[4] RM, Pt. II. Vol. ii. p. 753.
[5] RK, p. [illegible]

§ 1

How Núshírwán made ready to war against Cæsar

It is recorded in the ancient book
From the recital of a truthful sage
That when news came from Rúm to this fair land
For Núshírwán, the world-lord: "Mayst thou live,
For Cæsar is no more and to another
Hath yielded time and earth," death filled his soul
With care; his ruddy countenance became
Like yellow leaves. He chose out of Írán
An envoy of experience and high birth,
And then dispatched him unto Cæsar's son,
Dispatched him to that fresh and fruitful Bough,
First charging him with many kindly words,
And saying: "'Tis an evil none can 'scape."
He wrote a letter in distress and grief,
With eyes all tearful and cheeks sallow, thus:—
"God grant thee life and loving-kindliness
Now that thy sire is dead. No living thing
Is born unless to die. A Wayside Inn
Is this and we pass on. Although we handle
The crown or helm and casque we find no quittance
From death's clutch. What is Cæsar or the Khán
When his time cometh and all suddenly
Shall lay his head in dust? Mayst thou receive
No lack of joyful tidings of thy sire;
May Christ befriend his soul. Now I have heard
That thou art seated on his famous throne,
And hast adorned the fortune that was his.
Require of us such strength as thou dost need
Of steeds, of arms, of treasure, and of troops."
The ambassador went forth from Núshírwán;
He made the journey in all haste to Cæsar,

And, when he reached the court, they gave him entry;
The envoy of the Sháh approached the state.
When Cæsar saw the title on the scroll
His heart swelled at the pride of Núshírwán.
He was a hasty youth, new to the throne,
Showed himself overbearing to the envoy,
Saluted him in an unseemly fashion,
With lax observance and discourtesy,
C 1775 Gave him a lodging distant from the court,
And took no notice of the Great King's letter.
A week passed, Cæsar's counsellors assembled,
And he addressed their leader: "Now consider
The answer to this letter, draw it up,
As thou dost know to do, in fitting terms,
And set forth good and ill."
The priest replied:—
"Thy liege am I and will obey the world-lord."
So all the bishops, priests, and counsellors
Assembled by themselves apart and then
Wrote with all speed a letter in response,
As Cæsar bade, and first they praised the Maker,
And based their praise on wisdom, then they said:—
"Was such a letter worthy of the Sháh,
A letter graceless and malevolent?
Thou dost amiss for Cæsar is but young,
But lately crowned, our king in right of birth.
Forbear to press the youth for this one year
With haughty superscriptions, tax and toll.
The youth hath written in befitting terms
To all the lieges and the potentates,
As the illustrious emperor of Rúm,
To whom the mountain-tops are so much wax.
The envoy of the Sháh hath come to us,
And he will tell the Sháh what he hath seen
With us—our words of grief and joy alike:

Our weal and woe shall not remain concealed.
One Cæsar hath departed but another
Succeeded who exalteth o'er all chiefs
His head without regard to any king
Among the underlords and overlords."
When they were ready with that Rúman letter
They summoned the ambassador to court.
That sage, on hearing that they were advised,
Came to the court and asked for the response.
They made him ready an unworthy robe
Of honour and put strangers from the hall.
Then Cæsar said to him: "No slave am I,
The inferior of the Haitálians and Chín.
One should not lightly treat a potentate
Although thy Sháh be Great King in the world.
He that hath many enemies is great,
And I have foes and friends upon my skirts.
Why dost thou scant me of my majesty,
And cloud my sun? Thou, when such need is mine,
Shalt be my king, my father's memory.
Make fair report of thine experience here,
And seek no foul intent in my response."
They put the robe of honour on the sage,
And called the marchlord's roadster to the door.
He parted hastily and, tarrying not
At any stage, reached Núshírwán and told C. 177
What he had seen and heard and what had passed.
The Sháh was sorry at the words and said:—
"Thou hast had fruit of travel. I have heard
That whosoe'er indulgeth his self-will,
Not thinking what he doth, will smart therefor.
If he discerneth not 'twixt friend and foe
In telling thus the secret of his heart
To thee I ween too that he is no friend
To us and, further, hath not blood and feet
And skin. By holy God, by sun and moon,

By crown and throne and by Ázargashasp,
I swear that if I leave of Rúman race
A single man in joy upon the throne
I am not of the race of bold Kubád,
And in men's presence never mention me.
Henceforth will I make black the fame of Rúm,
And set the cultivated parts a-blaze.
Moreover he shall fill the ox-skins for us
With all the gems and treasures of his realm,
And my sword's point shall touch not sheath until
I have my heart's desire upon this Rúman,
Who arrogantly boasteth : ' I am Cæsar,'
As though I were but one among his chiefs ! "
He bade the clarions and the Indian bells
And gongs be sounded at the palace-gate,
And bound upon his mighty elephants
The kettledrums. The world was indigo
With dust. A host that made the green sea[1] quail
Marched forth from Madá'in toward the waste,
While at the blare of trump, the gleam[2] of flag,
And stir of horsemen in their golden boots,
Thou wouldest have declared : " The stars are drowned,
And all revolving heaven is astound ! "

§ 2

How Núshírwán took the Stronghold of Sakíla and how a Shoemaker had Dealings with him

When tidings came to Cæsar of the Sháh :—
" He hath marched forth in anger from Írán,"
He set forth from 'Ammúriya[3] to Halab ;

[1] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 174 and *note*.
[2] Reading with P.
[3] *Cf.* Vol. vi. p. 23 and *note*.

The world was filled with tumult, bruit, and din.
Three hundred thousand horsemen of Írán
Besieged the fortress of Halab. Troops gathered
From every side and tarried not from strife.
The warrior-prelates of the Rúman host
Set up their catapults on every side.[1]
The Íránians took the stronghold of Sakíla,
For from that region they would fain attack;
Halab became as 'twere a sea of blood,
And all the host of Bátarún sought quarter;
Unnumbered Rúmans perished 'neath the arrows, C. 1777
And many were ta'en prisoners in the fight.
Within two se'nnights the Íránians brought
Some thirty thousand captives to the king.
The Rúmans dug a trench before their host,
And let the water in at break of day.
They barred the Sháh's advance; he and his troops
Were at a stand in fight. He called to him
His commissaries and discussed with them
The posture of the war at large and said
Thus: "This hath grown a matter of much toil:
We cannot pass the water and the fosse.
The troops have need of money and supplies,
As well as horses, mail, and Rúman helms."
The commissaries, scribes, and treasurers
Of that world-lord went the treasury,
Which, as the number of his soldiers stood,
Was in dínárs three hundred thousand short.[2]
An archimage came to the Sháh like dust,
And told him what the treasury lacked, whereat
The Sháh's face gloomed. He ordered Búzurjmihr
To come, and said to him: "With treasury void
What booteth me the throne of king of kings?
Go, call the camel-drivers, and dispatch
Some Bactrian camels on the road and take

[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 373. [2] Reading with P.

Out of the treasures of Mázandarán
A hundred loads and upwards of dínárs."
But Búzurjmihr made answer to the world-lord:—
" O just, wise, loving Sháh! the way is long
To reach the treasures of Írán, the while
Our troops are destitute and at a stand;
But in the cities round about are those,
A hundredth of whose wealth would pay our troops.
If thou shalt ask the merchants and the thanes
To make advances they will not refuse."
The Sháh was in this matter of a mind
With what the wise man of Írán had said,
And Búzurjmihr chose out a messenger,
Wise, of a cheerful heart, and goodly face,
And said to him: " Go with a second horse,
And choose thee out some lusty notable
Among the merchants and the thanes—a man
Of mighty reputation—and request
A loan of money for the troops. The Sháh
Will order money to be sent with speed
Out of the treasury."
That emissary,
Fair-spoken, young in years but old in wisdom
And shrewd, came to a neighbouring town and asked
A loan of money for the king's affairs,
And round him gathered many of the rich.
A certain man, who made and vended shoes,
Attended closely to the envoy's words,
And asked: " How much? "
The gallant envoy told,
C. 1778 And said: " O man of wisdom and of wealth!
The sum amounteth to four million drachms."
Said that shoemaker: " I will furnish them,
And earn the treasurer's praise."
He brought his balance,

Weights, and the drachms, but asked no bond in writing.
He weighed the coin, the envoy's task was done.
Then that shoemaker said: "O fair of face!
Be good enough to say to Búzurjmihr:—
'I have but one child only in this world,
For whom my heart is all anxiety.'
Then add: 'The monarch of the world perchance
Will grant a private favour to myself,
And let me place my boy among his sages,
For he hath wealth and intellect therefor.'"
"With pleasure," was the messenger's reply,
"For thou hast cut my quest for treasure short."[1]
So Búzurjmihr came to the Sháh rejoicing,
Whose face cleared when he saw that wealth. Thereafter
He said: "Thanks be to God, whom I have known
Through all my years of life, that in our realm
There is a manufacturer of shoes,
Blessed in this manner and illustrious.
God grant that we may never injure one
That is possessed of such a store of wealth.
Discover for me what his wishes are,
That this good will of his to us may last,
And when thou payest the debt bestow upon him
A hundred thousand drachms that he may not
Forget us."
Búzurjmihr said to the world-lord:—
"O well-starred Sháh of goodly countenance!
God grant that no king who is tyrannous
Be happy on his throne and fortunate.
Thy subjects all are men of wealth, aspire,
And are possessed of thrones and diadems.
Now this boot-seller, if the Sháh will hear,
Made one request. He said, for so the envoy

[1] Couplet omitted.

Reporteth: 'May the world-lord mate with wisdom.
I have a son grown up who is desirous
Of one to teach him learning, and if now
The Sháh is willing to assist therein,
So that my good son may become a scribe,
Then for the Sháh's life will I pray God, saying:—
"May this throne-worthy live eternally."'"
The Sháh made answer saying: "O wise man!
How hath the Dív perplexed thy vision! Go,
And lead the camels back, for God forbid
That we ask him for silver and for pearls.
How should the merchant's son become a scribe,
Accomplished, learned, and mindful though he be?
Our son when he shall sit upon the throne
Will need a scribe whose fortune will prevail.
C. 1779 If this young boot-seller attain distinction,
And my son look to him and list to him,
The man of wisdom and of noble birth
Will have but discontent and chilling sighs,
The sage will be held lightly by my son,
Receive no praise for what he answereth,
And we shall be accursed, when we are dead,
For having introduced this precedent.
Our rations must be got by honest means.
Ask not his money, talk not of our needs,
Dispatch the camels back upon their way,
And ask shoemakers for supplies no more."
So with the cash the envoy went again;
Those drachms filled that shoemaker's heart with pain.[1]

[1] Two couplets omited.

§ 3

How the Envoys of Cæsar came to Núshírwán with Apologies and Presents

Whenas from Pisces Sol displayed its crown,
And flung a robe of ivory o'er the earth,
The scouts returning from the trench-edge came
Before the exalted Sháh and said to him :—
" An embassage from Cæsar hath arrived
In tribulation to excuse his faults."
The ambassador approached immediately
With benedictions upon Núshírwán,
On seeing whose head and crown the Rúman heaved
A cold sigh, thinking : " Lo ! a Sháh exalted
With kingship, manhood, and a mighty host ! "
Two score pilosophers of Rúm, whose tongues
Were full of utterance and their hearts of sighs,
Brought, each one, thirty thousand in dínárs
As offerings to the king. When they beheld
His comely countenance they came lamenting,
And writhing serpent-like. The king of kings,
On seeing them, received them graciously,
Assigning them the customary seats,
And then their spokesman thus addressed him :
" Cæsar,
O Sháh ! is young and hath but just acceded ;
His sire is dead, the world is new to him,
And he is unacquainted with affairs.
Now we are all of us thy tributaries,
And servants, and are under thy protection.
For thee Rúm is Írán, Írán is Rúm ;
Why then distinguish them ? The king of kings
Hath all the age's wisdom for his own,

And straighteneth Cæsar's back. The Khán of Chín,
The king of Hind, are glad in him and help
C. 1780 To grace his throne. Although a youth, not yet
Of man's estate, made utterance ill-advised
Let not the king of kings, in whom the vault
Of lapis-lazuli rejoiceth, take
Revenge thereat or dudgeon. We will pay
The tribute laid on Rúm from the beginning,
And keep pact."
Smiling at the envoy's words
Said Núshírwán: "Although the boy be noble
His speech hath little wisdom. What is Cæsar?
What Bátarún, the insensate one, whose tongue
Hath caused his soul's abasement? All the wise
Born of Sikandar's stock have proved triumphant,
And eminent, yet if one doeth not
Our bidding but rejecteth our advice
And our alliance, from his peopled realm
Will we send up the dust and will not fear
His treasures and his troops."
The envoys kissed
The ground, as courtiers use, and made reply:—
"O Sháh that art victorious and supreme!
Blame not the past. We are thy travail's dust,
The warders of thy treasure. When the king
Shall take us into favour we shall cease
Both from misfortune and from discontent.
The toils that here the king of kings hath borne
Are no small matter in the Rúmans' eyes,
And we will pay, by way of toll and tax,
His treasury ten ox-hides of dínárs.
'Tis thine to bid us pay thee less or more,
And to accept it though it be unworthy."
"As touching treasure," thus the Sháh replied,
"The matter resteth with my minister."

Then all the Rúmans went before that archmage,
Went with loud lamentations and ill-starred,
Used every plea at large, told Cæsar's purpose,
Informed him of the ox-hides and dínárs,
And matters that concerned the peace of Rúm.
The archmage answered thus: "Ye give the gold,
But what brocade will ye present as well?
What time the king returneth he will need
A thousand pieces of gold-woven brocade,
For he is constantly concerned with gifts
Of robes of honour for his lords and lieges."
The Rúmans gave consent thereto and then
Returning did obeisance to the Sháh.
He tarried on the battlefield awhile.
Then when the king and host had taken rest
He chose among the troops a warrior—
One of ability in ciphering—[1]
And gave him soldiers that he might demand
The Rúman tribute and convey it home.
The Sháh departed thence toward Taisafún C. 178
With troops behind him and in front of him,
All furnished well with silver and with gold,
With silvern bridles and with golden girdles.
"The air is silken all," thou wouldst have said,
"With all the silken banners of the chiefs,
While hills and plains are golden and the belts
Are like the Pleiades with jewelry."
When he drew near the city on his march
A multitude went out to welcome him.
All came to Núshírwán afoot with loins
Girt up for service and with open hearts,
While all that had accompanied the Sháh
Proceeded to the palace-gate afoot,
And all the mighty chieftains called down blessings
Upon that Sháh alert and just and holy,

[1] Couplet omitted.

While those of greatest eminence brought gifts
Of precious stones. The Sháh, on his return,
Made manifest his power to all the chiefs,
And then the warriors went home. There came
Addition in the world to each man's fame.[1]

§ 4

How Núshírwán chose Hurmuzd as his Successor

The high-souled minstrel, who instructeth me,
What said he of time's mutability ?
" No prudent sage will set his mind and heart
Upon this Hostel whence we must depart,
For we arise and fall from day to day,
And alternate our joyance with dismay.
Dark earth will be our final resting-place,
This with high honour, that with deep disgrace,
And after they depart they tell us not
If wakeful joy or slumber be their lot ;
Still if they flourish not that pass our ken
At least they will not strive with death again.
In contemplation of that day of awe
What are five years and twenty or five score,
Passed by one man in pleasure and delight,
Passed by another in penurious plight ?
None have I seen that had a wish to die
Among the upright or the waywardly,
But all are shocked at death—the pious one,
Just as the idol-serving Áhriman."
Old man ! when three score years and one have past,

[1] " Lorsqu'il fut près son palais, le roi congédia chacun des grands, et ces héros se rendirent aux lieux de leur demeure, célébrant dans le monde entier la gloire de Kesra." Mohl.

Wine, cup, and rest grow savourless at last,
Yet wine for one that readieth to die
Is as a wool-coat when 'tis winterly,[1]
When body freezeth in the midst of vice,
And soul hath lost its way to Paradise.
Full many a friend hath lagged or passed away,
But in the waste the cup with thee will stay.
Unless thy life's endeavour thou forecast C. 17
Sure retribution will be thine at last.
Ill-doing endeth in calamity;
If thou dost ill the world will sadden thee.
Joy not in evil that thou hast achieved,
Who, grieving others, shalt thyself be grieved.
Know that, however great may be the sum
Of these thine earthly years, thine end will come;
So multiply thy good deeds here below
That thou mayst gladden when thou hast to go.
The deeds accomplished and the words let fall
In life will serve as our memorial.
I ask of God from time, its Maker He,
For such a respite, such felicity,
That all these many tales and stories told,
Now over-passed by years and waxen old,
From Gaiúmart to Yazdagird, which be
In disarray, may be arrayed by me;
That I may range them, weed that garth, and tell
Anew what hap the kings of kings befell,
Then verily I shall not grieve when I
Shall have to quit this Wayside Hostelry.
And now what saith the man of ardent soul
Of Núshírwán, the world-lord's, purposes?
The monarch at the age of seventy-four
Became possessed by thoughts of death and sought
A master for the world whose chiefest aim
Should be to clothe him in the robe of justice,

[1] Literally "In (the month of) Dai."

Display compassion to the mendicants,
Be great, untroubled, and of ardent soul.
He had six sons of noble birth who all
Were great, shrewd-hearted, and of kingly mien,
With valour, learning, self-control and counsel,
Young with a love of knowledge, and of these
The wisest and the eldest was Hurmuzd,
The nobly born, a man unparalleled,
Exalted, knowing, fair of countenance,
And well affected to the noble race.[1]
The Sháh gave orders to his officers
To test the disposition of his son,
By day and night to mark his utterances,
And to inform the monarch of the world
Of his proceedings whether good or bad.
At that time said the Sháh to Búzurjmihr :—
" I have a secret purpose in my mind.
When I exceeded three score years and ten
My musky tresses took a camphor-hue,
And when I quit this Wayside Hostelry
A master will be needed for the world,
Who will give largess to the mendicant,
The stranger, and the man of his own kindred,
Be bounteous, will refrain from love of treasure,
And set his heart not on this Wayside Inn—
One whose whole purpose ever is toward good,
Whose place is on the Sháh's throne. I thank God
C. 1783 That I have sons wise, learned, who worship Him,
And none esteem I dearer than Hurmuzd,
Or more pre-eminent for rede and sense.
Of mercy, generosity, and right
I see naught lacking in his heart at all.
So summon now the archmages and the chiefs,
All that observe the way of understanding,

[1] *i.e.* the Persians. Hurmuzd was half Turkish by birth—the son of the daughter of the Khán. See pp. 87, 97 *seq*

Prove ye his knowledge and thereby present
Accomplishment upon accomplishment."

§ 5

How the Archimages questioned Hurmuzd and how he replied

The archimages, the investigators,
And counsellors assembled, called to them
Hurmuzd, the atheling, and seated him
Among the chiefs. Then Búzurjmihr began :—
" O prince fair-starred and fair to look upon !
What know'st thou that will brighten the pure soul
And wisdom, and be fruitful for the body ? "
He answered : " Knowledge is the best, for great
Among the great is one of understanding.
In knowledge is man's safety ; it restraineth
The hands of Áhriman from ill, and next
Come patience and munificence whereby
The body gaineth fame and ease."
The sage
Then asked : " What showeth virtue to advantage,
And what will raise a man to high estate ? "
Hurmuzd replied : " First, to be courteous
To all in good and ill ; next, to endeavour
To grieve as little as one can the hearts
Of every one ; and, thirdly, to deal justly
Within the world and so gain self-content."
On that pure-hearted prince of goodly mien
Gazed Búzurjmihr, the questioner, and said :—
" Now will I speak concerning needful topics.
Count them upon thy hands, remember all
That I shall ask, and make a just response
To them in that same order. Bring to bear

High-mindedness and justice for, if thou
Art heedful of such matters, of a truth
Heaven's gate is oped to thee since I will question
At large that I may have response in full.
The Master of the world instruct thee! May
Thy wit be bright, good fortune by thy mate.
Now will I question thee of what I know
With fairness. Answer as thy knowledge is.
The wise man is discerned by his replies,
And compasseth his will in everything.
C. 1784 Inquiry is the lock, response the key;
Response discriminateth bad from good.
Who is the child dear in his father's eyes,
Fair of behaviour, and without offence?
What man is worthy of our heart's compassion,
So that one needs must weep at his distress?
What man repenteth of his own good deed,
And that too from the bottom of his heart?
Who is the man deserving of my blame
When I shall make inquiry of his acts?
Who would do better if he shunned the world
Because his quiet days are at an end?
What maketh for our happiness in life,
And what do we recall most willingly?
Which is the time to praise? What profiteth
Us most? Who is the dearest of our friends,
Whose voice doth make a pleasance of the heart?
Who is the man with most friends in the world,
That joy in him in public and in private?
Who too is he that hath most enemies,
And most malignantly disposed to him?[1]
What is the thing, the most injurious,
For which when done there is good cause to weep?
Of all the things that mortals cherish here
What is the most unstable of them all?

[1] Couplet omitted.

Who is the tyrant that is unashamed,
The man most loveless and irreverent ?
Whose words produce most ruin in the world,
And cause the greatest trouble to his friends ?
What is the matter that entaileth shame,
And evil on a man through his own words ? "
For one whole day till night rose o'er the hills
The sage's words produced no weariness,
But when the darkness brought the time for lights
The chiefs' heads darkened with bewilderment,
And, when the Sháh grew weary of his words,
He paused for a reply. The great Hurmuzd
Rose to his feet and fitly praised the Sháh :—
" Ne'er may the Sháh be lacking to the world,
But still abide upon the imperial throne ;
Ne'er may we see the crown, the royal state,
And throne of ivory, devoid of thee ;
In their excusings may the strong be dust
Before thee, heaven thine antidote from harm.
Now will I make reply to Búzurjmihr,
And solve his questions with a right good will.
The sage first questioned me concerning sons,
And so it is with them I must begin.
A son doth make his father glad of heart,
And freeth it from griefs, if he affect
His sire, incline to goodness, and be just.
Next, of the pitiable man, for whom C 1
The eyelids drop their tears : this is the magnate
Whose fortune hath been scattered and he now
Is thrall to one unworthy. This man's case
Is one to be deplored with bitterness,
Because he hath a miscreant for his lord.
Again, the man that doeth benefits
To thankless folk is all solicitude,
And one forgetful of good done to him
Would make a fool of wisdom. Then the sage

Inquired for whom 'tis goodlier to seek
A resting-place by flight from tyranny ?
The wise man is at liberty to quit
The country where the monarch is not just ;
Escape is needful from an unjust king,
Because he bringeth Doomsday on the world.
The sage inquired : ' In what rejoicest thou ? '
'Tis in a brother or some charming fere.
He then inquired : ' What is the time to praise ? '
The time when we are quit of enemies :
'Tis well to praise that ever more and more.
Moreover for thy question touching friends,
'Tis good to have the aidance of all such.
If they be wealthy shelter 'neath their cloaks,
And toil with them if they be mendicants.
The humbler and the nobler that one is
The more do his friends' hearts rejoice in him.
The sage next asketh me : ' Who hath a foe
By whom his heart is ever vexed and hurt ? '
The man whose tongue is bold to utter ill
Is very apt to make him enemies.[1]
' What is of things the most injurious,'
Thou saidest, ' and at last a cause for tears ? '
When passion hath the mastery of thy heart
It passeth with the passing of a breath,
But with fruition cometh penitence ;
So handle not the blossom of desire.
' What,' he inquired, ' is that inconstant thing
Whose feet I seek to clutch and grasp its head ? '
It is the friendship of a foolish man
Of evil nature and unstable counsels ;
And furthermore he saith : ' Who is the tyrant
That is all shameless and remediless ? '
Call him remediless if he use guile,
A tyrant if he acteth shamelessly.

[1] Four couplets omitted.

As for the man whose very trade is lies,
I term him tyrannous and despicable.
'Whose words,' thou saidest, 'are the cause of ruin, C. 17
Cause grief and harm but leave the speaker scathless?'
The traitor and the worthless double dealer
Fill wise men's hearts with pain. The sage inquired:—
'What is the fault that causeth one most shame,
And maketh him repent of his own words?'
The foolish talker's who doth bear himself
Vaingloriously within the sight of men,
But is, when he is private and alone,
Repentant for the words that he hath spoken,
Yet, when he next shall speak, will boast again.
The man without accomplishment is honoured
If he exceedeth not his limitations.
Those were the questions, these are my replies.
The blessings of the world be on the Sháh,
May all tongues speak according to his will,
And may his noble heart be glad and blest."
The king of kings was lost in wonderment
At him and lauded him right royally;
All were rejoiced that were assembled there,
The monarch's heart was set at large from care.

§ 6

How Núshírwán appointed Hurmuzd as his Successor and gave him parting Counsels

Then by the Sháh's command they wrote a patent
That gave Hurmuzd the throne and crown, and when
The wind had dried that paper wrought in Chín

They set a seal of musk thereon. The Sháh,
In presence of the magnates and shrewd sages,
Charged the high priest therewith. I, by the grace
Of the victorious monarch of the world,
Put into verse this act of Núshírwán's.
The world in practice doth belie its show;
Beneath 'tis naught but dolour and chagrin,
But, whether thou hast crown or toil and woe,
Thou ne'ertheless must quit this Wayside Inn.
Peruse a letter of the kings of yore,
And see if Núshírwán hath any peer
For justice, rede, festivity, and war,
Yet, his day done, he found no tarriance here.
So turn from feast and pleasure, and be wise,
Thou agéd dotard and impenitent!
The world may still look freshly to thine eyes
When in thy cups thou scornest to repent;
Yet still, if thou be wise, repent anon;
The man of Faith is well advised for aye;
The seasons of thine age will soon be gone,
Spring, Summer-tide, and Autumn pass away!
Then when thy body is in dust below
Think whither that pure soul of thine will go!
What was it that the agéd chronicler
Said of the testament of Núshírwán?
C. 1787 When the responses of Hurmuzd were ended
The high priest entered on a new discourse.
The Sháh bade, and the counsellors and scribes
Wrote out on silk a gracious document
From Núshírwán to young Hurmuzd, beginning
With praise of the All-just and then proceeding:—
"This counsel of the offspring of Kubád
Hear graciously and write upon thy heart,
Which haply through these words of mine may live.
Know that this world is faithless, O my son!
And full of toil and trouble, pain and bale.

Whenever thou are joying therein and when
Thy heart is free from time's distemperature
That happiness hath no abiding-place,
And thou must quit this Wayside Hostelry.
As I resign the world to thee with justice
Thou must thyself resign it to another.
Since both by bright day and by longsome night
My thoughts are busied with mine own departure
I seek a head fit for the royal crown
To be a diadem on every head.
We have six sons—the Lustre of our heart—
Wise, generous, and just. We have made choice
Of thee because thou art the eldest-born,
A wise man and the adornment of the crown.
Kubád, the well beloved, had four score years
What time he spake to me of sovereignty;
Now I have come to seventy years and four,
And I have made thee monarch in the world.
Herein mine aim hath been but peace and weal
So that I might have worship after death.
My hope is that almighty God will make thee
All glad and fortunate. If by thy justice
Folk are secure through thee thou wilt thyself
Repose in peace, glad through thine own just dealing,
And for thy good works done win Paradise,
For he is blest that sowed but seed of good.
See that thou ne'er lose patience; haste is ill
In kings. The world-lord that is shrewd and learned
Will be in estimation all his years.
In no way go about to compass lies,
Else will the visage of thy fortune pale.
Keep haste afar both from thy heart and brain;
The wisdom that is joined to haste will slumber.
Incline toward the good and strive therefor,
And list the sage's rede in weal and woe.

Ill must not compass thee about, for ill
Will verily result in ill to thee.
Let both thy raiment and thy food be pure,
And keep thy father's counsels still in mind.
Make God thy refuge and incline to Him
As thou wouldst have Him for thy guide. When thou
Shalt make the world all prosperous by thy justice
Thy treasury will prosper, fortune joy
C. 1788 In thee. Reward men when they act aright;
Wait not till good men's toil hath waxen old.
Make glad the men of parts and have them near thee,
But keep the world dark to the ill-disposed.
In all affairs take counsel with the sage,
And fret not at the toils of sovereignty.
Whenas the wise hath access to thee, throne
With troops and treasure will continue thine.
As for thy subjects, suffer none of them
To be in cheerless case. The potentates
And nobles of thy realm must all partake
Thy good, but let the ignoble share it not,
And trust not aught to one that is unjust.
Give all thine ear and heart to mendicants,
And let their sorrows be thy sorrows too.
The chief that of his own accord is just
Will please the world as well as please himself.
Bar not thy treasury to men of worth,
But act with bounty to the virtuous;
Still if thine enemy become thy friend
Sow not thy seed of good on that salt soil.
If thou shalt follow this advice of ours
Thy crown will be exalted evermore.
May He that giveth good wish well to thee,
Thy throne be wisdom and thy crown success.
God grant that thou mayst not forget my words

Though thou be far removéd from my sight.
May thy head flourish and thy heart be glad,
Thy person pure and far from hurt of foes.
May wisdom be thy watchman evermore,
And righteousness the subject of thy thoughts.
When I shall pass away from this wide world
A goodly palace must be built for me,
Secluded somewhere from the haunts of men,
And where the swift-winged vulture flieth not[1]—
A palace lifted toward revolving heaven,
And in its height ten lassoes long and more,
And thereupon let there be limned my court,
The great men, and the warriors of my host.
Let tapestries of every kind be there
In plenty, strewings, colour and perfume.
Embalm my corpse with camphor and arrange
A crown of musk upon the head thereof.
Bring forth five pieces never handled yet
Of cloth of gold and of brocade of Chín,
And garb me in them in the Kaian mode,
As is the usance of Sásánian Sháhs,[2]
By which same token make an ivory throne
With crown suspended o'er the ivory,
And let the golden vessels that I used,
The goblets and the censers and the cups—
A score filled with rosewater, saffron, wine,
Ten score with camphor, musk, and ambergris—
Be set upon my left hand and my right,
No more or less, for such is my command.
Drain from my trunk the blood and afterwards C 1785
Let the dry space be filled with musk and camphor,
And lastly block the passage to my throne—
A passage that no other Sháh may see.
That court will be conducted otherwise,

[1] This is not at all in accord to Pársí notions. *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 81 *s.v. Dakhma.*
[2] Reading with P.

And none will have e'en access unto us.
Let those among my sons and noble kin,
Who feel my death as a calamity,
Refrain from feast and pleasure for two months,
For that is usual at the Sháh's decease,
And 'twould be seemly for the good to drop
A tear on this, the Great King's, testament.
Depart not from the bidding of Hurmuzd
And breathe not save according to his will."
All o'er that testament shed many a tear,
And Núshírwán survived it just a year.

§ 7

How Núshírwán had a Dream and how Búzurjmihr interpreted it as signifying the Appearance of Muhammad

In that year Núshírwán upon a night
Amidst his prayers and praises had a dream,
Wherein his lucid spirit saw in sleep
A Sun rise in the night and therewithal
Was an ascent that had two score degrees,
Whose summit reached to Saturn in the ascendant.
From the Hijáz in stately pomp and joy
That Sun ascended that ascent, fulfilling
The world with brilliancy from Káf to Káf,[1]
And everywhere converting grief to mirth,
While all the horizons, whether far or near,
Took lustre from its glory everywhere,
And everywhere light entered save the hall
Of Núshírwán which still abode in gloom.
The Sháh rose from his sleep for half the night,
And oped his lips to none on that affair,

[1] Káf=Alburz. See Vol. i. p. 71.

But when the sun unveiled its countenance
He summoned to his presence Búzurjmihr.
The king of kings in private to that sage
Related what he had beheld in sleep,
And Búzurjmihr, possessed of all the case,
Considered all the dream from end to end,
And thus replied: "O king of power supreme!
In truth there is a mystery herein."
The king said: "Speak the truth because my life
Is failing in my body for suspense."
Then Búzurjmihr spake thus: "O thou whose rede
Is higher than moon and sun! this dream have I
Well studied: mark the marvel of its meaning.
From this day forth for forty years and more
Among the Arabs one will rise to power,
Who will adopt the way of righteousness, C. 17
And turn aside from all deceit and loss.
He will confound the whole Faith of Zarduhsht.
When he shall show the moon his finger-tip,
His finger will divide it into two,
And none will look upon his back in toil.
The Jew and Christian shall withstand him not,
And he will do away with former Faiths.
He will ascend a triple-footed throne,
And all the world will be advised by him.
When he shall quit this Wayside Hostelry
The treasure of his words will still remain.
The world will joy in him from age to age,
Save the Sháh's palace which the winds will scatter.
When he is dead a scion of thy race
Will have the tymbals, drums, and elephants.
A host will come on him from the Hijáz,
Though unpossessed of arms and equipage,
Will cast him from the throne upon the dust,
And fill the world with warriors. Then will cease

The observation of the feast of Sada,
And every Fire-fane be a rubbish heap,
Folk will no longer worship Fire and Sun,
And all the fortunes of the brave will slumber.
Jámásp himself declared before Gushtásp
This secret, giving this interpretation."
When Núshírwán heard this from Búzurjmihr
The favour of his countenance was changed;
He was all day the mate of pain and grief,
And slumbered, when night came, worn out by care.[1]
Now when three watches of the night had passed
There went up such a panic-stricken cry
That thou hadst said: "The world is all o'er-turned!"
And then one said: "The hall is rent in twain!"
Thereat the Sháh's heart started from its place,
And in the uttermost bewilderment
He spake concerning it to Búzurjmihr,
Beginning with the rending of the hall,
Which when the sage had looked upon he spake
On this wise, saying: "O Sháh Núshírwán!
This outcry rose by reason of the Sun
That thou beheldest in thy dreams last night.
Know that thy palace gave a cry what time
That moon-like babe was born, and presently
A horseman with two steeds will come to say:—
'Fire-worship is abandoned to the blast!'"
Thereat, as swiftly as the flying dust,
A horseman came with tidings: "Even now
Ázargashasp is cold!"
The Sháh's heart straitened
Because of it; he sighed continually.
Then Búzurjmihr: "O Sháh! why mourn therefor?

[1] Or, with the change of a diacritical point:—
And when the night came, could not sleep for care.

What matter this world's griefs and joys to thee
When thou art gone and parted far by time ?"
  The Sháh survived not this event for long.
He died : the world bewailed him. Búzurjmihr
Veiled his own visage in the dust within C. 17
Four se'nnights of the passing of the Sháh,
Who left behind this record when he went.
Be thy part to preserve his monument,
For since the turning sky proved so unfair
To him expect no love or justice there.[1]

And now the crown and throne I decorate
Of Sháh Hurmuzd, and seat him on the state.

[1] The reign ends here in the original.

XLII

HURMUZD, THE SON OF NÚSHÍRWÁN

HE REIGNED TWELVE[1] YEARS

ARGUMENT

Hurmuzd, on succeeding to the throne, makes fair promises but soon belies them and puts to death his father's ministers. Afterwards, perturbed by a prophecy, he repents, and two stories are told of his even-handed justice. War breaks out and Bahrám Chúbína comes upon the scene. He is appointed commander-in-chief and defeats the Turks under King Sáwa and his son Parmúda, but after having been shamefully insulted by the Sháh he rebels—a course strongly opposed by his sister Gurdya. He contrives to make Hurmuzd suspicious of his own son Khusrau Parwíz who escapes. Hurmuzd is dethroned and blinded, and Khusrau Parwíz returns.

NOTE

Hurmuzd (Hormisdas IV., A.D. 578-590) may not have been so black as he has been painted but his reign, to say the least of it, stands in melancholy contrast to that of his father whose precepts he disregarded, whose system of administration he did his best to overturn, whose trusted ministers he put to death, and whose practice of personally leading his troops he made no attempt to emulate.[2] He had the good fortune to possess a general at once brave, able, and apparently quite loyal whom he treated with the basest and most insolent ingratitude, wrecking his own

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[1] Fourteen according to P. [2] RSM, p. 473.

reign thereby and inflicting many wounds upon his country. The romantic history of that general, as told in the Sháhnáma, is one of the finest passages in the poem, and the poet was fortunate in having such to lay before his readers as he was nearing the end of his great undertaking.[1]

§ 2. Mákh, the marchlord of Harát, who seems to have been known as Khurásání in accordance to Persian custom in such matters, appears to be the father of, or identical with, one of the four compilers of the prose Sháhnáma for Abú Mansúr which Firdausí used as his chief authority. In the Introduction to the present Translation the name of this particular compiler is given, in accordance to the text of C., as Táj son of Khurásání of Harát[2] but according to Nöldeke[3] the Táj is quite uncertain.

§ 3. Núshírwán had based his system of administration upon the nobility. We have seen in a characteristic anecdote how he refused to consult his own convenience by accepting a loan of money from a shoemaker.[4] Hurmuzd, not having his father's ability, found the system irksome and consequently was inclined to favour the lower at the expense of the higher orders. Accordingly later on we have two stories of his even-handed justice.[5] A justice, however, which is said to have put to death 13,000 of the nobility and priesthood, and imprisoned or degraded many others in the course of a few years is somewhat suspect.[6]

Burzmihr seems to be identical with Búzurjmihr who, we were told at the end of the last reign,[7] died within a month of Núshírwán. According to Mas'údí Búzurjmihr survived to be the chief minister of Khusrau Parwíz who after thirteen years of reign disgraced him and treated him even worse than Núshírwán is said to have done on one occasion,[8] the two accounts no doubt being variants of the same story. Firdausí tells us that one of the three scribes was young,[9] and that Búzurjmihr was a youth at his lessons when he first attracted Núshírwán's attention,[10] He need not have been an old man at the time of that Sháh's death. The probability is, however, that he was executed along with other ministers by Hurmuzd as the text seems to imply.

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[1] See p. 96 *seq.*
[2] Vol. i. p. 67.
[3] NIN, pp 14 *note* 15.
[4] p. 48.
[5] p. 91.
[6] NT, p. 267.
[7] p. 69.
[8] p. 4 *seq.*, MM, ii. 224. *Cf.* p. 313.
[9] p. 81.
[10] Vol. vii. p. 283.

§ 5. The account in the Sháhnáma and in Oriental historians of these wars seems much exaggerated. The war with Rúm was nothing new: it had been going on from the days of Núshírwán and was not specially active at the moment. The Arab and Khazar invasions require further confirmation and the latter, it may be suggested, was merely a patriotic invention to cover up an unfortunate incident that befell the Persians South of the Caucasus after the conclusion of the war with the Turks (p. 76). This last war has generally been taken to have been waged between the Persians and the Khán who was a relation by marriage of Hurmuzd and would be certain to bring great forces into the field. It appears, however, that Sáwa is merely the Persian form of "Chao-wou"—the name given in Chinese official reports of the period to the princes of small states on the Oxus that were more or less subject to the Khán who does not appear to have been concerned in the matter at all.[1]

§ 6. In the story of Mihrán Sitád's embassage as given in the Sháhnáma the prophecy is limited to the outcome of the marriage of Núshírwán with the Khán's daughter.[2] It afforded, however, a convenient starting-point for the Romance that gathered round the heroic personality of Bahrám Chúbína and the reference to him was interpolated accordingly.

§ 7. Bahrám Chúbîna, whose story and that of his sister Gurdya extend through the rest of this and far into the succeeding reign, had been marchlord of Rai and governor of the North, apparently, under Núshírwán.[3] He continued to hold the same posts under Hurmuzd.[4] He was a native of Rai, sprung from a race of marchlords and army-chiefs, a Mihrán, and is said to have been descended from Gurgín[5]—all important indications to the student of the Sháhnáma. Rai was the traditional seat of Arsacid power.[6] Shápúr of Rai, an army-chief, who was called in by Kubád to overthrow Súfarai of the race of Káwa, also was a Mihrán and descended from Mihrak.[7] The Mihrán clan played an important part in Sásánian times and the name often recurs.[8] Gurgín, son of Mílád, was the villain of the story of Bízhan

[1] NT, p. 269 and *notes*. RSM, p. 467.
[2] Vol. vii p. 354.
[3] ZT, ii. 252. *Cf.* Vol. vii. p. 214.
[4] ZT, ii. 253.
[5] ZT, ii. 252.
[6] Vol. vi. pp. 201, 215, 223.
[7] Vol. vii. pp. 185, 192.
[8] *Id.*

and Manízha.[1] The point is this. The words Mílád, Mihrak, and Mihrán are closely allied, probably mere variants, are reminiscent of Parthian times and under the Sásánian Dynasty represent the vanquished Arsacid element.[2] That element recovered sufficiently to exercise much political power as in the case of the Mihráns.

A Ruhhám of that stock is said to have been influential in placing Pírúz upon the throne.[3] If they could not be kings themselves they aspired to be king-makers and ministers. There was rivalry between them and families of purer Íránian stock, and the Sháhs, as in the instance given above, availed themselves of it to serve their own ends. Such rivalry, however, was a subsidiary matter: the great antagonism between Arsacid and Sásánian, though latent, still persisted and is indicated plainly enough in the course of the story of Bahrám Chúbína.

Nöldeke's account of that story, which is a blend of history and romance, is briefly as follows. It was compiled in Pahlaví shortly before the end of the Sásánian Dynasty, about the beginning of the reign of Yazdagird III., A.D. 632, and was translated into Arabic by a certain Jabala bin Sálim of whom nothing more is known save that he was "the writer of Hishám" who can be no other than the Arabic historian Hishám Ibn Al-Kalbí. Hishám died about A.D. 820. The story thus became known to the Muhammadans and was woven into the general presentment of Sásánian history.[4] We may add that Tabarí, who was born some eighteen years after Hishám's death and died A.D. 923, gives the historical nucleus of the story in his history. The redactor of his work into Persian (A.D. 963) states that as his Arabic authority has not given the life of Bahrám Chúbína in its entirety he gives it from the book of the history of Persia where he found it more complete.[5] This version agrees very closely with Firdausí's. Both are derived from the Persian Book of Kings in one or another of its later forms. Which the redactor of Tabarí used we cannot say, but Firdausí, we may assume, used the modern Persian prose Sháhnáma of Abú Mansúr[6] for which a new translation of the story had been made from the

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[1] Vol. iii. p. 289 *seq.*
[2] Vol. iii. p. 11. vi. 256, vii. 156.
[3] Vol. vii. p. 156.
[4] NT, p. 474.
[5] ZT, ii. 253.
[6] See Vol. i. p. 67.

original Pahlaví.[1] This may account for the difference in some of the proper names that exists between Firdausí's version and that in the Persian Tabarí. In this and some other respects the latter is of decided help to the understanding of the former. Attention will be called to such matters in subsequent notes.

It is evident that the redactors of the Pahlaví original into Arabic or Persian took good care to leave little repugnant to Muhammadan Faith or morals. Even the statement in Tabarí and its Persian version that Gurdya was the wife as well as the sister of Bahrám Chúbína[2] disappears in Firdausí.

Yalán-sína—a prominent character in the Romance—is called Mardánsháh in the Persian Tabarí. He was the brother[3] and a firm supporter of Bahrám Chúbína. Another brother—Gurdwí—took the opposite side and remained loyal to Khusrau Parwíz. The sympathies of Gurdya, Bahrám Chúbína's sister, though she associated with him till his death, were also legitimist.

§ 8. Here we have another instance of a Mihrán in high office.[4] Probably he was the successor of Ízid Gashasp, the scribe, who had been put to death by Hurmuzd early in his reign[5] and is to be carefully distinguished from the general of the same name in Bahrám Chúbína's army, which is not always done in the text of C.[6]

In the Persian Tabarí the purveyor of sheep's heads is said to have been naked and Bahrám Chúbína to have speared two of the heads one of which fell back into the tray. The interpretation was that he would have to deal with two kings of whom one would be killed while the other would be restored to his royalty. The nudity signified that Bahrám Chúbína would revolt.[7]

According to the Persian Tabarí, Hurmuzd, on hearing of the invasion of Sáwa Sháh, sent Kharrád, son of Barzín, with an escort to him to delay his advance while the expedition under the command of Bahrám Chúbína was being got ready. The envoy managed to keep Sáwa at Balkh for a whole year.[8]

Faghfúr, or Faghfúr of Chín, hitherto in the Sháhnáma a

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[1] NT, p. 475.
[2] NT, p. 478.
[3] *Cf.* pp. 75, 150 *note*, 158 *note*.
[4] NT, p. 279. ZT, ii. 303.
[5] *Cf* p. 72.
[6] p. 83
[7] ZT, ii. 258.
[8] *Id.* 259.

dynastic title, here appears as the name of the younger son of Sáwa perhaps to add to the latter's importance. In the Persian Tabarí the governor of Khurásán takes the part here played by Faghfúr.[1]

§ 12. In the Persian Tabarí Bahrám Chúbína has the dream while dozing on horseback after having been engaged in arraying the troops all night, and in the same authority bars the road of retreat with five hundred horse,[2] while the only sorcery is in connexion with the dream.

According to Tabarí[3] the shot that slew king Sáwa was one of three that gave renown to archers in Persian story. The others were that of Árish[4] and that of Súfaraí who in the war undertaken to avenge Pírúz shot at a chief in the vanguard of Khúshnawáz and pierced his horse's head with an arrow. The chief was taken prisoner by Súfaraí who sent him back to Khúshnawáz with instructions to report the matter, and Khúshnawaz was so impressed that he sued for peace.[5] Neither of these instances is mentioned in the Sháhnáma though it celebrates in a famous passage Rustam's shot in the fight with Ashkabús[6] and Bahrám Gúr's skill in archery.[7]

Bahrám, the son of Siyáwúsh, had married a niece of Bahrám Chúbína.[8]

§ 14. The episode of the garden is not in the Persian Tabarí.

§ 17. The above remark applies to the quarrel between Bahrám Chúbína and Parmúda, and to the former's retention of some of the booty.

The Persian Tabarí makes Mardánsháh (Yalán-síná), not Ízid Gashasp, conduct the Khán, the other prisoners, and the booty to Írán.[9]

§ 18. The Sháhnáma here seems to confuse Ízid Gashasp with the scribe of that name executed by Hurmuzd[10] It is clear from the Persian Tabarí[11] that the person consulted by the Sháh about Bahrám Chúbína was his confidant and minister Áyín Gashasp who in the Persian Tabarí is named Yazdánbakhsh. Ízid and Yazdán both mean God which also caused confusion and when it became hopeless the form Áyín Gashasp was adopted to get out of the difficulty.

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[1] *Id.* [2] *Id.* 261. [3] NT. p. 271.
[4] See Vol. v. p. 12. [5] NT, p. 127. ZT, ii. 143.
[6] Vol. iii. pp. 109, 181. [7] Vol. vi. 383, vii. 54, 55, 80.
[8] ZT, ii. 262. *Cf.* NT, 281, 282 *note.* [9] ZT. ii. pp. 265, 266.
[10] p. 83. [11] ZT. ii. p. 266.

§§ 19–21. The definite accusation of withholding some of the booty made by the archscribe (Mihrán) against Bahrám Chúbína is absent in the Persian Tabarí which merely gives the vague insinuation of the minister Yazdánbaksh which rouses suspicion in Hurmuzd's mind and causes him to send Mardánsháh back to the commander-in-chief with a chain, distaff-case and cotton, and an insulting letter.[1] A similar insult is recorded to have been offered by the Empress Sophia to the exarch Narses when he was superseded and bidden return to his place among the maidens of the palace where a distaff should again be placed in his hand.[2]

The treatment of Bahrám Chúbína by Hurmuzd, though foolish enough in any circumstances, was not quite so unreasonable and motiveless as it appears to be in the accounts of oriental writers. In A.D. 589 after the successful conclusion of Bahrám Chúbína's expedition Hurmuzd conceived the idea of renewing the Lazic war which his father had abandoned in A.D. 562,[3] and sent Bahrám Chúbína to conduct the campaign. That chief, however, was defeated by the Romans in a battle on the Araxes and his disgrace followed.[4]

§ 22. Here for once the Sháhnáma seems to join hands with Western Romance. The Adventure, *mutatis mutandis*, reads as if it had been taken bodily from some mediæval romance of chivalry.

According to the Persian Tabarí both Kharrád, son of Barzín, and the archscribe were present on the occasion.[5]

§ 23. Here again there seems to be some confusion in connexion with Ízid Gashasp. He is identified with the archscribe in the heading. Moreover he is pursued, captured, and brought back to Bahrám Chúbína, who lets him off very easily, because he is wanted for service with that paladin. In the Persian Tabari *both* the fugitives make good their escape to Hurmuzd.[6] That version does not know of Ízid Gashasp, who is mentioned, however, in Tabarí.[7]

§ 24. In the Persian Tabarí Bahrám Chúbina sends Hurmuzd twelve thousand hangers with bent points to represent all his twelve thousand troops.[8]

Bahrám Chúbína is here described as the son of Gashasp.

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[1] *Id.*
[2] GDF, v. 336.
[3] Vol. vii. p. 215.
[4] NT, p. 272 *note*. RSM, p. 469
[5] ZT, ii. 267.
[6] *Id.* 268.
[7] NT, p. 278.
[8] ZT, ii. 267.

Tabarí makes him the son of Bahrám-Gushnasp,[1] the Persian version of Bahrám,[2] and Mas'údí of the nickname—Chúbín.[3]

§ 25. Ízid Gashasp is regarded as dealing with both sides because of the malicious speech that he is represented to have made about Bahrám Chúbína.[4]

The debate is not in the Persian Tabarí.

§ 26. The letter to the Khán is not in the Persian Tabarí.

Historically Bahrám Chúbína issued coins in his own name but apparently not in that of Khusrau Parwiz.[5]

§ 27. The authorities differ as to whether Gustaham was imprisoned as well as Bandwí. The Oriental say both, the Greek Bandwí only,[6] which makes the revolt more intelligible.

§ 1

The Prelude

The Summer[7] mocked the ruddy apple-tree,
And treated fruit and leaf with raillery :—
" As for the posy that in Spring of late
Thou barest on thy breast intoxicate,
With just a blush remembered in its bloom,
And branches yielding exquisite perfume,
How didst thou find a purchaser to buy,
And do thy marketing so readily ?
Those emeralds and rubies who bestowed
On thee that bendest underneath the load ?
Sooth ! thou hast bartered blossom for the grace
Of colour wherewithal to deck thy face,[8]
But brought me to despair who cannot see
Thy blossoms for thy flaunting bravery."
Sweet Spring, my charmer ! whither hast thou fled,

[1] NT, p. 270.
[2] ZT, ii. 252.
[3] MM, ii. 213. *Cf* p. 98 *note*.
[4] p 150 and *note*.
[5] RSM, p. 471 *note*.
[6] *Id*.
[7] Tamúz, the Syrian month of July, in the original.
[8] Three couplets omitted.

And left the glories of the garden dead ?
Howbeit Autumn hath a scent of thine,
And I will drink to thee in new-made wine ;
Though thou art sallow I will praise thee yet,
And deck thee like Hurmuzd's own coronet,
For now my mart is brisk. Art thou to see,
When I am dead and gone, no trace of me ?[1]

§ 2

How Hurmuzd ascended the Throne and harangued the Chiefs

A marchlord of Harát, well shot in age,
There was, in all approven and beseen,
A ready speaker, Mákh by name, world-sage,
Still flourishing and of exalted mien ;
And it was him I questioned fain to find
What record of Hurmuzd he had in mind
When that Sháh filled the throne of equity :
That eld of Khurásán thus answered me :—
Whenas that Sháh sat on the famous state
He first gave praises to almighty God,
The Arbiter of fortune, and then said :—
C. 1792 " We will renown the throne and hold in honour
The men of high degree. We will enfold
The world beneath our wings, as did our sire,
In goodly case and Glory. We will make
Offenders quake and ease the oppressed, be patient
If one doth ill and succour him in trouble.
The prop of majesty is clemency
With bounty, justice, and right conduct. Know
That good and evil never are concealed

[1] Division of text as in P.

From Him who is the Maker of the world.
Our ancestors—crown-wearers in their time,
Which through their justice had its share of praise—
Sought but for mildness, equity, and greatness,
With valour, aptitude, their lieges' service,
Their lords' observance, and to vex their foes.
In every clime to act and to command,
Power, counsel, and authority to treat,
Are mine. The good affect a heaven-sent Sháh.
Now mercy is the capital of such;
The age becometh full of ease through bounty.
The mendicants will I entreat with kindness,
And will watch o'er the rich. The self-made man
Shall have a prosperous commerce with ourselves.
Withhold not your desires from my fond heart;
I will abate with ease whatever cause
For fear ye entertain. Ye prosperous!
Joy in my crown and throne. Amid the great
Mine is the lustre in that mercy, justice,
And bounty are mine own. Grow still in kindness,
And banish greed and vengeance from your hearts.
They that fear God will see not evil fortune,
So strive ye all, both small and great, to win
The favour of the Maker of the world.
Again, let not the heart of one possessed
Of wisdom contemplate ingratitude,
And when thou benefitest other folk
Let there be no idea of recompense.
Mix not with men that speak deceitfully,
For what they utter is for outward show,
And if thy king be just think thou no shame
Concerning him, for while thou callest him
Unwise he may be studious of the words
Of former Sháhs,[1] and when his heart is prompted
To mercy sow not thou the seed of guile

[1] Reading with P.

Upon the earth. The spurner of our counsel
Will throw away the benefits of fortune.
C. 1793 The approval of thy Sháh sufficeth thee,
While to resist him is the road to ruin.
His harshness in exhorting thee is kind,
For he would break with thee if he were wroth.
Begrudge no efforts in the cause of good,
And joy not in injustice and in wealth.
When in the world thou hast thy heart's desire,
And reached what thou wast instant to attain,
Still, when thou don'st the crown of seventy years,
Thou yieldest all thy winnings to the foe.
My heart is greatly troubled for the poor,
And I would have them ever in my thoughts.
I ask the holy Fosterer for time
To render poor folk happy with my treasures;
I will not bring the saintly heart to trouble.
If any by his monetary wealth
Shall grow too kinglike him will I abase:
No rival will I have. From first to last,
In public utterance and secret thought,
We are the same. The Maker's benison
Be yours, your earth the circling vault of heaven."
Now when the assembly heard his words each man
Grew thoughtful, those of wealth were filled with fear,
And tyrants' hearts were rent, while for their part
The sage and mendicant waxed glad of heart.

§ 3

How Hurmuzd slew Ízid Gashasp, Zarduhsht, Símáh Barzín and Bahrám Ázarmihán, his Father's Ministers[1]

The Sháh ruled well until he felt secure
And had attained his ends but then he raged,
Displayed his evil nature, left the path
Of right and, as he had determined, slew
Those most in honour with his father—men,
Who, innocent and happy, feared no ill.
Among the scribes of Núshírwán were three,
Two old, one young, their names Ízid Gashasp,
Burzmihr—a learnéd scribe of Grace and presence—
And Máh Ázar, wise, shrewd, and prosperous.
The three had been vizírs and ministers
Before the throne of Núshírwán. Hurmuzd
Was longing to bring ruin on all three
Because he feared that they might prove ingrate. C. 17
Without a cause he raised his hand against
Ízid Gashasp, bound and imprisoned him.
The high priest's heart was straitened and his cheek
Wan with anxiety, for he was good,
An ancient named Zarduhsht, and at the bondage
Of scribe Ízid Gashasp it was as though
His own heart had been arrow-pierced.
Now when
Ízid Gashasp had passed a day untended,
Without food, clothes or solacer, a friend
Conveyed for him this message from the prison
To the high priest: "O thou that to the captive
Art skin and marrow! here am I within

[1] The heading in the original seems to have been carelessly compiled. The one above has been adopted to suit the account in the text.

The prison of the Sháh without attendance,
And none can come to me. I crave for food;
A famished paunch increaseth my distress.
Send to me what is fit and, when I die,
Some linen[1] and a stitcher for my shroud."
The high priest's heart was grieved at his affliction,
His message, place, and lodging. He replied:—
"Complain not of the matter of thy bondage
If thou art not in jeopardy of life."
Albeit the message left him broken-hearted,
And troubled for himself. He thought: "If news
Shall reach this Graceless and ungenerous Sháh
That his high priest hath sent things to the prison,
My life and body are not worth a mite;
This world-lord will destroy me and will turn
A livid face toward me in his wrath."
Yet through affection for Ízid Gashasp,
The scribe, his heart was wrung, his face like gall.
He bade his heedful cook take to the prison
Food for the prisoner and afterwards
Gat on an Arab steed and went to him.
The keeper of the prison paled with fright,
On seeing the high priest, but dared not say:—
"Go not within the prison for this king
Is self-willed and a novice."
Bathed in tears
That agéd man alighted from his steed,
And visited Ízid Gashasp. They clasped
Each other in a close embrace, all anguish,
The lashes of their eyes like clouds in Spring,
And held talk of the Sháh's malignity
Until words failed them. Then the board was spread
Before those holy men who next began

[1] Reading with P.

To mutter prayers with sacred twigs in hand,
And afterwards Ízid Gashasp in whispers
Conveyed his wishes, while the high priest hearkened,
As to his hoarded treasure and dínárs,
His mansions, palaces, and property,
And said: "O noble man! on going hence
Say to Hurmuzd from me: 'Though thou mayst spurn C. 17
My words yet think upon the toils and care
That I supported with Sháh Núshírwán,
And how I cherished thee too on my breast.
My recompense is chains and fear of worse,
And I shall show God on the Judgment Day
A guiltless heart aggrieved against the king.'"
Now when the high priest had gone home a spy
Departed hastily and told the news
To Sháh Hurmuzd whose heart conceived fell schemes.
He did not spare Ízid Gashasp but sent,
And slew him in the prison, heard reports
At large about the high priest, made no sign,
And pondered how by fair means or by foul
To slay him; then gave orders to the cook
To mingle bane in secret with some dish,
And when the high priest came at audience-time
To pay his duty to the illustrious king,
Hurmuzd said: "Tarry here to-day for I
Have a new cook."
The high priest sat; they spread
The board; he paled; he felt that 'twas his last,
And so it proved. The cooks brought up the meats,
And Sháh Hurmuzd partook of all in turn,
But when he had the poisoned dish brought in
The high priest glanced thereat and looked again.
There was an ill surmise in his pure heart:—

" His remedy is poison in that dish ! "
Hurmuzd, on seeing this, said not a word,
But stretched his hand out to that dish of bane,
And, in accordance to the use of kings
When paying servants honour and regard,
Put his own noble fingers to the board,
And, having taken marrow from the dish,
Said to the high priest : " O thou honest man !
I made this luscious morsel for thyself,
So open wide thy mouth and take this food,
And such should be thy nourishment henceforth."
The archmage answered : " By thy life and head,
And may thy head and crown endure for ever,
Bid me not eat it ; I have had enough,[1]
So do not press me further."
Said Hurmuzd :—
" By sun and moon, and by the purity
Of soul of him who is the Sháh and world-lord,
Thou shalt accept this morsel from my hand,
And frustrate not my wish herein."
He answered :—
" The Sháh hath bidden and I have no choice."
He ate, then left the board, in sore distress,
C. 1796 And hurried home, spake of the poisoned food
To none but spread a robe and lay lamenting.
He ordered one to fetch an antidote
From those old hoards of his or from the city,
But it availed not aught, and bitterly
Complained he unto God against Hurmuzd.
The Sháh dispatched a trusty man to learn
The high priest's state, the action of the poison,
And if the scheme had failed. Now when the eye
Of the high priest beheld the messenger
Tears fell from his eyelashes down his cheeks.

[1]Reading with P.

"Go, tell Hurmuzd," he said: 'Thy fortune changeth.
Hereafter, through thy mischievous designs,
Thou shalt be blind and shiftless in the world,
Thy foes shall have their hearts' desire upon thee,
And lasting shame shall dog thy soul for this.
Soon wilt thou die and leave an evil name.
I go to lay my cause before the Judge,
Where we shall face each other. Never more
Sleep free from ill, for chastisement divine
Confronteth thee. I take my leave of thee,
Malignant man! Ill done will bring thee ill.' "
The trusty envoy heard and went with tears
To take the king the message. He repented,
Writhed at the high priest's righteous words but saw
No way to cure that smart and deeply sighed.
Anon the high priest died, and all the wise
Wept o'er him sorely. In this world of pain
And toil why court renown and clutch at gain?
The wise count breaths because no joys remain.
The high priest's wretched end convulsed the realm
With grief, but that blood-shedding, brutal world-lord
Recked not of evil fortune, girt his loins
For bloodshed, made Bahrám Ázarmihán
His tool, called him by night and made him kneel
Beside the throne, then said: "Thou wouldst feel safe
From evil treatment at my hands? Then when
The sun is bright in heaven, and mountain-tops
Are shining like a back-plate, come among
The nobles of Írán and take thy stand
Before my throne. Then will I question thee
About Símáh Barzín: make answer boldly.
I shall inquire: 'What is this friend of thine,

An evil man or one that serveth God ? '
C. 1797 Reply : ' He is an evil man, a villain,
And sprung from Áhriman.' Then ask whatever
Thou wilt—a handmaid, signet, throne and crown."
Bahrám replied : " I will, and multiply
The ill a hundredfold."
The Sháh thus sought
An artifice to put Símáh Barzín,
One of the chiefs, beloved by Núshírwán—
That Lustre of the age—beyond the pale
Of sympathy.
Now when the Robe whose hue
Is ivory-bright grew visible, and Sol
Rose in the Sign of Gemini, the world-lord
Sat on the ivory throne, and o'er his head
They hung the costly crown. The Íránian chiefs
Met and drew up in rank before the court-gate.
The audience-chamberlain withdrew the curtain,
And all the throng approached the king. First came
Bahrám Ázarmihán, Símáh Barzín,
And valiant chiefs. Each took his proper seat,
The crowd still standing in the monarch's presence,
Who questioned thus Bahrám Ázarmihán :—
" Now doth Símáh Barzín, in presence here,
Deserve our wealth or is he troublesome,
Because the ill-disposed deserve not treasure ? "
Bahrám Ázarmihán well understood
The question of the monarch of the world,
Its base and motive : " We must weep therefor,
And from the ruler of the people I
Shall have at last a charnel but no shroud ! "
And thus he made response : " O noble Sháh !
Look for no goodness from Símáh Barzín,
For he hath wrecked Írán. Would that his body
Had neither brain nor skin ! He speaketh naught
But villainy and thus produceth strife."

Símáh Barzín, on hearing this, replied :—
" My good old friend ! defame not thus my person,
And be not thus confederate with the Dív.
Since thou hast been my friend what words and deeds
Of Áhriman hast thou perceived in me ? "
Bahrám Ázarmihán thus answered him :—
" Thou hast been scattering seed throughout the world,
And thou wilt be the first to reap the crop.
Black smoke shall be thy portion of the fire,
For Núshírwán once summoned thee and me,
And made us kneel before the royal throne
With the high priest, Burzmihr, and with that chief
Of comely face, Ízid Gashasp, and asked :—
' Who doth deserve the imperial throne and who
Possesseth Grace ? On younger son or elder
Shall I bestow it ? Which is worthier
Of kingship ? '
Then the rest of us arose, C.
And framed our tongues to utter this reply :—
' This man of Turkman kindred is unworthy ;
None would give aught for such a Sháh, for he
Is Khán-descended, is of evil nature,
And like his mother both in looks and bearing.'
Thou saidst : ' Hurmuzd is fit to be the Sháh,'
And now art guilty of the consequence.
For this cause have I testified against thee,
And opened thus my lips in thy dispraise."
Hurmuzd at that archmage's truthful words
Turned pale with shame. At night he sent them both
To prison and for two nights made no sign
Withal, but on the third, what time the moon
Arose above the mountains, he dispatched
Símáh Barzín by slaying him within

The prison of the thieves yet gat thereby
But toil and malison. On hearing how
That man of honest heart had passed away
Bahrám Ázarmihán sent to the Sháh
A message saying: "Thou whose crown is over
The orbit of the moon! thou knowest how much
I have endured to keep thy secrets close,
And ne'er was aught but well disposed to thee
Before thy father, that illustrious Sháh.
If thou wilt summon me and make me sit
Beside the royal throne I will reveal
A matter to thee in thine interest.
Free me at once from bondage in the prison;
'Twill help Írán and keep the wise unscathed."
Hurmuzd, when this came, chose a confidant
To bring Bahrám Ázarmihán to him,
And to that court renowned. The monarch summoned
Bahrám Ázarmihán when it was night,
Caused him to kneel before the royal throne,
And then said: "Tell me what this matter is
That will secure my life in happiness."
He answered: "In the royal treasury
I have observed a plain black cabinet.
Deposited within it is a casket,
And therein is a document in Persian.
'Tis written on white silk: the Íránians' hopes
Are centred there. 'Twas written by thy sire,
That Sháh and world-lord, and thou shouldest see it."
Then to his treasurer, good at need, Hurmuzd
Sent one to say: "Seek in the ancient hoards
A plain sealed cabinet and on the seal
The name of Núshírwán, and may his soul
Be ever young! Dispatch and bring it me
Ere night be past."

The treasurer was prompt, C. 179
And brought it with the seal intact. The world-lord
Oped it, invoking oftentimes the while
The name of Núshírwán. He saw within
A casket, which was also sealed, wherefrom
He eagerly took forth the piece of silk,
And saw the characters of Núshírwán
Inscribed thereon, and thus the writing ran :—

> " Hurmuzd for two years more than ten
> Will prove a matchless monarch, then
> The world will be convulsed, his name
> Pass to abeyance with his fame.
> Foes will spring up in every place
> Led by a man of evil race,
> An Áhriman, the monarch's host
> Will be dispersed, his throne be lost.[1]
> Him will that villain blind, and they
> Will, after, take his life away.[2]"

On seeing that script, and in his father's hand,
Hurmuzd was frayed and rent the silk asunder.
With bloodshot eyes and livid face he cried :—
" Injurious man ! what was thine aim herein ?
Wouldst have my head ? "
Bahrám Ázarmihán
Said : " Turkman-born ! how long wilt thou delight
In bloodshed ? From the Khán, not Kai Kubád,
Art thou upon whose head the crown was set
By Núshírwán."
Hurmuzd knew : " If he can
He will o'erthrow me," heard out his abuse,
And sent him back to prison where next night,

[1] More literally :—
" The enemy will cast him down from the throne."
[2] Reading with P.

What time the moon rose o'er the mountain-tops,
The deathsman slew him. At the court no sage
Or counsellor or archimage was left.
From ill self-governance all evils spring;
See that thou disregard that evil thing.

§ 4

How Hurmuzd turned from Tyranny to Justice

From that time forth he led a goodlier life,
Moved by remorse at heart. Now every year,
When nights were short, he sojourned at Istakhr
Two months because that city was delightsome,
The air serene: he knew not how to quit it.
He and his court were wont to spend three months
At Ispahán with its delicious air—
The seat of mighty men. In Winter-time
He dwelt at Taisafún among the troops,
The archimages and the counsellors;
While in the Spring he was upon the plain
Of the Arwand, and thus a while went by.
C. 1800 His heart was terror-stricken by that scroll,
He spent three watches of the night in prayer,
Shed no more blood thenceforth and did no wrong:
His soul mused not of ill. Whene'er the Veil
Of lapis-lazuli was hidden, and when
The topaz height appeared, a herald used
Thus to proclaim: "Famed men of Grace and prudence!
If tilth be trampled and the sower troubled
By that mishap, or if a horse shall enter
Crops, or if any one withal shall trespass
On orchards, then the horse's tail and ears
Must be cut off and the thief's head be set

Upon the stake."[1]

He had a son beloved,
Just like the moon, whom he had named Parwíz,
And sometimes called "Khusrau the well-content."[2]
He never left his father's side for long;
The father never bloomed without the son.
It chanced that the young steed of prince Parwíz
Escaped from stall and followed by its groom
Went to the growing crops whose owner came
Lamenting to the groom and asked: "What man
Must sorrow for this horse's ears and tail?"
The groom said: "'Tis the horse of prince Parwíz;
What careth he for subjects?"
Then the owner
Went to the king and laid the case before him,
Who said: "Haste, dock the horse's tail and ears,
Then have the damage to the crop assessed,
And prince Khusrau shall recompense the man
A hundredfold in money from his treasures
Upon the field and in its owner's presence."
Thereat the prince moved chiefs to plead for him
Before the Sháh that he would not have docked
The black steed's tail and ears, but in his wrath
Against the steed the king paid no regard
To all those men of world-experience;
The groom through terror of the king made haste
To dock the young steed of its ears and tail
Upon that tilth betrampled; and Khusrau
Paid the complainant what the Sháh had bidden.
Anon the king went hunting, and they all C.
Had much good sport. A valiant warrior,
Whose father was the captain of the host,
Saw, as he went along, a vine well laden

[1] Two couplets omitted.
[2] The prince afterwards famous as Sháh Khusrau Parwiz.

With unripe grapes and bade his servant haste
To cut and take some bunches to his cook.
The owner came and said: "Thou miscreant!
Thou neither wast the tender of this vine,
Nor boughtest it with treasure and dínárs!
Why hast thou spoiled the labour of another?
I shall complain of thee before the Sháh."
The valiant horseman, fearing what might chance,
Undid his belt forthwith and then bestowed it,
All costly and all golden with each link
Inlaid with gems, upon the man who said
On seeing it: "What wrong one must condone!
Tell not the king. Thou hast no purchaser
In me, so make it no affair of price;
While as for thanks I lay on thee that word;
Thou wouldst be lifeless if that just judge heard!"[1]

§ 5

How Hosts gathered from all Sides against Hurmuzd, and how he took Counsel with his Wazírs

When he had reigned for ten years righteously
The voice of foemen rose from every realm,
King Sáwa marched upon him from Harát
With drums and treasure, elephants and troops.
If thou wouldst take the number of that host
Go count four hundred o'er a thousand times.
There were twelve hundred elephants of war;
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth hath no room for them."
The desert from Harát to the Marvrúd[2]
Was thick as warp and woof with soldiery,

[1] Six couplets omitted. [2] Reading with P.

And as he led them on to Marv the earth
Was hidden by the dust-clouds of the host.
King Sáwa wrote a letter to Hurmuzd, C 1
And said: "Convoke thy powers from every side,
Repair the roads and bridges for my troops,
Get provand and bethink thee of my sword.
I would pass through thy realm. Mine army reacheth
O'er river, height, and waste."
On reading this
The king turned pale at all that countless host.
Then from another quarter Cæsar came,
And over-ran the land with his array—
A force of Rúmans five score thousand strong,
Courageous and redoubted cavaliers.
The cities ta'en by Núshírwán, whose name
Still frighted him, he took back with the sword:
All were again obedient unto Cæsar.[1]
A host came from the side of the Khazars,
And all the fields and fells were black with them.
A warrior of experience and possessed
Of troops and treasure of his own was leader,
And from Armenia their companies
Extended to the gate of Ardabíl.
Then from the waste of spear-armed cavaliers
An army came past count. 'Abbás and 'Amr,
Two horsemen youthful and illustrious,
Led them. They gave to havoc land and crop
Because Hurmuzd demanded tribute of them.
That host reached the Farát, and in that land
No place for grass was left. When fortune loured
News reached Hurmuzd, and that successful Sháh
Grew all amort at his informants' words,
And he repented slaying those archmages,
And alienating wise men from his court.
He saw no counsellor, and he had need

[1] Couplet inserted from P. and one omitted.

Of wise advisers, so he sent and summoned
The Íránians to full session in the palace,
And made discovery of all the matter,
Addressing thus those nobles of the land :—
" A greater host than any can recall
Is marching on Írán."
Then all the marchlords
Approached him with suggestions, saying thus :—
" Advised and prudent Sháh ! hear us herein.
Thou art a wise Sháh ; we are subjects merely,
And count ourselves as less than one archmage.
Thy scribes and thine archmages hast thou slain,
Departing from both faith and precedent.
Think what to do and who shall guard our land."
Then said an archimage who was wazír :—
" O sage and knowledge-seeking Sháh ! if now
C. 1803 The host of the Khazars come forth to battle
Our warriors will be fully occupied.[1]
Let us make overtures to them of Rúm,
And then pluck up the Arabs by the root.
King Sáwa is more instant and with him
Our prospect is more gloomy too. Our trouble
Will come by way of Khurásán for he
Will waste our country and our wealth withal ;
So when the Turkman marcheth from Jíhún
To war there must be no delay."
Hurmuzd,
For he was seeking for a policy,
Said to that archimage : " How shall we now
Bear us toward king Sáwa ? "
He replied :—
" Put thine own soldiers into war-array,
For troops exalt a monarch. Summon too
The muster-master that he may account
The number fit for service."

[1] " tes vaillantes troupes n'hésiteront pas un instant." Mohl.

With the roll
The muster-master came before the Sháh,
Whose army numbered five score thousand men,
The more part mounted, many were on foot.
The archmage said: "With such a host as this
We well may be defeated by king Sáwa
Unless thou actest boldly and uprightly,
Dismissing all ideas of fraud and falsehood;
Then thou wilt free thy subjects' heads from bonds
As well becometh kingship. Thou hast heard
The mighty tale of ill done to Gushtásp,
And to Luhrásp all for religion's sake
By great Arjásp, that brave old Wolf, and all
The cavaliers of Chín, the woe of Balkh,
And how life was embittered in that land
Until Asfandiyár was set at large,
And pressed the war amain.[1] Unless the king
Of earth will be advised he will behold
Much trouble from the Turks of Chín, but though
I pass the king in years I pass him not
In thought."
The king said: "Cæsar shall not fight
With us. I will restore the cities taken
By Núshírwán, and then he will withdraw."
He chose a scribe—a warrior—as envoy,
A wise, a prudent, and observant man,
And sent him unto Cæsar with this message:—
"I want no Rúman cities; be that land
Thine; but withal set foot not on our coasts
If thou wouldst be both great and prosperous."
The envoy came to Cæsar and delivered
The message of Hurmuzd. The lord of Rúm
Withdrew and did no scath upon Írán.
The king, when Cæsar had withdrawn, prepared
To war with the Khazars. He formed a host,

[1] See Vol. v. p. 35 *seq.*

C. 1804 Whose dust-clouds blotted day, and sent it thither
To fire those fields and fells, led by Kharrád—
A man of Grace, of worship, and of justice.
Now when that army reached Armenia
The host of the Khazars barred all the way.
The Íránians slaughtered many and bare off
Much spoil. The Arabs hearing this were checked,
And went back whence they came. So when the Sháh
Heard that Kharrád had been victorious
Naught but to fight king Sáwa still remained,
To which endeavour all his thoughts were strained.

§ 6

How Hurmuzd heard of Bahrám Chúbína and sent for him

A servant of the Sháh's, one hight Nastúh,
A wise, successful, and observant man,
Spake thus: "O Sháh! be happy. May the hand
Of ill be ever far from thee! My sire,
The wise Mihrán Sitád, hath still his wits,
Though old, and sitteth with the Zandavasta
In his retirement, having naught to hope for
Through age and weakness. Now but recently
I went and spent a day and night with him,
Told him about king Sáwa, his vast host,
And elephants of war. My father said:—
'The ancient prophecy is then fulfilled!'
I questioned him: 'To what referrest thou?'
He answered: 'If the Sháh shall ask of me
I will reveal it.'"

Then the king of kings

Commanded that a noble should set forth
In haste and fetch the old man from his palace
Upon a litter. When that ancient came,
His heart all knowledge and his head all lore,
Before the Sháh, Hurmuzd inquired of him :—
" What know'st thou of the past ? "
" O fluent Sháh,
And heedful," said the elder, " when the Khán
Dispatched thy mother to Írán from Chín
I was the chief of eight score warriors
That went to ask of him her hand in marriage.
Thy father, that most upright king of kings,
Demanded no slave's daughter of the Khán,
But said : ' Require a daughter of the queen ;
No slave must be the consort of the Sháh.'
I went before the Khán and did obeisance. C. 1805
He had five daughters in his women's bower,
All goodly, fit to deck the thrones of monarchs,
In gait like pheasants and in looks like Spring,
And all fulfilled with colour, scent, and beauty.
The monarch sent me to their bower. I entered
That famed court. They had decked the daughters' faces,
And twined their locks with roses, save thy mother
Who wore no coronet, no necklace, bracelet,
Or other ornament but sat there mute
With hanging head and shyly hid her face
Behind her sleeves ; but she alone of all
Was daughter of the queen ; none of the rest
Possessed such elegance, such bloom, and charm
Because the queen was daughter of Faghfúr,
And naturally indisposed to ill.
She sorrowed that her child should dwell afar,
And that pure daughter quit the monarch's palace.
Among those daughters her it was I chose ;
I heeded not the others. Said the Khán :—

'Select another; all the five are fair
And worshipful,' and this was my response:—
'My choice is made; to choose again were fatal.'
Then summoned he his priests and made them kneel
Before the royal throne and asked concerning
His daughter's future. Those astrologers
Replied: 'Thou shalt see naught but good and hear
Naught but the truth. From her and from the Sháh
A prince like some fierce lion will be born,
Of lofty stature and with lusty limbs,
Brave as a lion, bounteous as a cloud,
Black-eyed, impetuous, and choleric,
Who, on his father's death, will be the king.
He will enjoy much treasure from his sire,
And in his latter days refrain from evil.
Thereafter will a mighty king arise,
Lead forth a valiant host of Turks and seek
With that array to occupy Írán
And country of Yaman throughout. The Sháh
Will be in dudgeon at him and will fear
His high, victorious fortune, but will have
Far off a subject, an exalted horseman
And loyal liege, tall and adust of body,
Upon his head crisp locks as black as musk,
Big both of bone and nose and swart of skin—
A warrior brave and strong, nicknamed Chúbína,[1]
And sprung from paladins. This strenuous man
C. 1806 Will come with some few soldiers to the Sháh,
Soon overthrow this Turk and wreck his host.'
Ne'er saw I one more glad than was the Khán
On hearing this. He gave the Crown of all
His daughters unto Núshírwán while I
Received her on the Sháh's behalf. This done

[1] *i.e.*, Stick-like.

I hied me home, the Khán producing for us
Such wealth of jewels from his treasury
That we were put to it to carry them.
He came with me as far as the Jíhún,
Embarked his daughter and with doleful heart
Turned back, at one with sorrow for his child.
Now have I told my tale here in thy presence,
O king of men! Seek for the man himself
Within thy realm and bid thy couriers haste
Because thy triumph lieth in his hands,
But tell not friend or foe."
E'en with the words
He yielded up the ghost, and all the folk
Bewailed him bitterly. The king of kings
Was all astound and poured down tears of blood.
"Mihrán Sitád," he told the Íránians,
"Retained this story in his memory,
And after having told it to us died,
Committing his accepted soul to God,
And God be thanked that this old man hath uttered
Words of such import. Had I fetched him hither
But one hour later he had died and I
Had seen much grief. Our realm must now be searched
For this man whether he be lord or liege.
Seek indefatigably for this one
Until ye find him."
An illustrious subject,
The master of the horse, named Zád Farrukh,
Who sought in all the pleasure of the Sháh,
Went to him and thus spake: "The indications
Detailed by that famed man before the lords
Can only, otherwise we clutch but wind,
Apply, methinketh, to Bahrám Chúbína,
Son of Gashasp, a noble, well skilled horseman
To whom thou gavest Ardabíl and Barda'

Where he became marchlord with drums and troops."
The Sháh dispatched a speedy cameleer
To bid Bahrám Chúbína dally not
Upon the way but come from Ardabíl
To court alone without the drums and host.[1]
The messenger the joyful news conveyed,
And told him what Mihrán Sitád had said.

§ 7

How Bahrám Chúbína came to Hurmuzd and was made Captain of the Host

C. 1807 Not calling any of his warriors
That world-aspirant hurried off from Barda',
And when he came the Sháh accorded audience.
On seeing the visage of the king of kings
The veteran much praised that noble one,
Who at first sight grew favourably disposed,
Perceived the marks named by Mihrán Sitád
In him, smiled and grew blithe of countenance,
Received him well and lodged him splendidly.
When sombre night flung off its musky veil,
And Sol displayed its face, the marchlord came
To court, and all the chiefs made way for him.
The world-lord summoned him and made him sit
Among the magnates, told him how Írán
Was placed and what Mihrán Sitád had said,
Then asked about king Sáwa, saying: "Shall I
Make peace or send forth troops?"
The warrior
Replied: "We may not make a peace with him,
For, since he fain would fight, to sue for peace

[1] Reading with P.

Will mean defeat for us; the foe moreover
Will be emboldened if he see thee weak.
To proffer feast in war-time is to make
Contention like submission."
Said Hurmuzd:—
"What is the course then? Shall I seek delay,
Or march to battle?"
He made answer thus:—
"It augureth well if[1] foes behave unjustly.
What said the noble counsellor? 'No match
For justice is injustice.' Therefore seek
To fight with this injurious enemy,
For fire and water will not flow together;[2]
But if thou actest otherwise herein
The ancient sky will choose another Sháh.
If we put forth the might of our own arms,
And what we have of prowess, holy God
Will neither blame us nor shall we be shamed
Before the heroes when the truth is sought.
Shall we be weak enough to shun the combat
While yet ten thousand of Íránians
Remain unslain? What will malignants say
To thee if thou flee foes without a fight?
When I pour arrows down on them and make C 1808
My bow as 'twere a cloud in Spring, and when
A hundred thousand swords and iron maces
Are brandished in the ranks of war, and yet
We gain no glimpse of triumph but despair
Of fortune in our hearts, then we will be
Our foemen's to command for we shall have
No body, life or spirit, left to us;
But let us struggle till we see if heaven
Will bring us gain or loss."
On hearing this
The Sháh smiled and the court grew bright, and then

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id.*

The veterans left the presence with full hearts,
And talking with Bahrám Chúbína said :—
" Henceforth if he shall speak with thee be modest,
Because king Sáwa hath such mighty powers
That e'en to ants and gnats they bar the way !
Who after what thou said'st before the Sháh
Will venture to be captain of the host ? "
He answered them : " Illustrious warriors !
I will be captain by our great Sháh's leave."
Informants on the watch went to the world's king,
And told him of this speech and ten times more.
The king of kings rejoiced thereat and ceased
To fear those troops. He gave Bahrám Chúbína
The chief command, exalting to the clouds
His valiant head. All warriors that sought
For glory hailed him captain of the host.
He came before the king with girded loins,
Equipped for war, and said : " By thy permission
I will call o'er the roll and ascertain
Who are the fighting-men and who are slack
In quest of fame."
The Sháh said : " Thou art leader
Responsible for good and ill alike."
The chief went to the royal muster-ground,
And bade the troops parade. He made his choice
Of those that were the crown among the chiefs,
And entered on the roll twelve thousand names
Of mail-clad warriors on barded steeds.
All those enrolled were forty years of age ;
The older and the younger were rejected.
Bahrám Chúbína held the chief command
As one renowned in war. He made one hight
Yalán-sína—a man of vengeful breast—[1]
Chief of the warrior-chiefs to go before

[1] Sína.

The ranks on battle-days, to wheel his steed,
Proclaim his ancestry, and set on strife
The warriors' thoughts. One named Ízid Gashasp,[1]
Who drew not rein at fire, he bade to guard
The baggage-train and dress the wings. He made
Kandá Gashasp, who as he rode would grasp
The tails of lions, leader of the rear.
Then to the troops thus spake the paladin :—
" Ye ardent chiefs ! if ye would have God's help
In lightening your dark task inflict not harm
Or loss and never gird your loins for ill,
And when at night the clarion-call ariseth
Leap up and one and all so spur your steeds
That in the dark more tumult may arise.
Through strength derived from resting horse and man
Will take no thought about the day of battle."
When tidings reached the king of how the wise
Bahrám Chúbína acted he rejoiced
Both at the words and deeds ; he oped his treasures,
And paid the troops. He gave Bahrám withal[2]
Arms from the magazines which he unlocked,
Assembled in the city all the herds
Of battle-steeds that were at large, and ordered
The captain of the host to ask of him
Whate'er was needful, saying : " Thou hast seen
All sorts of warfare and hast heard what stores
King Sáwa, that illustrious man, possesseth
Of treasure, arms, and troops, and how his Turks
Set earth a-quaking on the day of battle.
Now thou hast chosen out of all the host
Twelve thousand men in mail on barded steeds !
I know not how such numbers can avail
Upon the day of fight, and thou hast chosen,
Instead of youthful sworders, men of forty ! "

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id.*

The chief replied: "Well-starred and courteous
A Sháh!
'The saying of the mighty thou hast heard,
Who ruled the world as Sháhs in days of old:—
'When conquering fortune is assisting thee
'Tis well though little other aid there be,'
And by this token I will prove it too
If now the Sháh, whose word is law, will hear:
When Kai Káús was in Hámávarán,
In bonds with countless others, Rustam chose
Twelve thousand fit and warlike cavaliers,
And freed him, and no harm befell the chiefs.
C. 1810 Again, Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, the head
Of noble and illustrious men, employed
Twelve thousand men in mail on barded steeds
To execute revenge for Siyáwush.
Again, the glorious Asfandiyár
Was leader of twelve thousand warriors
Against Arjásp and by a stratagem
Made dust fly out of host and hold alike.[1]
When any host exceedeth this amount
It is too large for dash and enterprise;
The leader that conducteth countless troops
To battle is discomfited in fight.
As for thy saying: 'Men of forty years
Are not so eager for the fight as youths,'
The man of forty hath experience,
And excellence in point of hardihood,
Remembering the seal of bread and salt
O'er which the heaven hath so oft revolved.
In dread too of the voice of calumny,
And loss of fame, he shirketh not the fight.
Moreover wife and child and family

[1] In the accounts given in the poem of these instances the limitation to twelve thousand is recorded only in the case of Asfandiyár Later on Gurdya, Bahrám Chúbína's sister, repeats the statement

Irk not the feelings of a veteran.
A young man is deceived by outward show,
And when he should have patience he is rash.
He hath not wife or child or tilth; to him
The worthy and the worthless seem alike.
Since wisdom resteth on experience
He seeth not the import of affairs.
If he is conqueror in any fight
He laugheth with delight and wasteth time;
But if one chanceth to prevail against him
His foes see nothing but his back."
On hearing,
The king grew fresh as roses in the Spring,
Then said: "Depart, put on thy mail, and go
Forth from the palace to the riding-ground."
The general left the king, called for his girdle,
Mail-coat, and Rúman helm, had his steed barded,
And set the coiled up lasso in its straps.
The world-lord with his arrows, clubs, and balls
Went out upon the ground with his wazírs.
The general approached with mace and mail
And Rúman casque. The world-lord, seeing, blessed him.
He kissed the ground and showed a liege's prowess
With mace, at polo, and in archery.
The king then had the banner brought that bare
A violet dragon for device, the banner
That had been borne in fight in front of Rustam,[1]
Grasped it immediately and, handling it
With smiles, bestowed it on Bahrám Chúbína,
Invoking many a blessing on him, saying:—
"My predecessors used to hail as chief
Of all our race the man whose name was Rustam, C. 181
The paladin, the conqueror of the world,
Triumphant and of ardent soul. Thou holdest

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p 154.

His flag. Mayst thou be conquering and loyal!
Thou art a second Rustam to my thoughts
In courage, prowess, and obedience."
The paladin saluted him and said:—
"Be always conquering and bright of mind."
With peerless Rustam's banner in his hand
The general left the plain for his abode,
And on their several ways the Sháh's troops went.
The captain of the host was well content.

§ 8

How Bahrám Chúbína went with twelve thousand Cavaliers to fight King Sáwa

When morning dawned upon the mountain-tops,
And when the glittering Shield of Gold appeared,
The chief came to the palace of the Sháh,
And prostrate in the presence of the troops
Spake thus:' "I was a man that had no claims,
But by thy Grace became the age's crown.
I have to beg one favour of the king—
That he will send with me a trusty man
To make a note of those that fight and lay
A hostile head beneath the dust and thus
Achieve their end."
Hurmuzd replied: "Mihrán,
The old, is great,[1] observant, eloquent,"
Bade him accompany the chief and quit
The palace for the combat. From the province
Of Taisafún the army marched, their leader
Bahrám Chúbína. 'Twas a prudent, brave,
And dauntless host, and wary as a lion

[1] Reading with P.

Was their commander. When he had departed
The monarch of the world himself withdrew,
Was privy with his archimage[1] and said :—
" Upon the day of fight this man will laugh
For joy ! What will result ? Let us confer."
The archmage answered : " Mayst thou live for ever,
For thou deservest everlasting life.
This paladin possessed of such a mien
And stature, ready speech and ardent soul,
Must needs be happy and victorious,
And cause a barren world to bring forth fruit ;
But yet I fear me that he will revolt
At last against his sovereign and patron
Because he talked with such audacity,
And spake so like a lion to the Sháh."
Hurmuzd made answer to him : " Mingle not C. 181
Bane with the antidote, misdoubting one !
If he shall prove victorious o'er king Sáwa
I ought to yield to him the crown and throne.
May he be ever as now for he will make
A glorious sovereign ! "
The archimage,
On hearing what the Sháh said, paled and bit
His lips. The king himself moreover kept
The thing in mind, and in a while selected
A courtier as his confidant to learn
How matters stood, and said : " Pursue in haste
The paladin and tell what thou observest."
The agent followed swiftly, known to none.
He was a guide, in omens skilled, and used
To utter his prognostics to the Sháh.
Bahrám Chúbína, quitting Taisafún,
Led on the host himself. In front appeared,
And far from him, one that purveyed sheep's heads,

[1] Ayín Gashasp.

Which rose above a clean draped wicker tray.
The chieftain urged his horse and, strange to tell!
Pierced one head with his spear, rode off with it
Aloft, then flung it where he would and drew
An omen from the matter, saying thus:—
"Just so will I cut off king Sáwa's head,
Will throw it in his army's line of march,
And shatter all his host."
The emissary,
Sent by the Sháh, drew too his presage, saying:—
"This favourite of fortune will attain,
His labours done, the crown at last for when
His end is gained he will grow troublesome,
And will rebel."
He went and told the king,
Who wedded grief and anguish for the words
Were worse than death to him. He withered up,
That verdant leaf grew sere. He called to him
A young man of the court and sent him off
In all haste to the paladin and said:—
"Depart and tell the captain of the host:—
'For this night tarry where thou art. At dawn
Turn back and come to me for I would clear
The court of strangers and advise thee further,
For thoughts of profit have occurred to me.'"
The messenger came to the paladin,
And told what he had heard. Bahrám Chúbína
Made this reply: "Men do not, O wise Sháh!
Recall an army on the march; such action
Would be ill-omened and would reinforce
C. 1813 The foe. I will return when I have conquered,
And then thy kingdom and thy diadem
Shall shine."
The messenger returned and gave
The warrior's answer to the Sháh and he
Was satisfied. That envoy's toil was vain.

At dawn the captain of the host led on
The troops and called God's blessing down on them.
He marched to Khúzistán :[1] the troops harmed none.
There came a woman with a sack of hay
Among them and a horseman purchased it,
Refused to pay her, and made off. She came
Lamenting to Bahrám Chúbína, saying :—
" I have some hay concealed. I brought a sack's worth,
And passed before thy troops. A cavalier,
With iron helm, hath taken it from me
While on the march ! "
Forthwith they sought the man,
And haled him quickly to the general.
The brave Bahrám Chúbína said to him :—
" So thou didst think this fault a little one ! "
They smashed his head and hands and feet. The chief
Had him dragged forth before the camp-enclosure,
Then clave him through the middle with the sword,
And filled the heart of the unjust with terror.
Then from the camp-enclosure 'twas proclaimed :—
" O ye illustrious men and of good will !
The stealer of a stalk of hay shall find
No intercessor. I will cleave his waist
Asunder with the sword. Let all procure
By payment what they need."
Bahrám Chúbína
Led on his host well ordered and they marched
Toward Dámaghán.
The Sháh was full of care

[1] This seems to imply that he started from Párs. Later on he says (p. 112) that he started from Baghdád, *i.e.*, from the neighbourhood of Taisafún (Ctesiphon) where the troops were stationed (p. 90). Baghdád itself was not then in existence.

At Sáwa's army, elephants, and treasures,[1]
And spake thus to Kharrád, son of Barzín,
One night at rise of moon: "Prepare to go
To our opponent and be diligent,
Not slumbering but speeding. Mark his troops
As to their numbers and their quality,
And who their leader and their warriors are."
He ordered that a letter of advice
Should be indited to the hostile king,
And countless royal presents sent therewith.
He said thus to the messenger: "Proceed
Toward Harát and if a host appear
Know it for that of brave Bahrám Chúbína,
C. 1814 And not another. Then approach and tell him
What thou hast heard from me, thus saying: 'I
By good news and by blandishment will spread
A fresh snare for the foe. Thy secret purpose
Must be kept hidden. If he hear thy name
And fame . . . ! I will induce him to thy net,
Employing fair and lengthy parleyings.'"
Kharrád, son of Barzín, prepared to start,
Came as the Sháh had bidden and delivered
The message when he saw Bahrám Chúbína.
He went thence to king Sáwa, to the place
Where were the elephants and troops and treasure,
And, having audience, did him reverence,
Delivering the message privily,
And adding to it every argument
To draw the army to Harát. When Sáwa
Arrived and camped upon the river-bank
The outposts went forth, marked Bahrám Chúbína
With all his troops and, seeing that stout host,
Returned in all haste to king Sáwa, saying:—
"A force hath reached the desert of Harát,
Commanded by a famous chief."

[1] Two couplets omitted.

King Sáwa,
Concerned what course to take, called from the tent
The envoy of the Sháh and rated him :—
" Didst not foresee, thou crafty Áhriman !
A fall from thy high station ? From the court
Of that vile Sháh thou camest to ensnare me,
And leadest forth to war a Persian host,
Encamping on the meadows of Harát ! "
Kharrád, son of Barzín, replied : " The force
Confronting thine is small. Take not its coming
In ill part ; 'tis some marchlord passing by,
Or some chief seeking shelter with the Sháh,
Or merchants who have brought an escort with them
To guard them on their way. Who would confront thee,
Though mountains turn to seas, to seek revenge ?
I will send one to find out who or what
This traveller is."[1]
His words rejoiced king Sáwa,
Who said : " In truth that is the course to take.
We will dispatch to learn if friend or foe
They be."
Now as Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Withdrew to his own tent the night o'ertopped
The mountains, and he gat in readiness
To flee the wrath to come. At dead of night
The monarch bade Faghfúr go with an escort
Forth from his father to the paladin. C.
That understanding youth went forth and reaching
The Íránian host dispatched a cavalier
To ask : " Who are these warriors and wherefore
March they ? "
The horseman went like dust and cried :—
" Who are your chiefs and leader, noble sirs !

[1] This couplet inserted from P.

And champion in the combat, for Faghfúr,
Who is king Sáwa's heart and eyes, would see him
Without attendance ? "
Came a warrior
Forth from the troops and told Bahrám Chúbína
What he had heard. The captain of the host
Went from the tent-enclosure and his flag
Was reared resplendent over him. Faghfúr
Of Chín, perceiving, hasted and made sweat
His prancing steed, and questioned : " Whence art thou ?
Why haltest here ? I hear that thou hast fled
From Párs as one who being wronged shed blood."
Bahrám Chúbína answered : " God forbid
That I should purpose vengeance on the Sháh.
I came forth from Baghdád with this array
To fight by his command, for when the news
About king Sáwa and his host reached court
He said to me : ' Go forth and hold the road
With arrows, maces, spears, and scimitars.' "
On hearing this Faghfúr sped back to tell
His sire how matters stood. Being thus apprised,
And grown suspicious, Sáwa sought forthwith
The envoy of the Sháh but some one said :—
" Kharrád, son of Barzín, hath fled with tears
Of blood at having come."
" How could that foe,"
Said Sáwa to his son, " get clear away
At night from such a countless host as this,
And wherefore have the guards been so remiss ? "

§ 9

How King Sáwa sent a Message to Bahrám Chúbína and his Answer

He sent thereafter to Bahrám Chúbína
A fluent elder, saying : " Go and tell
This Persian : ' Mar not out of foolishness
Thy reputation here, for surely thou
Must know this much—that that great king of thine
Would have thy life and therefore sendeth thee
To fight with one nigh peerless in the world.
He said to thee : " Go forth and seize their road,"
And thou unwillingly didst hear the words,
For with my troops and elephants I trample
A mountain if it cometh in my path.' "
Bahrám Chúbína, hearing what he said,
Smiled at that hasty traffiicking and answered :—
" If my death be the world-lord's hidden purpose
My duty is to do what pleaseth him
Though earth shall take the measure of my height."
The messenger, returning to king Sáwa,
Reported what he heard the warrior say,
And Sáwa said : " Go, tell the Persian thus :—
' Why talk so much ? Why art thou in the field ?
Ask what thou wilt of me.' "
The messenger
Went to Bahrám Chúbína and thus spake :—
" Reveal thy purposes because my king
Is favoured by the stars and he would have
Thee do his will."
Bahrám Chúbína said :—
" Say : ' If thou wouldst do right act openly.
If friendship with the monarch of the world
Be secretly thy wish I will receive thee

On this march as a guest and pledge myself
To grant thee thy desires. I will bestow
On thy troops gold and silver, crowns and girdles
Upon those worthy of them. I will send
The Sháh a cavalier that he may come
Half way to meet thee and, as equals do,
Provide thee provand. If thou art a friend
He will make much of thee, but if thou hast
Come hither for contention, to the deep,
And to the crocodile's maw, then thou shalt quit
The desert of Harát in such a plight
That all chiefs shall bewail thee. May a ditch
Be at thy door on thy return, may blast
Pursue and rain companion thee, for naught
But ill luck brought thee hither, being fain
That ill befall thy head.' "

The messenger
Turned back, came like the wind, and gave the answer
Of that aspirant. Hearing it king Sáwa
Was wroth with that stone-hearted opposite;
His heart was straitened at that chill response,
And thinking of it filled his cheeks with shame.
He said: " Go, take yon human dív this message :—
' Thou hast no fame in war; I would not slay thee.
Such as thy Sháh are servants at my court,
And set by thee my meanest slaves are chiefs.
If thou shalt ask for quarter at my hands
I will exalt thy head above the throng,
Thou shalt have many gifts from me, and all
Thy troops shall be enriched; but one aspiring
C. 1817 To valour looketh not to futile words
And deeds of madness.' "

That proud monarch's envoy
Came to Bahrám Chúbína and delivered
Those biting words which yet were what he wished.

On hearing he informed the man : " Thy lord
Must hear my answer : ' If I am so mean
That meanness covereth my head with shame,
The king of kings for his part was ashamed
To come out in his wrath to fight with thee.
'Tis through my meanness that I have marched forth
With troops to wreck the kindred of king Sáwa.
I will cut off his head and carry it
Before the Sháh ; it is not worth my while
To stick it on my spear upon the road.
For me to grant thee quarter would demean thee,
But I will fall upon thee in my meanness.
Thou shalt not see me save upon the day
Of fight and followed by my dark-blue flag,
Because if thou upon that dragon glance
'Tis death ; thy head and helm shall sheath my lance.' "

§ 10

How King Sáwa and Bahrám Chúbína set the Battle in Array against each other

King Sáwa's envoy, when he heard those words
Of stern defiance, showed his back. He went,
And told what he had heard and seen whereat
The Turks' king's head breathed vengeance and he bade
To bring the tymbals forth and to lead out
The elephants high-crested to the plain.
The realm was darkened with the dust of hoofs,
The trumpets blared. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
Heard that a host had come, and plains and vales
Were yellow, red, and black, he bade his men

Mount and rode forth in armour, mace in hand.
Behind him lay Harát, before a host
Of swordsmen. He drew up the wings. The troops
Were as one heart and body. Thou hadst said :—
" The world is all cuirass ; a star is shining
On every spear."
King Sáwa viewed that field,
Its order and array, perceived that while
Bahrám Chúbína rested on Harát
His own position was both cramped and ill,
And thus addressed his horsemen, veterans,
And intimates : " A lying messenger
Came from the Persian leader of the folk,
C. 1818 And tarried till yon host had seized the city,
And left me nothing but a brake of thorns ! "
He ranked his army in that straitened place,
The air was indigo and earth was hidden.
Upon the right were two score thousand horsemen,
Who used two-headed darts and wielded spears,
With two score thousand on the left withal,
All archers and engrossers of the fray,
While two score thousand warriors formed the centre,
Who carried spear or sword, and two score thousand
He stationed in the rear ; but many troops
Were left unused for he was cramped for room.
They placed the elephants before the line,
As 'twere a wall, and barred the way in front.
Thus circumstanced king Sáwa's heart was grieved
By reason of this straitening of his host.
Thou wouldst have said : " His fortune hath foreshown
To him the presage of an empty throne."

§ 11

How King Sáwa sent another Message to Bahrám Chúbína and his Answer

Then from the champaign of Harát he sent
Again a warrior of eloquence,
A man all guileful, to Bahrám Chúbína
To say: "Thou hast not wedded heaven's own fortune:
Wilt thou not hear advice and such appeals?
Make friends with wisdom, open thine heart's eyes.
Thou hast found two whose equals in the world
Have never yet been born of royal race;
They shine like suns in heaven and all the year
Are clad in mail, they are so valorous.
One is myself, the lawful king of earth;
The other is my high-born son Parmúda.
My troops are more than leaves upon the trees,
Had some the skill to number them. If I
Should reckon up my men and elephants
Thou wouldest smile at rain-drops from Spring-clouds.
There are tents, tent-enclosures, implements
Of war beyond conception; shouldst thou count
Withal my steeds and men, my wastes and mountains,
Thou wouldest marvel. All the other kings,
If worthy of such honour, are my lieges.
If seas had life[1] and mountains feet to run
They could not carry off my treasury,
Arms, implements, and fruitage of my toils.
The glorious Great, save for thy Persian lord,
Throughout the world acclaim me as their king,
And thy life also lieth in my hands
As well I know. If I lead on my troops C. 1819

[1] "Si l'eau de la mer inondait *la terre*." Mohl.

They will not let pass ant and gnat. Withal
I have a thousand barded elephants
Whose scent affrayeth horsemen. Who will come
To face me from Írán and from Túrán,
And by such coming aggravate my toils ?
From this place to the gates of Taisafún
My powers extend, will stay, be amplified.
Some one hath duped thee, O mine enemy !
Some one, perchance a madman, for thou lov'st not
Thyself or else dissemblest since thine eye
Discriminateth not 'twixt good and ill.
How should such foolishness become the wise ?
Cease this contention and present thyself
Before me, and I will not keep thee waiting.
But give to thee high office and my daughter
With worship and a crown. Thou shalt receive
A lordship at our hands and suffer not
The ills that subjects bear, and when the Sháh
Shall have been slain in fight, and when his crown
And throne are mine, on thee will I bestow them
With all his treasure, diadem, and goods.
Thence will I march on Rúm and then the troops,
The treasure and the land, will all be thine.
Thus have I spoken for thou pleasest me,
And wisely hast thou dealt with these affairs.
Thou knowest the conduct and the art of war ;
Thy sire and grandsire held command in chief,
So what I say is not mere compliment
But pity for thy sake who hast arrayed
Thy puny force to fight with me to-day.
Thou shalt receive no further messages
If thou art retrograde to my desires."

The envoy spake, the chieftain heard and made
A grim response : " O man of evil mark !
Among the magnates and the eminent
None reverenceth a monarch profitless

And wordy. From thy talk from first to last
I have perceived thee confident in speech.
The man whose day is ending seeketh prowess
In words not deeds. I heard thy feckless parle,
Yet my heart quaileth not for fear of harm.
As for thy saying: 'I will slay the Sháh,
And give thee realm and throne,' a chief once said:—
'If thou shalt drive a mendicant away
From any town is he not sure to say:—
"There I was lord; the rest were 'neath my sway?"'
In our affair there will not intervene
Two days of sunlight ere I shall dispatch
By this same token to the Sháh thy head C. 1820
Upon a spear. Again, for what thou saidest
About thy daughter, treasure, troops, and realm,
I should have thanked thee once and should have called thee
A monarch of discernment thus to give,
Without designs upon the Íránian throne,
Thy daughter to me and with her dispatch
A gorgeous throne and goods. Then thou hadst had
Myself for friend within Írán, not fought
Against its warriors; but now my lance
Is at thine ear and with my sword will I
Behead thee, and when thou hast gone thy pate,
Thy crown and treasure, are mine, and mine withal
Thy daughter and the fruit of thy past toils.
Thou saidest further: 'I have crowns and thrones
With elephants and horsemen past compute.'
A chief said, battling in the ranks of war:—
'The longer water is denied a hound
The greater will his eagerness be found.'
The dívs seduced thy heart so that thou camest
To fight the Sháh and thou wilt writhe beneath
God's chastisement and for thine evil deeds.
Again, thou sayest: 'I have among my lieges

Great men possessed of crowns and coronets,
And all the cities of the world are mine.'
The age herein is witness to thy words.
To cities roads are open, lord and liege
May tramp the marches, but if thou shalt knock
Upon a city-gate thy kingship there
Will prove a brake of thorns. As for thine offer
To pardon me—a craven in thine eyes—
Thou wilt forgive me not when thou hast seen
My spear and shalt not have me as a liege.
As for thy troops, desires, and policy,
Thy mighty elephants and throne, what time
I rank mine army I account them naught,
And care no jot for all thy warriors.
Though thou art king thou utterest such lies
That thou wilt gain no glory in the world.
For what thou saidest: 'I approve of thee,
And would select thee as my general,'
What I approve, since reaching man's estate,
Is the approval of the king of kings.
I have allowed the king three days and when
The Glory of the Lustre of the world
Shall show, the army in Írán shall see
Thy head upon a spear before the Sháh."
The messenger returned with cheeks like gall,
And fruitful, youthful fortune waxen old.
He told king Sáwa what the answer was,
And at his words the monarch's visage loured.
1821 Said the Faghfúr: "What feebleness is this?
Yon little host should rather ask our tears."
Then to the entry of the camp-enclosure
He went and bade bring forth the Indian bells,
Gongs, mighty elephants, and kettledrums,
And make heaven ebon-hued. While that famed youth
Prepared to fight the haughty monarch mused;

Then to his son : " Thou chosen of the troops !
Refrain from fighting till to-morrow morn."
The troops withdrew on both sides and the watch
Went from the tent-enclosures. In both hosts
They kindled fires, and rumour filled all coasts.

§ 12

How Bahrám Chúbína had a Dream in the Night, how he gave Battle the next Morning, and how King Sáwa was slain

Now when Bahrám Chúbína was alone
Within his tent he sent and[1] called the Íránians,
And with his troops took counsel for the fight
Till dark, till Turk and Persian both reposed,
And he that would might have the world for naught;
But brave Bahrám Chúbína still mused war,
While sleeping in his tent. That Lion dreamed
That in the fight the Turks proved valorous,
While his own troops were routed and himself,
Debarred more strife, unsuccoured and afoot,
Asked quarter of the heroes of the foe.
He woke in grief, his noble head sore troubled,
With pain and sorrow passed the hours of dark,
Arrayed himself but told to none his dream.
Just then arrived Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Who had escaped king Sáwa, and spake thus :—[2]
" What confidence is this ? Behold the snare
Of Áhriman and give not to the winds
Ír ánian lives but treat these nobles fairly ;
For valour's sake take pity on thy life,
For nevermore will such a task confront thee."
" Thy city," said Bahrám Chúbína, " yieldeth
No valour save thy sample, for all there

[1] Reading with P. [2] Two couplets omitted.

Sell fish from Summer-time[1] till snow-storms come.
Thy work is net and pond; thou art no man
For spear and mace and arrow. When the sun
Shall rise o'er yon dark mountains I will show thee
How kings and soldiers fight. Thou shalt behold
Those elephants and troops of his and all
His fair presentment prostrate in the dust."

When Sol arose from Leo, and the world
Grew white as Rúman's face, the trumpet sounded,
The battle-cry went up, earth shook beneath
The horses' hoofs, Bahrám Chúbína ranged
His host and mounting grasped a war-worn mace.
They furnished for the right three thousand men,
All-cavaliers mail-clad and veteran.
He sent an equal number to the left,
All valiant, vengeful horsemen. On the right
Ízid Gashasp, who rode through rivers, led,
And on the left Kandá Gashasp who worshipped
The glorious Ázargashasp. Yalán-sína
Supported them with troops as a reserve.
Hamdán Gashasp was posted in the van,
A man whose horse-shoes set the reeds ablaze.
With each there were three thousand warriors,
All fighting cavaliers with hearts of stone.
It was proclaimed: "Ye chiefs with golden crowns!
Whoe'er, though faced by lion or by pard,
Shall flee the fight, by God! I will behead him,
And burn his useless carcase in the fire."

On each side of the host there was a road
Whereby he[2] might retreat. On each he raised
A bank ten cubits high. His own position
Was at the centre, and to him there came
The archscribe[3] of the king of kings and said:—
"This is beyond thy power and thus to mock
At fortune cannot prosper. Of the troops

[1] Tamúz. [2] Bahrám Chúbína. [3] Mihrán. See p. 106.

Upon this field we are the one white hair,
Note, on a sable ox! No soil or stream,
Or hill is visible, so many are
The swordsmen of Túrán!"

Bahrám Chúbína
Cried at him furiously: "Thou recreant wretch!
Thy business is with inkstand and with paper:
Who bade thee take the number of the host?"

The scribe approached Kharrád, son of Barzín,
And said: "Bahrám Chúbína and the Dív
Are mates!"

Those scribes then sought a way to flee
That they might not behold that day of doom.
They feared both king of kings and arrow-rain,
And bit their lips. On one side and afar
From those Túránian horsemen they beheld
A height precipitous and thither fared
A-tremble, saying: "We must watch the host." C. 1
They gazed upon Bahrám Chúbína's helm
To see how he would fight when roused. That hero,
When he had drawn his host up, left the field,
And with loud outcries, prostrate in the dust
Before his God, exclaimed: "O righteous Judge!
If in thy sight this conflict is unjust,
And thou preferrest Sáwa to myself,
Give my heart rest in battle and to Sáwa
His whole desire upon the Íránians;
But if I undergo this toil for Thee,
And risk my head in fight, make jubilant
Me and my troops and by our combating
The world all prosperous."

Still praying loudly
He mounted with his ox-head mace in hand.[1]

King Sáwa thus addressed his host: "Begin
Your incantations that the Íránians

[1] Two couplets omitted.

May quail in heart and eye, and no disaster
Befall yourselves."
Then all the sorcerers
Began their spells and hurled fire through the air.[1]
Rose blast and murky cloud whence arrows showered
Upon the Íránians. Bahrám Chúbína
Exclaimed: "Chiefs, magnates of Írán, and heroes!
Shut ye your eyes to all these magic arts,
And come all wroth to fight, for this is naught
But trick and sorcery, and they that use
Such means demand our tears."
The Íránians shouted,
And girt their loins for bloodshed, while king Sáwa
Surveyed the field, saw that the foe recoiled not
At those black arts but came on all the more,
Led by Bahrám Chúbína, and assailed,
Like wolf a lamb, their left, brake it and charged,
Like one bemused, Bahrám Chúbína's centre,
Who thence saw how his soldiers fled the foe,
Came, with his spear unhorsed three warriors,
And dashed them headlong to the ground, exclaiming:—
A. 1824 "This is the way to fight, this is the mode,
And how to do it! Are ye not ashamed
Before the Lord of earth, the glorious chiefs,
And nobles?"
Then he made toward the right,
As 'twere a lusty lion famishing,
And brake the mighty force opposed to him,
So that their leader's banner disappeared.
Thence he departed to his army's centre,
To where the leader was among the troops,
And said to him: "Perdition take it all!
If this fight last the host will be dispersed!
Look out in what direction to retreat."

[1] Three couplets omitted.

They went and sought; there was not any way
Because the proper road was mounded over.
Then to that leader said Bahrám Chúbína:—
"There is an iron wall in front of us,
And only he that knoweth how to make
A breach therein can gain the other side,
Safe-guard himself and carry to Írán,
And to the monarch of the brave, his life.
All put your whole heart in it, shield your heads,
And ply your swords. If sleepless fortune help us
It will repay our toils with thrones and crowns.
Let none despair of God or ye may see
Your white day turn to gloom."
King Sáwá thus
Harangued his chiefs: "Advance the elephants
Before the host, attack in force, and make
The world both dark and narrow to our foes."
Bahrám Chúbína from afar beheld
The elephants, was grieved, unsheathed his sword,
And thus addressed his captains: "Warriors famed!
String up your bows of Chách and helm ye all.
Now by the life and head of this world's king,
The chosen of the lords and crown of chiefs,
Let every one that hath artillery
String up his bow perforce and let him fix
His arrows, fashioned out of triple wood,
Whose points are keen for blood, upon the trunks
Of yonder elephants, then out with mace,
On to the fight, and slay your enemies."
The chieftain strung his bow and set a casque
Of steel upon his head. He made his bow
As 'twere a cloud in Spring and showered arrows
Before the host: the soldiers followed him.
The stars were dimmed by pointed, feathered shafts.
They pierced the elephants' trunks, and dale and
plain

Grew like a pool of blood. The elephants
Turned from the smart and fled the battlefield.
Now when the elephants were smitten thus
They trampled their own troops. The Íránian host
Came on behind and earth grew like the Nile.
All was confusion; many died; ill fortune
Had all its will of them. There was a spot,
A pleasant place, behind that stricken host
Where, on a golden throne, fierce Sáwa sat.
He saw his army like an iron mountain
In flight with heads all dust and souls all gloom,
While from behind enormous elephants
Beyond control were trampling down the troops.
He wept for wherefore should his army flee?
And mounting his bay Arab fled himself
In dire dismay. Bahrám Chúbína came
Pursuing like an elephant run mad,
A lasso on his arm, a bow in hand,
And shouted to his troops: "Illustrious men!
Ill fate hath marked them out.[1] Rain swords on them,
And quit you in the fight like cavaliers."
He reached the hill where erst king Sáwa sat
Crowned on a throne of gold, beheld him thence
Upon his mighty lion of an Arab,
And sped forth like a tiger o'er the waste.
He chose an arrow with a glittering point,
Plumed with four eagle's feathers, took in hand
His bow of Chách and laid the deer-hide thong
Within his thumb-stall, straightened his left arm,
And bent his right. The bow twanged as he loosed
The shaft and pierced king Sáwa's spine, who came
Down headlong to the dust; the ground beneath him
Was soaked with blood. Of that great host the king
Bediademed was gone, gone golden throne,

[1] Couplet omitted.

And golden crown.
Such deeds the turning sky
Doth, showing neither love nor enmity.
Joy not in lofty throne and greatly fear,
What time thou feel'st secure, disaster near.
The brave Bahrám Chúbína came and dragged
The corpse face downward wallowing in the dust,
And severed that crowned head while none of all
Its kindred came anear. When the Turks found
Their king the corpse lay headless on the road.
All wailed ; cries filled the earth ; the air resounded,
And he that was the son of Sáwa said :—
" This is God's doing, for unsleeping fortune
Is with Bahrám Chúbína."
Multitudes C 182(
Died in the strait defiles. The elephants
Trod many under foot ; not one in ten
Of all that host escaped. They perished crushed
Beneath the elephants or were beheaded
Upon the battlefield, and when nine hours
Of that ill day had gone the Íránians saw
No enemy alive save prisoners bound,
Their souls and bodies pierced with grief and shafts.
The route was strewn with bards and helms whose heads
Were suffocate therein,[1] with Indian swords,
With arrows and with bows dropped by the foe
On all sides. Earth was like a sea of blood
With slain, and everywhere were saddled steeds.
Bahrám Chúbína went his rounds to learn
Who had been slain upon the Íránian side ;
Then said he to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
" Give me thine aid to-day and ascertain
What slain Íránians it is ours to mourn."

[1] " de casques qui n'avaient pas garanti ce jour-là les têtes contre la mort." Mohl.

He went through all the tents. One man of worship
Was missing in the host—a chieftain named
Bahrám, who was the son of Siyáwush,
A valiant prince, a magnate of Írán,
Descended from a captain of the host.
Like one insane Kharrád went forth in quest
Of traces of him, moving many a form
Of slain and wounded men but found no sign.
The captain of the host was grieved thereat,
And cried: "Alas! thou prudent warrior!"
Howbeit the man himself appeared anon,
A key to that locked door, and with a Turk
Red-haired, cat-eyed, and, as thou wouldst have said,
With heart all wrung with rage. Bahrám Chúbína
Cried when he saw Bahrám: "Ne'er be it thine
To wed the dust!" then of that foul Turk asked:—
"O thou hell-visaged, banned from Paradise!
What man art thou? What is thy name and birth,
For she who bare thee will have cause to weep?"
He said: "A warlock I. I meddle not
With manhood and with manliness but help
My chief in battle when things reach a pass,
And make him dream of what will hearten him.
I gave thee that ill dream last night to bring
Ill on thy head, but I must seek for means
More potent[1] for my sorcery hath failed,
Ill-fortune hath recoiled upon my head,
And all my toil is wedded to the wind.
C. c 1827 If I get quarter from thee thou hast gained
An all-accomplished friend."
On hearing this
Bahrám Chúbína mused, his heart was troubled,
His visage wan. Anon he said: "This man
Might prove of service in the stress of fight,"

[1] Reading with P.

But said again : " What did king Sáwa profit
Through this dark-dealing warlock ? All good things
Descend from God on fortune's favourites,"
Then bade cut off his head and robbed of life
His feckless form, which done Bahrám Chúbína
Stood up and said : " O just and upright Judge !
From Thee are greatness, victory, the Glory,
High place, the diadem of king of kings,
Distress and joy. Blest is the warrior
That followeth Thy way."
The archscribe came,
And spake thus : " Valiant Farídún, Bahrám,[1]
And Núshírwán ne'er saw one like to thee,
O lusty paladin ! Possessed art thou
Of lion's courage, counsel, and device.
May no calamity befall thy life.
Through thee the cities of Írán all live,
And all the paladins are but thy slaves.
Through thee the exalted throne hath been exalted,
And every liege escaped mishap. Thou art
A chieftain and a chieftain's son, and blest
Is she that brought forth such a child, for thou
Art glorious by birth and enterprise,
A king all absolute in Grace and wisdom."
Then the Sháh's paladins and men of might
Dispersed themselves and left the scene of fight.

§ 13

How Bahrám Chúbína sent a Letter announcing his Victory, and the Head of King Sáwa, to Hurmuzd, and his Answer

When night had curled its locks and sent thereby
The eye to sleep, and when the Ebon Veil

[1] Bahrám Gúr probably is meant.

Appeared, the world had respite from the drum.
Meanwhile the wheel of heaven turned apace
In view of darksome night and hurried on
Till from the deep a Golden Vessel rose,
And travail waxed and slumber fined away.
Then came the captain of the host and sent
Some one to bid his comrades good at need :—
" All those that have been slain among the chiefs,
War-cavaliers and captains of the Turks,
Each leader of the folk, behead and set
C. 1828 Behind the heads of all of them that were
Those warriors' diadem a flaunting flag."
He had the captives and the heads collected,
And carried from the field, then called a scribe
And spake at large of that famed, countless host,
The movements and the day's vicissitudes,
The battle and[1] the divers stratagems
That he had used against so vast a foe,
The toils and fighting of the Íránians,
And how no horsemen loosed his belt all day.
When he had written to the Sháh he chose
A courier from the troops, first put upon
A lance the head of Sáwa, then bade bear
The standard of that monarch and the heads
Of those chiefs of Túrán and cavaliers
Of Chín withal upon a dromedary
With all speed to the Sháh. The prisoners,
And whatsoever spoil there was he kept
Intact within Harát until the king
Should make his pleasure known. He sent withal
Experienced horsemen to escort the heads,
And to obtain permission from the Sháh
To march against Parmúda with the host.
The dromedary started, and a guide
Led on the cavaliers who toiled and trod

[1] Reading with P.

The way that quickly they might see the Sháh,
And greet him from the paladin and chiefs.
Upon their side the Turks all destitute
Went horseless, weaponless, and baggageless,
And both their cavaliers and those of Chín
Returned toward Túrán. Now when the news
Came to Parmúda he put off his crown,
While from the Turks arose a grievous wail;
The day was bitter for those chiefs; all heads
Were full of dust, all eyes of tears, and none
Ate or reposed or slumbered. Then he summoned
The warriors and, weeping his heart's blood,
Inquired of them: "Why did that countless host
Prove impotent upon the day of battle?"
A counsellor replied: "We held the foe
To be but weak, but none will see in time
Of action such another cavalier
As brave Bahrám Chúbína. Not one man
For every century of ours had he,
Yet not a youth of his brave troops was wounded,
For God directed him! I might say more,
But thou hast heard enough."
On this Parmúda
Reflected on Bahrám Chúbína's deeds,
Was wroth, turned pale of cheek, and was resolved C. 18
In his distress of heart to battle on.
A hundred thousand of the host remained—
All men of name and ready for the fray.
He led his army plain-ward from the camp
Toward the Jíhún in order to avenge
His noble father on Bahrám Chúbína.
What time the letter of that paladin
Came to the Sháh of ardent soul that world-lord
Was sitting on his throne and holding forth
Concerning his own fortune to the court:—
"Strange! that no tidings of Bahrám Chúbína

Have reached our court! What say ye, and hence-
forth
What shall we do? We must advise thereon."
Now as he spake the words the chamberlain
Came from the gate and brought the king of kings
The glad news: "May the Sháh rejoice for ever!
Bahrám Chúbína hath prevailed o'er Sáwa,
And grown the lustre of the world in fight."
At once the Sháh called in the messenger
Sent by Bahrám Chúbína, seating him
Above the nobles present, and inquired
Concerning host and paladin and those
Illustrious and glorious warriors.
The messenger replied: "Exalted Sháh!
The battle went as thou didst wish. Mayst thou
Live ever happily and joyously,
For thy foe's fortune hath grown old. The heads
Both of king Sáwa and his younger son—
Him whom his father used to call Faghfúr—
Are at thy gate on spears—a sight for all
The city."
Hearing this, the king of kings
Rose, quickly bowed, and standing in God's presence
Said: "O Thou righteous Guide! Thou hast des-
troyed
Our foes, Thou Fashioner of sun and moon!
Great was my wretchedness and my despair
What time the foe came headlong from his throne!
'Twas neither chieftain nor the warrior-host
That did this, but God's goodness to His slave."
Then from the treasures that his sire had left
He had a hundred thousand drachms brought forth,
With one third first gave largess to the poor,
But the more part to his own servitors,
And sent the Fanes of Fire another third,
There to be given over to the priests

To grace the Feasts of New Year and of Sada.
With what was left men sought out and repaired
The ruined sites and caravansaries
In desert places, rendering the roads
Secure and easy. He remitted imposts C. 183c
For four years to the poor, and subject kings,
And then had letters written to each province,
To all the nobles, thus: "Bahrám Chúbína
Hath triumphed o'er the foe and with his sword
Cut off king Sáwa's head."
The Sháh next passed
Two weeks in prayer; then when the world's light rose
He called the envoy of the paladin,
And seated him rejoicing 'mongst the lords;
Then wrote an answer instantly and set
A tree within the garth of majesty,
Sent too a silver throne and golden boots,
And wealth of all sorts. All that lay between
Haitál and the great river[1] he bestowed
On that bold paladin[2] and bade: "Distribute
Spoil ta'en on way and waste among the troops
Except king Sáwa's private property;
Let that be sent to court. This done, make war
Upon Parmúda till he is o'erthrown."
Hurmuzd sent gifts too to the Íránians,
Confirmed by letters written to each city.
They gave the messenger a robe of honour,
And called thereafter for the nobles' steeds.
Bahrám Chúbína, when the envoy came,
Joyed well content and gave the troops much booty,
Except the wealth pertaining to king Sáwa,
The impure of heart; this he dispatched with horsemen,
Famed veterans of his kin, who bore it all

[1] The Oxus. [2] Reading with P.

To court what while the chieftain went his way,
He and his army, to renew the fray.

§ 14

How Bahrám Chúbína fought with Parmúda, Son of King Sáwa, and overcame him, and how Parmúda took Refuge in the Hold of Áwáza

Parmúda, when news came "Bahrám Chúbína
Is seeking for the throne of empire," held
A stronghold hight Áwáza where he joyed
Secure. Therein he stored whate'er he had
Of money, jewels, and of other treasures,
And passing with his army o'er Jíhún
Proceeded proudly to the seat of war.
The hosts drew near for battle, dallying not
Upon the march, and chose a fitting field
Two stages out of Balkh. Between the hosts
Two leagues of plain lay suitable for fight.
C. 1831 The next day brave Bahrám Chúbína went
To view Parmúda's warriors. Parmúda
Looked, saw him, and chose out upon the waste
A steep height and there ranged his host until
The plain was full. Thence he beheld a power,
Whose aspect dazed the desert, and in front
Bahrám Chúbína with his warlike head
Exalted to the sky, was grieved and spake,
Addressing his own troops: "A mighty lion
Is fitting mate for this protagonist!
One cannot see the sum of his array,
But would not care to fight with them. The leader
Is proud and fierce. The dark dust under him
Will turn to blood. At night, when it is dark,
Make we a camisade and banish care

And terror from our hearts."
Now when Parmúda
Returned to camp he canvassed schemes for fight,
And said : " It is an excellence of theirs
That though their troops are few their horse are splendid,
And in the chief degree of warriors,
Well armed, and have for chief Bahrám Chúbína,
A man to whom spears are as thorns and weeds,
With heart elate at conquering king Sáwa,
And drunk with gore ; yet by the Maker's aid
I will require from that huge Mountain-mass
The vengeance owing for my father's blood."
Now when Bahrám Chúbína left Írán
To fight the Turks a reader of the stars
Said : " Stir not on the Wednesday of each week,
Or harm will follow, and thy whole emprise
Prove profitless."
Between the hosts there lay
A garden bordered by the battlefield,
And on the Wednesday of the week at dawn
Bahrám Chúbína thither went and said :—
" We will be glad to-day."
They carried thither
Rich carpetings ; he took wine, meat, and minstrels,
And coming to that garden revelled there.
Now when a watch of darksome night had passed
The outposts brought Parmúda the report :—
" Bahrám Chúbína revelleth in the garden."
The chieftain chose among his warriors
Six thousand cavaliers, all valiant men,
And sent them forth without lights to surround
The garth and take the Iránian chiefs. Now when
Bahrám Chúbína was aware thereof,
And of the plan and purpose of Parmúda,
He thus addressed Yalán-sína : " O chieftain !

Break us a passage through the garden-wall."
Bahrám Chúbína and Ízid Gashasp,
With other warriors, mounted on their steeds.
. 1832 They issued from the breach; who knoweth how
Those warriors issued? At the garden-gate
Arose the clarion-blare: the chieftain charged.
They quickly made a second breach and smote
The foe. Bahrám Chúbína, dart in hand,
And half bemused, assailed them. Few escaped him,
So eager was his drunken head for blood!
As when smiths' hammers meet the steel so rang
The chieftains' blows, and trunkless heads were strewn
Between the garth and king Parmúda's camp.
Now when Bahrám Chúbína had returned
To his own camp he planned a camisade,
And, midnight past, girt up his loins and led
His powers against the foe. Among the Turks
There was no scout that saw him. When he reached
His fighting-ground the blare of trumpets rose.
Roused in the darkness by the clarions' din
The warrior Turks leaped up, and such a shout
As would have split a mighty lion's ears,
Ascended.[1] None knew who another was
Amid the lengthy lances and the gloom.
The Íránians made their swords flash fire and set
The earth and air ablaze. Of those brave Turks
But few were left; the stones were coralline
With blood. Like flying dust the leader fled,
Dry-mouthed and livid-lipped, and thus it was
Till dawn began to breathe and sombre night
Drew in its skirts, and then the Íránian chief
O'ertook the foe and roaring like a lion
Cried to Parmúda: "O thou runaway!
Mix not henceforth with warriors. Thou'rt no man

[1] Couplet omitted.

Of battle but a very child: 'tis fit
Thou suck thy mother's milk."
The king replied:—
"How long, O ravening lion! wilt thou be
Thus keen for bloodshed? Crocodiles in water,
And pards on land, grow satiate with the blood
Of heroes in the fight. Will naught sate thee?
Methinketh that thou art a ravening lion,
Thou who hast stricken off king Sáwa's head—
A man beloved through life by circling heaven—
And slaughtered so his troops that sun and moon
Feel ruth for them, while as for me who am
That valiant king's memorial, know that thou
Hast slain me too with sheer distress. We all
Are mother-born for death and have surrendered C. 1
Our necks thereto since remedy is none.[1]
I flee; thou followest but wilt not take me
Till my time come. If sword in hand I turn
Upon thee either of us may be slain.
Be not so hasty and so hot of head,
For that becometh neither chief nor host.
Now will I fare to mine own tent and there
Seek to retrace my steps. I will indite
A letter to the king in fashion such
As fortune maketh needful, and if he
Accept me and protect me from attack
I will become a bondslave at his court,
And wholly banish lordship from my heart.
Put from thee war and strife. Thou camest to fight;
Now feast in all good will."
Bahrám Chúbína,
On hearing this, turned back, for that curst foe
Had grown so gracious. When the troops had rested,

[1] Couplet omitted.

And come to king Parmúda's camp, they fared
About the field, cut off the chieftains' heads,
And heaped them till the pile grew mountain-like:
The hero's men of name called it Bahrám Tal.[1]
Whate'er they saw of horsemen's equipage,
And other booty, they assembled there.
Bahrám Chúbína wrote the king a letter
About Parmúda and his countless host,
Narrating "all that hath befallen us
Both from the Turks and from their warlike king,
Whose heart was eager to avenge his sire,
And who departed to Áwáza hence."
Parmúda, on his side, made fast the hold,
And sat down deep in thought, while in pursuit
Came countless troops and circled it about;
But though so many leaguered it none knew
Parmúda's plans. Bahrám Chúbína said:—
"The toils of war are better than delay,
And so he told Yal-án-sína to choose
Three thousand of the horsemen on the field,
And further that Ízid Gashasp should call
To horse four thousand warriors of the troops.
He bade behead forthwith all whom they found,
Thus haply from the hold the king to draw
When all the waste a-stream with blood he saw.

§ 15

How Bahrám Chúbína sent a Message to Parmúda and how Parmúda asked Quarter

1834 Bahrám Chúbína stayed before the hold
Three days but sent at sun-rise on the fourth

[1] Tal is a heap or mound.

This message to Parmúda as the chief
Both of the realm and race : " O noble king
Of Chín and of the Turks ! why hast thou chosen
To occupy this stronghold ? Where are now
King Sáwa's passion to possess the world,
And all his treasure, power, and elephants,
His armour for the steeds and ardent chiefs ?
Where are thy witchcraft and thy sorcery
That now thou dost seclude thyself ? Time was
When all the Turks'domain was not enough
For thee, thy father peerless in the world.
Now womanlike thou sittest in this hold,
With full heart, beating thine own head. Undo
The castle-gate, seek quarter, ask of me
To plead for thee before my king. Dispatch
Thy treasures of dínárs and all thy purses
From this hold plain-ward or if thou keep them
Keep not the realm for kings despise dínárs.
Myself will intercede for thee at court
Because I am the champion of Írán ;
Thee will I make chief of all chiefs and treat thee
Above thine aims and thine imaginings.
Now if thou hast some hidden policy,
One that will make thy gloomy prospects bright,
Confide in me ; since thine affairs are thus
Be not thou distant. I have given thee quarter,
As thou dost know, and opened thee a way
To scape by, else thou hadst been lifeless now,
As is thy sire, and seen not son or kindred :
But if thou hast companions for the fight,
With treasure and abundance of dínárs,
Exert thyself herein and take revenge,
For troops are not to seek where there is treasure."
The messenger arriving told his message,
Which when Parmúda, the ambitious, heard
He answered : " Say : ' If so thou canst forbear

To search out this world's secrets. Thou perchance
Hast made too bold therewith because thy toils
Have brought forth fruit; yet in thy victory
Joy not; though thou art young the world is old.
The secret of the turning sky is known
To none; it never showeth us its face.
To mock becometh not a general.
I too had soldiers, elephants, and drums,
But heaven above is practised in deceit,
So couple not thy heart with arrogance.
My sire, the world-lord, that discerning man,
Whom thou beheldest on the day of fight,
Had earth as bondslave of his horse's hoofs,
And heaven revolved according to his will;
Yet sought he what it was not his to seek,
And turned not from his wrongful purposes.
His prowess is o'erlaid by ridicule,
And enemies bemock him from afar.
As for thy saying that thy host exceedeth
The revolutions of the sun and moon
In sum, and that thy steeds and elephants
Seem grass-seeds scattered by a wind-mill's sails,
All that will pass away and thou withal
Wilt cease to joy and to illume the world.
Fear sharp fate's vengeance yet;[1] it may infuse
Some of its bane in this thine antidote.
When one hath made a trade of shedding blood,
And harassing the hearts of enemies,
Men will shed his blood also by the token
That he hath shed the blood of other chiefs.
Wreck though thou mayst the country of the Turks
Still in the end they will exact revenge.
If I shall come to thee forthwith I fear
That thou wilt make an end of me. Thou art
A slave; I am a king. Shall I abase me

[1] "Crains le sort, qui sème la vengeance." Mohl.

Before a thrall ? I will not come to battle
Without a host or those that wish me well
Will call me mad ; but it is no disgrace
For me to ask for quarter from thy Sháh
In mine extremity. When that is done
The hold, the treasure, and the men are thine ;
Thy wishes will be law in this famed land.' "
The messenger returned with this reply ;
Bahrám Chúbína was rejoiced thereby.

§ 16

How Bahrám Chúbína asked of Hurmuzd a Warrant to spare the Life of Parmúda and the Answer

They wrote a letter that might bear good fruit
To that victorious and exalted Sháh :—
" The Khán of Chín is suppliant for quarter ;
He is beleaguered by Bahrám Chúbína,
And needeth a safe-conduct under seal ;
The news thereof will be a feast to him.
Now since the suppliant is the Khán of Chín,
Fall'n from such dignity to wretchedness,
The king of kings should pity one whose worship
Hath passed away."
Now when the letter reached
The Sháh he cloudward raised his glorious crown.
He sent and summoned the Íránians,
And set them by the famous throne of kingship,
Bade read the letter and strew gems upon C.
The reader, saying : " I thank my God and praise Him
Three watches of the night in that the Khán
Of Chín is now our subject and high heaven

Our crown. He raised his head to touch the sky,
And thought himself the monarch of the world;
But now this leader who attacked our coasts
Is made the slave of one still mightier,
And so the Turks' chief and the prince of Chín
Is offering his homage unto us.
Praise to the Ruler of the sun and moon,
The Source of this supremacy of ours.[1]
Do ye too offer praise to God and be
More instant in the practice of all good."
He called the envoy of the paladin,
Gave him a long and gracious interview,
Called for a girdle set with royal gems,
A kingly robe of honour and a steed
With trappings decked with gold and every buckle
Bejewelled. To the messenger withal
He gave dínárs, a purse, and much beside
To be a present to that prudent man,[2]
Whom he held chief among the paladins,
Bade come a scribe and had a letter written
On silk: "Parmúda Khán is mine ally,
And in all regions under my protection.
God is the witness to this deed and seal;
His slaves are we and He is Lord."
He wrote
An answer also to that world-aspirant,[3]
A letter all good will like Paradise,
And said: "Dispatch Parmúda to my court
With all observance but without his host.
The booty that thou tookest from his troops—
A service which thou didst right zealously—
Send thither too, whate'er of it is worthy.
The Maker aideth thee. Spy out the foe,
And if he hath a stronghold let thy guards
Seize and consume it through thy glorious fortune,

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] Bahrám Chúbína. [3] *Id.*

And world-illuming presages. If thou
Hast need of further troops they shall be thine,
And there shall be addition to thy treasures.
State thy demands in writing; we will send
Whatever troops are needed. In thy letter
Name those Íránians that have acted well
In thine esteem; their toils shall be rewarded.
Thy troops the guardians of the march shall be;
The crown of paladins I give to thee."

§ 17

How Hurmuzd's Letter granting Quarter to Parmúda reached Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bahrám Chúbína was wroth with Parmúda

Now when this letter reached the paladin C. 18.
That famous chieftain's heart grew young; the letter
Astounded him. He sent and called the Íránians,
And showed the Sháh's gifts; all that saw them blessed him.
He showed the Íránians too all that Hurmuzd
Had written of them. The warriors acclaimed;
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth's surface shook."
He sent too
The honourable safe-conduct for Parmúda,
Giv'n by the monarch, to the hold to him;
His darkened soul grew bright. With many blessings
Upon the king he left his famous fortress,
And leaving to Bahrám Chúbína all
The wealth therein made ready to depart.
Descending from the hold the proud Parmúda
Bestrode his charger swift as flying dust,

And set forth with his troops without regard
To bold Bahrám Chúbína who chagrined
Thereat, and though his captive was a king,
Sent after him and had him brought afoot,
And running in the presence of the troops;
Then said to him indignantly: "Are such
Your manners in Túrán and Chín—to go
Without leave asked of me? Sheer folly this!"
Parmúda said: "Once I was raised o'er folk,
But now am humbled and a suppliant,
Cast vilely from the zenith of my power.
To-day withal thou art not generous
In bringing me before thee, evil one!
Now that I have the letter of safe-conduct
I purpose going to the king. Perchance
He will receive me brother-like; misfortune
May grow more light to me. What wouldst thou more?
I have surrendered fortune, home, and goods."
Bahrám Chúbína raged with flashing eyes
In indignation at Parmúda's words,
And struck him in excitement with a whip—
Behaviour only fit for miscreants.
They bound Parmúda's feet forthwith and made
A scanty tent his prison. Said thereat
1838 Kharrád, son of Barzín: "This paladin
And wisdom are not mates!"
He sought the archscribe,
And said: "This mighty paladin possesseth
Not one gnat's wing of wisdom![1] so he taketh
No heed of any one, and we must go,
And say to him: 'This is remediless.'
His temper is his great calamity."
The two departed to Bahrám Chúbína
With pallid cheeks and counsel on their tongues,

[1] Reading with P.

And told him: "Thou hast given to the winds
Thy toil! Oh! be that noble head of thine
Unfilled with fire!"
Ware of his foul behaviour,
That into water had been flung a brick
Already dried, he in his penitence
Released the Khán and was in great concern.
He sent the Khán a steed with golden trappings,
And Indian falchion with a golden scabbard,
Moreover went forthwith to him to make
His dark soul bright, there tarried till the Khán
Had armed and mounted on a speedy steed,
And then escorted him upon his way,
Perceiving that the prince's visage loured.
When it was time to part Bahrám Chúbína
Told him: "Thou hast a secret grudge against me;
Yet, though it be so, tell it not the Sháh;
No credit will result to thee therefrom."
The Khán replied to him: "It is of fortune
That I complain; I leave it all to God.
I am not such an one as would desire
To speak in many words of other men;
Still if thy monarch hath no news hereof
He is not worthy of his high estate.
It was the turning sky that fettered me;
I tell not of ill usage from a slave."
Thereat Bahrám Chúbína paled; he writhed,
But with an effort swallowed down his wrath,
And thus returned reply: "An instance this
Of what the famous nobles used to say:—
'Forbear thine utmost seed of ill to cast,
For time will give thee fruit thereof at last.'[1]
To what end did I deck for thee my heart,
Attempt to do thee kindness in the world,
And wrote its lord a letter hiding all

[1] Couplet omitted.

Thine own shortcomings ? "
" That," the Khán rejoined,
" Is past, and all the past hath turned to wind.
By God ! I do not owe thee any grudge,
Or cherish in my heart the former strife.
Thy kindness hath been greater than this wrong,
And thou didst guide me on the way to good ;
But just as there is insolence in war,
So is there courtesy in time of peace,
1839 And if the two are all the same to thee
Thy wisdom out of question is but small,
And when a leader is too wise to take
His lord's commands then evil will befall him.
Moreover one should tread God's path and purge
All darkness from the heart. 'Twere well for thee
To say no more for past ill is but wind."
On hearing this Bahrám Chúbína said :—
' Methought 'twould out, but no mishap will come
Of thy complaint for I will hide it up
With painted silk. On thine arrival say
Whate'er thou wilt ; 'twill minish not my lustre."
The Khán said : " Every king that taketh not
Account of good and ill, but passeth over
His slave's misdeeds in silence, be assured
Is witless, and when malcontents afar—
Allies or other kings—observe this thing
They will term thee unseemly and light-headed,
And him the foolish monarch of Írán."
Bahrám Chúbína paled, and when Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, had taken note thereof
He feared that wrathful and bloodthirsty man
Would hurl Parmúda from his steed to dust,
And said : " O general of the Sháh ! repress
Thy wrath and quit that path because the Khán
Saith well, so list to him and think no ill,
For had cool words ne'er passed the hearts of neither

Would have been pained."
" This ill-conditioned one,"
Bahrám Chúbína said, " would join his sire."
The Khán said : " Wrong me not. Reft as I am
Of mine own father I may well die young.
All those that in the world are like thyself,
With heads all dust-cloud and with hearts all fume,
Imagine ill, accord to none, but raise
Themselves by craft and cruelty. I fear not
The king of kings ; from him bale or relief
Is well. He is my peer among the great,
And not a slave malignantly disposed
Towards me, but is gentle, wise, high-born,
And greatly mindful of the men of name.
I charge thee by the soul and by the head
Of Sháh Hurmuzd that thou return forthwith.
Give me no more replies and insolence ;
Say naught and hear naught."
When Bahrám Chúbína
Heard he returned to camp in vengeful mood,
And thus that proven warrior harangued
The prudent chiefs : " Kharrád, son of Barzín,
And those wise men, the archscribe and archmages,
Shall write a letter to the world's king, telling C 18
All that hath passed in public and in private."
The general said further to the chief
And other archimages : " Men of wisdom !
Depart hence to the hold, be diligent,
Companion with the wind and ascertain
What quantity of wealth is hoarded there."
With fearful hearts the scribes set forth. From dawn
Until three watches of the night had passed
They blacked much paper but they had not done.
There was not room to move for precious things,

Hoards of the era of Afrásiyáb,
And of Arjásp, so ancient yet unspent,
Gold coins and jewels won from sea and mine
By favour of the sky; such were the treasures
Within Áwáza hold world-famous then.
Among the goods of Siyáwush came first
A belt with jewelled buckles and such earrings
As no one high or low besides possessed,
Which Kai Khusrau had given Luhrásp and he
Thereafter gave them to Gushtásp. Arjásp
Gat them and stored them there, none knoweth when.
They wrote a list of all the precious things
That were laid up within the treasury,
But no one in the world, astrologer,
Or noble prince had knowledge of the sum.
Bahrám Chúbína sent a scribe, a man
Shrewd, eloquent, and mindful, who collected
The booty from the hold and battlefield.
There were a pair of earrings in the spoil,
And pair of boots with patterns formed by gems;
The stuff was interwoven with gold threads
Bestrung with precious stones. There were withal
Two gold-embroidered curtains from Yaman,
Whereof each one was seven mans[1] in weight.
Now through presumption and perversity
The captain of the host, contemplating
No scrutiny, put secretly aside
The pairs of boots and curtains of Yaman,
And made no entry of them in his list.
He then gave orders to Ízid Gashasp
That he and all his cavaliers should mount,
Select a thousand warriors from the host,
And take the booty to the monarch's gate.
The warriors having mounted on their steeds,

[1] See Vol. i., p. 290 *note*.

Ízid Gashasp bore off that mass of spoil,
And full of joy and merriment they took
A hundred caravan-loads to Írán.
Íránian horsemen closed the long array,
The Khán with his own nobles led the way.

§ 18

How Parmúda came before Hurmuzd with the Treasures sent by Bahrám Chúbína

With treasure, gifts, and troops the Khán drew near C. 1841
The monarch of the world who heard and mounted
With crown on head and mace in hand, and thus
Came to the gate. When from the porch he saw
The visage of the Khán he paused to note
If at the sight of him that prince and troops
Would light down from their steeds. Parmúda watched,
Full of concern, if he would turn away,
Then, mounted still, came with the archimage,
Ízid Gashasp, whereat the Sháh, the world-lord,
Bestirred him with his troops. The Khán alighted
And hastened toward the Sháh, without delay
Remounting his black Arab, while the Great King
Abode not with Parmúda in the porch,
And rode his fleet steed off; but when the Khán
Was following, the keeper of the curtain
Laid hold upon his reins forthwith. Parmúda
Alighted instantly and manifested
His own diplomacy by that submission.
Now when the Khán approached the royal throne
The king of kings received him with all favour,
And having welcomed set him in the presence,
Repenting of the past hostility.
They lodged him fitly in the pleasant palace

Prepared for him and brought whate'er he needed.
A scribe was charged to lodge the retinue
Hard by. The Sháh, on hearing of the wealth
Brought by Parmúda, sent it to the park,
And charged therewith the keeper of the camels.
The eighth day, when Parmúda was refreshed
From all his toils, the Sháh ordained a feast,
And, when the Khán was seated at the board
At court and in the presence of the world-lord,
Bade bring the camel-loads before the chiefs.
One counted up the porters; on that day
There were ten thousand hired. The next, at dawn,
Hurmuzd had wine set forth and took his seat,
And from the park came fifty thousand bales
As well as parcels on the porters' backs.
C 1842 The baggage filled a hundred treasuries.
The Sháh, when his task was achieved, bade bring
Before the presence publicly a bale
Of stuffs, bejewelled earrings, and a girdle
Compact, thou wouldst have said, of gold and gems.
These he bestowed with many words of praise
Upon the messenger who kissed the ground,
While from the banquet-hall arose acclaim :—
" Victorious be the Sháh."
He at that time
Said to his confidant Ízid Gashasp :—[1]
" What seest thou in Bahrám Chúbína's exploit ?
He maketh war to cease right manfully."
The scribe Ízid Gashasp replied : " O Sháh,
Who art observant and of ardent mind !
When at a feast the theme is such know there
Will likewise be but ill-conditioned fare."[2]

[1] Perhaps we ought to read " Áyín Gashasp " here and below. See pp. 75, 174 *seq.*

[2] With changes of reading Mohl translates : " sache que les mets d'une fête ou c'est le mot corneille (djoubin) qui forme le refrain doivent être étranges."

The Sháh became suspiciously inclined
On hearing this ; misdoubtings filled his mind.

§ 19

How Hurmuzd heard of the Ill-doing of Bahrám Chúbína and made a Compact with the Khán

Then came a lusty camel-post and brought
This letter from the archscribe : " May the world-lord
Be ever joyful and his head and crown
For ever present in his servant's thoughts.
Know that there were two curtains of Yaman
Among the spoil, boots decked with gems uncut,
The earrings too of noble Siyáwush,
Who left us wisdom as his monument,
And these the paladin bare off with him[1]
No marvel since he underwent the toil."
Hurmuzd said to Parmúda : " Tell me all
That thou didst see hereof."
The fallen king
Confirmed the scribe's report. The haughty Sháh
Was wroth thereat and said : " Bahrám Chúbína
Doth err, uplifting to the moon his head.
For one thing he hath struck the Khán of Chín—
An act the outcome of an evil nature—
And then would nothing but these earrings serve
His turn ? Perhaps he hath become a king.
His toil hath turned to wind and all his knowledge
And justice have become corrupt."
This said,
He called the Khán and having seated him
Upon the famous throne they feasted there

[1] Reading with P.

Till night spread out her musky tresses black.
C. 1843 Then said the Sháh: "If thou wilt league with me
Thou shalt partake my honey."
As he sat
He grasped the Khán's hand, and Parmúda marvelled.
The Sháh proceeded: "Swear to me afresh,
And make a new departure, not to break
With me or with the nobles of this folk
On thy return."
Parmúda swore forthwith:—
"By shining daylight and night azure-dim,
By God who hath of right supremacy,
The Artificer of Jupiter and Venus,
The great Sháh's crown and throne, Ázargashasp,
The signet and the diadem, the Khán
Shall not grow alien from the Sháh in heart,
And vex him not in aught."
This sworn, they rose
And sought their couches.
When the yellow sun
O'er-topped the mountains, and the kings awoke,
The noble Sháh prepared a present—ware
Of gold and silver, horses, coronets,
Of girdles gemmed and golden, armlets, torques,
And earrings, Arab steeds with golden trappings,
And Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
Dispatched them to the Khán, consorted with him
Two stages and the more part of the third,
And having bidden him farewell returned.
The paladin, on hearing of the gifts
Presented by the monarch of the world,
And how the Khán was coming back rejoicing,
Rode forth to meet him with the Íránian chiefs.
He stored provisions where the Khán would pass
In town and village, station, hill, and plain,

And hurried on in shame at his ill temper
To make excuse in person. When he saw
Parmúda he did reverence but the Khán
Proved wholly adverse, would accept of naught
That he had brought of provand, purse, or slave,
And on the way ignored him utterly.
Bahrám Chúbína fared three stages thus,
And not once did Parmúda call for him.
Upon the fourth the Khán sent one to say :—
" Return for thou hast toiled enough."
Thereat
Bahrám Chúbína left him and in wrath
Set face toward Balkh where he abode in dudgeon,
Repenting of his acts with aching heart.
Withal the world-lord was displeased with him,
And fumes of anger filled the monarch's soul
First at that outrage to the Khán wherein C. 184
Bahrám Chúbína had done shamefully.
And next that he had dared to lay his hand
On certain of the spoil without command.

§ 20

How Hurmuzd wrote a chiding Letter to Bahrám Chúbína and sent him a Distaff-case, Cotton, and Women's Raiment

The king then wrote thus to Bahrám Chúbína :—
" Unconscionable div ! perceiv'st thou not
That all our excellencies are from God,
And yet thou sittest on the vault of heaven ?
Hast thou forgot my pains, troops, toil, and treasure ?
Thou keepest not the way of paladins,

But raisest thy head skyward. Thou hast turned
From my behest and acted otherwise.
Here is the robe of honour meet for thee,
Agreeable and appropriate to thine acts."
The Sháh, when he had sealed this, ordered one
To bring him a black distaff-case with distaff
And cotton, much unworthy gear, withal
A blue silk shift, red drawers, and yellow coif,
Chose an ignoble messenger to match
With that unseemly gift and said: "Convey
These to Bahrám Chúbína. Say to him:—
'O worthless miscreant! thou didst bind the Khán,
And gloat upon great men's mishaps, but I
Will fetch thee from thy seat and hold thee naught
Henceforth.'"
The messenger, these words in mind,
Departed with the gift and went like wind.

§ 21

How Bahrám Chúbína put on the Woman's Dress and showed himself therein to the Chiefs of the Host

Whenas Bahrám Chúbína saw the present
Sent with the letter he endured in silence.
He thought: "This is my guerdon! So the Sháh
Is now my foe though he hath not devised
This wrong but mine ill-wishers slandered me.
The world-lord is the master of his slaves,
And if he putteth me to shame 'tis well.
C. 1845 I did not think that enemies of mine
Had access to the Sháh. Since I left court
In haste with but few troops all men have witnessed
My deeds, my sorrows and my toils and hardships.

If these toils are rewarded by a shame
That is the portion of the infamous
I will complain of circling heaven to God
For having docked me thus of all its love."
He called upon the Judge that giveth good,
Then, having donned the red and yellow garb,
And set before him the black spindle-case,
And all the other things sent by the Sháh,
He summoned to him all the mighty men,
The nobles of the monarch of the world.
These came forth from the army to the chief,
Whose gloomy soul was full of anxious thoughts.
They came, both young and old, were all astound,
And mused, on seeing their paladin so clad.
He said: "A robe of honour from the Sháh!
Ye saw and heard of what I did and how
I combated with my two-headed dart.
The Sháh despaired about the royal throne;
The world was dark and I illumined it.
I have put on me this repugnant garb
According to the exalted king's command.
The Sháh is world-lord and we are his slaves,
Our hearts and souls are full of love for him.
What are your views, ye witnesses! herein?
What answer make we to the king of earth?"
All cried: "Famed paladin and worshipful!
If this be thy worth with the Sháh the troops
Are dogs at court! Note what the ancient sage
Observed at Rai when angry with Ardshír:—
'I grow averse from archmage and Sháh's throne
When he regardeth not my weal and woe.'
How canst thou seek for honour from a man
That honoureth not thee?"
He said: "Forbear:
The Sháh is source of honour to his troops;
His slaves are we; he giveth, we receive."

The Íránians said: "We will not arm henceforth;
We will not have him in Írán as Sháh,
Or, as our general, Bahrám Chúbína."
They spake and went forth from his presence, left
The palace of the chieftain[1] for the plain,
But he refrained his lips and at the most
Gave only prudent counsels to the host.

§ 22

How Bahrám Chúbína went to hunt and saw a Lady who foretold the Future to him

C. 1846 Two weeks passed, then Bahrám Chúbína left
His palace for the waste. In front of him
There was a forest furnished well with trees —
The very place for lucky revellers.
Upon the mead he saw an onager,
And none will see a fairer one. He followed
At leisure, heating not his steed. Appeared
Within that woodland-chase a narrow path,
Which when that gallant onager had traversed
A pleasance next was seen upon the plain.
Bahrám Chúbína, marking this, proceeded
Until a splendid palace came in sight.
Led by the onager he turned and rode
Thereto; behind him was Ízid Gashasp,
To whom he gave his fleet steed's reins and said:—
"May wisdom ever be thy mate," then entered
The porch alone. Ízid Gashasp the while
Abode without and held the noble steed.
Behind him hurrying came Yalán-sína

[1] Reading with P.

Armed on a swift horse. Brave Ízid Gashasp
Said: "Lion! enter thou and find out whither
Our chief, the heroic captain of the host,
Our succourer, hath gone."
Yalán-sína
Made for the palace with an anxious heart
To seek the chief. He saw it and its hall
Magnifical; its like he had not seen
Or heard of in Írán. Upon one side
Thereof there was a cupola whose top
Was viewless through its height and under it
A throne of gold with steps begemmed. The throne
Was covered with brocade of Rúm in patterns
Picked out with jewels on a ground of gold.
Upon the throne there sat a lady crowned,
Of cypress-height and with a face like Spring.[1]
Beside it was a seat and thereupon C. 1847
The captain of the host while many slaves,
Idols fay-faced and blooming, were around.
On seeing Yalán-sína the lady bade
A handmaid: "Hasten to yon lion-heart,
Fair mate, and say: 'Thou mayst not enter here.
Stay with thy comrades. He will come anon,
But go thou first. As from Bahrám Chúbína
Speak this and ease them as to his return.'"
She sent some also to his retinue
To bring the warriors' horses to the stalls,
And take good care of all their equipage.
The gardener unlocked the garden-gate
By hest of that fair hostess,[2] and they set
About the garden victuals past conceit.
Whenas the warriors had eaten bread
They led the chargers to the place assigned.
Bahrám Chúbína, when he left the lady,
Spake thus: "May Jupiter espouse thy crown."

[1] Three couplets omitted. [2] One couplet omitted.

She answered: "Be victorious and ever
Of patient heart and wise.[1] Go thou! the throne
And the Íránian diadem are thine.
The world shall be set straight by thee, so win it
By might and sword from dark dust to the stars."[2]
Now when he came forth from that garth of roses
Thou wouldst have said: "He weepeth blood!"
So changed
Was he in temper and in talk that thou
Hadst said: "He raiseth to the Pleiades
His head."
Anon the onager appeared;
The chieftain followed after on his steed,
And it was so that till he cleared the forest
The onager still served him as a guide.
He went back to the city from the chace,
But spake not of the matter to the host.
Kharrád, son of Barzín, regarded him
And said thus: "O thou chief that speakest sooth!
What was this marvel seen and heard by none
That happened in the chace?"
The paladin
Vouchsafed no answer but in dudgeon sought
The palace, and none else dared ask: "What might
This matter mean, this vision of delight?"

§ 23

How Bahrám Chúbína assumed the royal Style and how Kharrád, Son of Barzín, and the Archscribe[3] fled

C. 1848 The next day, when the uplands silvered over,
And when yon yellow shining Lamp appeared,

[1] *Id.* [2] *Id.* [3] Ízid Gashasp in the original. *Cf.* p. 106.

Bahrám Chúbína spread a carpeting
Made of brocade of Chín, and thou hadst said
That earth had turned to sky. Throughout the palace
He ranged gold seats and cushions of brocade
Of gold. They placed a golden ante-throne
Whereon the captain of the host sat down,
Then held a session like the king of kings,
And placed upon his head the crown of greatness.
The archscribe marked Bahrám Chúbína's conduct,
And, knowing him to be both bold and strong,
Went and retailed his knowledge, sight or hearsay,
Before Kharrád, son of Barzín, who listened,
Knew that his own toils had been vain, and said :—
" Take not this lightly, O thou noble scribe !
This king of kings of ours hath played the fool
In sending as a gift the distaff-case,
Not knowing that this battle-loving Lion
Would thus revolt. We must not talk of this,
But when 'tis midnight fare forth to the Sháh,
And say : ' Bahrám Chúbína's heart is set
Upon the crown ; the seat too under him
Is ivory.' "
They canvassed all the case,
And made a shift to flee, prepared the pretext,
And fled from Balkh by night. The chief, informed
Thereof, and knowing well their clear, shrewd minds,
Said to Yalán-sína : " Go in pursuit
Of those two dotards with a hundred horse."
He overtook the archscribe, raged at him,
As 'twere a wolf, took from him all he had,
And brought him back made fast in heavy bonds,
Back to Bahrám Chúbína so that he
Might slay the innocent. The paladin
Said : " Doer of div's work ! why didst thou quit me

Without my leave ? "
" O paladin ! " he answered.
" Kharrád, son of Barzín, made me afraid.
He said : ' We may not tarry ; thy delay
Will please those only that speak ill of thee,
For when the heroic captain of the host,
Bahrám Chúbína, holdeth court as Sháh
There is a fear lest thou and I be slain
Save we return.' "
Bahrám Chúbína said :—
" Just so : one must consult o'er good and ill."
He then restored and with advantages
From his own treasures what the scribe had lost,
Then said to him : " Go thou and ponder o'er
Thy conduct in this case and flee no more."

§ 24

How Hurmuzd received News of Bahrám Chúbína's Doings, and how Bahrám Chúbína sent a Frail of Swords to Hurmuzd

Kharrád, son of Barzín, for his part rode,
Escaping notice,till he reached the Sháh,
To whom he told his news, suppressing naught,
Of wood and meadow, course of onager,
Strait pathway and Bahrám Chúbína's sojourn ;
Told of the palace and the jewelled throne,
The slave-girls and the lady with the crown :
He told whatever he had seen and heard.
The Sháh mused at the tale, laid it to heart,
And sighed as he remembered what the archmage
And fortune-teller had said : " Bahrám Chúbína
Will turn him from thy throne."[1]

[1] See pp. 107, 108.

Forthwith he summoned
The high priest, set Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Within the room and said to him : " Relate
The adventures of thy journey."
Thus enjoined
He oped his lips and told it all. The Sháh
Said to the high priest : " What importeth this ?
We must consult at large. The onager
That led him through the wood, the palace seen
Amidst the wilderness, the lady crowned
Upon the golden throne, the slaves in waiting
As on a queen—the account is like a dream
Suggested by old tales ! "
The high priest thus
Made answer to the monarch of the world :—
" Beneath that onager there was a dív
Who sought to lead Bahrám Chúbína wrong,
And make perverseness show within his heart.
The palace, be assured, was sorcerer's work,
The lady on the throne an impious witch,
Who on this wise to hearten him the more
Displayed the crown and throne of majesty.
All eager and bemused he went from her : C. 18
Be sure that he will ne'er come back to hand.
His heart was wounded by thy distaff-case,
And going to that dív-witch made it worse.
It was not well to send the ignoble robe
To one so overweening, for thereby
The Íránians were estranged and ceased to trust
The king of kings. So now devise a scheme
To bring the army back to court from Balkh."
The king repented having acted so
About the cotton and the gaudy dress,
And asked Kharrád, son of Barzín : " What say
The troops there of that lady ? "
He replied :—

" As for that crownéd lady, all the troops
Call her, O king! ' Bahrám Chúbína's Luck,'
Which will be very great and glorious."
The king, on hearing, greatly feared the ills
That fortune had in store. Ere long there came
One from the paladin, the ćavalier,
And brought a frail of swords with points all bent.[1]
He set them down before the Sháh who looked
Upon that iron gear, bade break the swords,
Replace them in that ill-conditioned frail,
And then return them to Bahrám Chúbína:
No word was spoken but the intent was clear.
Bahrám Chúbína oped the frail, beheld
The long swords snapped at point and then replaced,
And, wayward as he was, grew full of thought.
He called the Íránians round the frail and said:—
" Behold the king's gift! Underrate it not.
It meaneth that this host is little worth,
And not the head of one of us will scape."
The troops thought much of what the Sháh had done,
And of their paladin's address. They said:—
" One day our monarch sendeth us as gifts
A distaff and a gaudy robe; anon
He giveth broken swords—a present worse
Than striking or abuse. Ne'er be such Sháh
Upon the throne! May none remember him,
And if again the offspring of Gashasp—
Bahrám Chúbína—ride on that court's dust
Then may they perish, skin and marrow both,
He and his worthless sire!"
The chieftain heard,
Saw how Hurmuzd had vexed the host and said:—
" Be vigilant and let your minds be clear
1851 Because Kharrád, son of Barzín, hath told

Our secrets to the king. Let each consult
His safety and conspire with me to-day.
If I send none to watch our enemies
Regard my days as done, my soldiers slain."
He spake and took new order: mark and muse.
He scattered horsemen through the realm lest letters,
Sent by the king, should reach the Íránians,
And they should arm themselves to fight for him,
And so it was that till a time had gone
A royal letter was perused by none.

§ 25

How Bahrám Chúbína made known to the Chiefs his Designs upon the Throne, and how his Sister Gurdya advised him

Bahrám Chúbína summoned then the chiefs,
And told them many secrets. There were present
Hamdán Gashasp and the archscribe, Yalán-sína,
Renowned and strong, with valorous Bahrám,
The son of Siyáwush, and that wise chief,
Kandá Gashasp. With these he held debate,
For they were Lions and men of war, and then
Harangued that fierce host, which was all astray,
Thus: "Famous chiefs whose counsel all require!
The Sháh is wroth with us without a cause,
And so hath turned away from what is right.
What will ye do? What is the remedy?
'Tis useless to shed tears upon the past.
Whoe'er hath hid his anguish from the leech
Hath showered from his lashes tears of blood,
And trifles grow in moment when we keep
Our secrets from the men of understanding.

I have myself my privy griefs and I
Will tell them to the sages of the world.
Ye all are conversant with these affairs,
And so can testify to what I say.
We left Írán by order of the Sháh
With but few troops, though eager to engage,
And none, though long his life, will see a foe
More numerous. Now if the Turk Parmúda,
Had, with king Sáwa, marched upon Írán
It would not have been worth a piece of wax,
And later they would have attempted Rúm;
C. 1852 But on Parmúda and king Sáwa came
A marvel such as none within the world
Had seen, and though we bare much toil ourselves
We left them neither elephants nor treasure.
The Sháh hath laid up wealth anew, grown rich,
And yet he is enraged against the host
Though all the business hath been done for him,
And he is franchised through no toil of his![1]
In such a coil what shift shall I employ
To set my head at ease? Do ye too all
Shift for yourselves. What is your remedy
For such a wound? I have discharged my heart,
And freed my soul. Respecting weal or woe
If ye are ware of any means now speak."
He proved with these words, for he feared, the host.
Behind his curtains that famed paladin
Possessed a sister, one of ardent soul,
And that wise lady's name was Gurdya,
Of fairy-visage and his heart's delight.
Now she, on hearing from behind the veil
Her brother's words, was angered; her heart flared.
With much to say and full of instances
She came forth to that conclave, and her brother
Kept silence, when he heard her voice, from word

[1] Couplet transposed.

And answer, and the Íránians too were silent
For fear of harm. Thus Gurdya addressed
The troops: "Illustrious men who seek for guidance!
Why do ye hold your peace and check your spleen?
Ye are the warrior-chieftains of Írán,
Wise, prescient lords. What see ye in this matter?
What game play ye upon this scene of blood?"
Then said Ízid Gashasp, the cavalier:—
"Memorial of the mighty! were our tongues
Sharp swords they would take flight before the sea
Of thine advice. Thine acts are all of God,
Brave, learned, and wise. We need not fight like pards
With all the world. Let no one seek my counsel
Henceforth because my lore hath reached its bound.
If ye will fight I too will bear a hand,
And cavalierly counter cavaliers,
While if the paladin is pleased with me
Methinketh that I shall be young for ever."
Bahrám Chúbína, hearing him thus speak,
Saw that he dealt with both sides. Then he marked
Yalán-sína and said: "What thinkest thou?"
Quoth he: "Brave chief! the walker in God's way C. 185
Will be wise, famed, and learned, will have his will
In all and, winning victory and Grace,
Will haste not to do ill for that would turn
A blessing to a curse and circling heaven
Be vengeful towards him. God hath given thee
Grace, fortune, troops withal, wealth, prowess, throne;
If thou art grateful He will send thee more,
But through ingratitude the heart will ache."
Then said Bahrám Chúbína to Bahrám:—
"Wise friend and prudent mate! what sayest thou
About this seeking after throne and treasure?
Will majesty result or pain and grief?"
He laughed that such a case should be discussed,

Then tossing up his finger-ring replied :—
" As long as this remaineth in the air
So long shall it be servant to the Sháh ;
Yet he is great ; despise him not for none
Should under-estimate the diadem."

Said to Kandá Gashasp[1] Bahrám Chúbína :—
" O thou sword-wielding and steed-spurring Lion !
What seest and sayst thou touching this affair
Of ours ? Do we deserve the royal throne ? "

That cavalier replied : " O thou that art
The memory of heroes in the world !
There was an archimage at Rai who said :—
' The wise and lucky man to whom 'tis given
Once to be king his soul will soar to heaven.'
So aiming at the treasure of the king
Is better than to be long years a slave."

Then to the archscribe said Bahrám Chúbína :—
" Old wolf ! unclose thy lips."
The archscribe kept
His lips still shut awhile and sat amid
A crowd of thoughts, then said : " Whoe'er shall seek
His wish in fitting fashion will attain it,
For time's stretched hand is long. Know that no pains
Can shun whatever God will have to be."

Then said the chieftain to Hamdán Gashasp :—
" O thou well versed in fortune's rise and fall !
Whatever thou shalt utter in our presence
Shall be as wind and, like wind, hurt thee not.
Advise us in this case, this test of good
And evil fortune."
Great Hamdán Gashasp
Thus spake : " Prized by the great ! why dost thou dread
Ills not yet come and question of the crown

[1] Reading with P. C. has Ízid Gashasp.

Of kingship ? Act and leave the rest to God.
Why reach out for the date if thou dost fear
The thorn ? A people's Head hath never rest ; C. 18
His mind is fearful and his body weary."
The sister of the captain of the host
Writhed at their words and grew o'ercast of soul,
Yet spake she naught in this debate from eve
Till midnight. Then Bahrám Chúbína said :—
" What thinkest thou of this assembly's words,
Fair lady ? "
Gurdya made no reply ;
The counsels of the chief displeasured her.
Thereafter she addressed the archscribe thus :—
" O man maleficent like some old wolf !
So thou conceivest that the crown and throne,
Host and addition and the might of fortune
Were in the world no objects of desire
To any famous chiefs of generous bent
Though kingship easier is than servitude !
Such sentiments as thine demand our tears.
Take we the precedents of former Sháhs,
And hear the sayings of those greater ones."
The archscribe made response : " If rede of mine
Obtain not with thee speak and do whatever
Thou art advised and follow thy heart's lead."
Then likewise to self-willed Bahrám Chúbína
His sister spake and said : " They are not good,
Thy knowledge and thy counsel, and thy steps
Are tending toward deceit. Full many a time
Hath the Sháh's throne been void and yet no chief
Cast any look upon it. It was theirs
To guard the world by valour, not to have
An eye upon the throne. They did not aim
Thereat but girt their loins to serve. They sought
Their sovereigns' weal and rendered hearty service.
They were no strangers to the throne and crown,

But worthy of their greatness by descent.
I speak first of the case of Sháh Káús,[1]
Who would have searched the mysteries of God,
Have summed the stars and trod heaven's circling dome,
But fell despised and wretched at Sarí
Through his perverseness and ill bent, and yet
Gúdarz and Rustam, who was paladin,
Did not take dudgeon, and thereafter when
Káús went to Hámávarán,[2] and folk
Bound him in heavy fetters, none essayed
The throne but manifested warm regret.
So when the Íránians said to Rustam: 'Thou
Art worthy of the throne,'[3] he cried against
The speaker: 'Be thy mate the narrow charnel!
Shall I be on the throne of gold, the Sháh
Bound? Perish kingship rather! Perish crown!'
C. 1855 He chose out of Írán twelve thousand men,[4]
World-taking cavaliers on barded steeds,
And freed Káús and Gív, Gúdarz and Tús,
From that captivity. Then when Pírúz
Was slain and for the Íránians all was lost,[5]
While Khúshnawáz emboldened by affairs
Was seated on the alluring throne in peace,
Came Súfarai, the scion of Káran,
In order to restore the throne of power.
When his success was manifest the nobles
Went from Írán to hail him as their Sháh,
And make a subject monarch of the earth.
He told them: ''Tis unseemly. Majesty
And crown are for the Sháh. Although Kubád
Is little he will grow; we may not put
The wolf within the lion's wood. To make

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 102 *seq.*
[2] *Id.* p. 82 *seq.*
[3] *Cf.* *Id.* p. 143.
[4] *Cf.* p. 104 and *note.*
[5] See Vol. vii, p. 167 *seq.*

A Sháh without blood royal is to give
His kindred to the winds.' Now when Kubád
Reached manhood he perceived that Súfarai
Deserved the crown and, led by miscreants' words,
Slew him who was the backbone of the state.
The folk thereafter put Kubád in fetters,
That horseman bold, that hero of the race
Of kings, and gave him to Zarmihr, the low-born,
That he might take revenge for his own sire.
Zarmihr saw none else worthy of the crown
And throne of kingship, so he freed Kubád
In order that he might assert his claim
Without delay. No subject dared aspire
Though many were entitled by their birth.
When from the Turks one hight ' King Sáwa ' came
To seek the seal and crown the glorious Maker
Ordained that he should perish in Írán.
Since by God's Grace and by thy hand so great
An action was by thine own thumbstall wrought
Thou wouldest have the empire ! Know that thou
Wilt lose thy life. Yalán-sína curvetteth,
Exclaiming : ' I will set up a new king—
Bahrám Chúbína, offspring of Gashasp—
And make my name remembered.' Núshírwán,
The understanding Sháh, found in old age
His lost youth in Hurmuzd whom all the magnates
Of this our realm support. Support, say I ?
Are all his bondslaves and his underlings.
He hath three hundred thousand cavaliers,
All paladins, all famed, and all his slaves,
Obedient to his will, yet chose he thee
By virtue of his high prerogative,
Ennobled all thine ancestors and granted C. 185
Revenge upon their foes. Wilt thou repay
His good with ill ? Know 'twill recoil on thee.
Design not evil, brother ! It will bring

Ill on thine own head. Make not greed the lord
O'er wisdom else the sages will not call thee
A man of piety. Although a woman,
Far younger than my brother, yet I give
A man's advice. Oh! fling not to the wind
Thy fathers' deeds and mayst thou not recall
My words to mind."
The assembly marvelled at her,
The chieftain bit his lips as well aware
That what she said was just and that she sought
The path of right. Yalán-sína replied:—
"O noble lady! in this company
Forbear to treat of Sháhs because Hurmuzd
Will soon pass and the paladin enjoy
The throne of majesty. Now since the Sháh
Is what he is in prowess count thy brother
Already as the monarch of Írán,
And if Hurmuzd affect[1] the royal crown
Why sendeth he a distaff as a gift?
The paladin is such a lion-man
That at the terror of his sword earth quaketh,
And had his sword remained undrawn Hurmuzd,
Írán and Shám had perished, and to send him
The present of a distaff and of cotton!
Fie on a king so faithless! Talk no more
About Turk-born Hurmuzd. May all that race
No longer be! To count from Kai Kubád
This stock hath had the crown and throne of gold
A thousand years. Now it is at an end,
So name them not or give Khusrau Parwíz
A thought; his mention is not worth a mite,
And those that are the princes at his court
Will be thy brother's subjects who will place
At his word their lord's feet in heavy bonds."

[1] Reading with P.

"The Black Dív spreadeth out," said Gurdya
A net upon thy path. Destroy us[1] not,
Both soul and body. I perceive in thee
But wind and vapouring. Our sire was march-
lord
At Rai and thou wouldst have us seek the throne.
Now thine incitement of Bahrám Chúbína,
And putting into tumult all our kindred,
Will give our race's travail to the wind,
And through thy words, thou base-born underling!
Yea! lead him on and fill our quiet times
With turbulence!"
She spake and then withdrew
In tears with heart grown alien from her brother,
While all those present said: "This saintly lady, C. 18
Our eloquent, clear-minded counsellor,
Hath spoken, thou wouldst say, just like a book,
And is in wisdom greater than Jámásp."
Howbeit the thing displeased Bahrám Chúbína,
Who was in dudgeon at his sister's words,
And through long musing his distempered heart
Showed him the throne of kingship in his dreams.
He said: "By toil alone aspirants win
This fleeting world."
He bade to spread the board,
And call for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
He told the minstrels: "Let your song to-day
Be of heroic deeds. I will not hear
Aught but the story of the Seven Stages;
So while we revel sing the part wherein
Asfandiyár went to the Brazen Hold,
And of the game he played in that campaign."[2]
They drank much wine to him and cried: "May
Rai
Be prosperous since such a chief as thou

[1] *Id.* [2] See Vol. v. p. 143.

Ariseth thence, and may God fashion more
Like thee."
At night they went their several ways;
The heads of all those topers were a-daze.

§ 26

Bahrám Chúbína's Letter to the Khán and how he coined Money with the Name of Khusrau Parwíz and sent it to Hurmuzd

Whenas the rising sun shot forth its beams,
And darksome night turned sickly at the glow,
The chief Bahrám Chúbína, that bold Wolf,
Bade the archscribe attend. They wrote the Khán
A letter that was worthy of the Artang,[1]
Perfumed[2], illuminate and illustrate:—
"For grief, while asking pardon for mine acts,
My heart is full of sighing and remorse.
Henceforth I will not hurt thy country, land,
Or marches through regard for thee; and I,
If I become the monarch of the world,
Will be to thee as 'twere a younger brother.
Wash vengeance from thy heart and thou shalt know
No difference between Írán and Chín.
Take not to heart the past for God forgiveth
His slave. A thousand blessings on thy helm,
Upon thy sword and thy world-conquering hand."
He spake much to the same effect. The envoy
Was in amaze at him, then trod earth's face,
And bore the message to the Khán of Chín
C. 1858 By whom a gracious answer was returned:—
"I for my part term thee magnanimous."

[1] See Vol. ii. p. 19 and *note*. [2] Reading with P.

He sent Bahrám Chúbína gifts that cheered
The heart.
This matter done, Bahrám Chúbína
Formed other plans, unlocked his hoarded treasures,
Gave his troops drachms, steeds, slaves, and privily
Aimed at the seat of sovereignty. He chose
Among the host a paladin, one fit
To be the prince of Khurásán, bestowed
That land on him with Nisháp úr and Balkh,
Marv and Harát, and troops withal, then went,
From Balkh to Rai, full of solicitude,
Upon the glorious Khurdád of Dai;
Took thought of great and small, then bade his men
Set up a mint and issue coins that bore
The superscription of Khusrau Parwíz.
He gave to merchants shrewd and plausible
Of speech, and fitted for the ticklish task,
Sacks of these new-coined drachms and said: "Buy up
Whatever ye can get in Taisafún
Of costly Rúm brocade with silken figures
Upon a ground of gold."
He meant to bring
That coinage to the notice of the king.

§ 27

How Bahrám Chúbína wrote to Hurmuzd and how Khusrau Parwíz fled from his Father

Bahrám Chúbína chose a prudent envoy,
Strong as the blest Surúsh.[1] He wrote withal
A blustering letter and discoursed at large

[1] The previous section ends here in the original.

About Parmúda and king Sáwa's host,
How he and his own troops had fought, the gift
That had been given to him by the Sháh—
That woman's coif and that black distaff-case—
Then said thus: "Thou wilt never more behold me
E'en in a dream so draw thy fish-hook up.[1]
While thine illustrious, high-fortuned son,
Khusrau Parwíz, is seated on the throne
At his command will I make mountains plains,
And deserts like Jíhún with foemen's blood.
Young though he be still he is fit to rule,
And faithful, not a faithless one like thee.
I have accepted him as king of kings,
And will henceforth be man to none beside."
His wish was that the king should put to death
The son though innocent[2] because he feared
Khusrau Parwíz, a young and charming prince.[3]
C. 1859 The fortune-favoured envoy reached Baghdád
With men of name from Rai. Hurmuzd grew pale
As fenugreek when he received the letter.
Anon accounts of that new coinage reached him,
Which added grief to grief. He writhed, suspected
His son, and spake thus to Áyín Gashasp:—
"Khusrau Parwíz hath grown so bold that he
Fain would revolt; moreover he hath struck
A brand-new coinage! Could he hold me cheaper?"
Áyín Gashasp replied: "Be course and charger
Ne'er seen without thee. Though Khusrau Parwíz
Is thine own son he should be bound for this."
Hurmuzd made answer: "Presently will I
Remove this upstart."
That ambitious lord

[1] "Jamais, même en rêve, tu ne me verras porter sous le bras du linge sortant de l'eau." Mohl.
[2] Couplet omitted. [3] Five couplets omitted.

Thus answered him: "May none prevail without thee."
They called one privily by night and set him
Before the Sháh who said: "Perform my bidding,
And rid earth's surface of Khusrau Parwíz."
He said: "I will, and charm love from my heart,
So let the Sháh assign me from his store
Banc, and some dark night when Khusrau Parwíz
Is drunken I will drug his wine. This way
Is better than to shed his blood."
The son,
Unwitting that his ruin was proposed,[1]
Sat in his palace gloriously, intent
On charming Idols and on pleasant wine,
And ignorant of all. A chamberlain
Heard of the plot, banned appetite and sleep,
Sped to Khusrau Parwíz and made all clear.
He, hearing that the monarch of the world
Was plotting secretly to slay him, fared
From Taisafún by night, and thou hadst said:—
"He vanished from the world." He did not give
His priceless head away but reached apace
Ázar Ábádagán. When tidings came
To all the chiefs—the marchlords of that province:—
"Khusrau Parwíz, aggrieved against the king, C. 186
Hath fled with some few cavaliers," those magnates
Sought for the traces of that well loved prince;[2]
All went, both troops and chiefs, to make him Sháh.
They said: "O prince! crown, throne, and helm befit thee,
And from Írán and desert of the spearmen
As many of the swordsmen and brave leaders,

[1] Reading with P. [2] Three couplets omitted.

As thou mayst wish, will come to thee. Thy Grace
Will lead the army on. Fear no disaster,
But live great, glad, and well beloved.[1] Although
Three hundred thousand horsemen of Írán
Shall mount the saddle to discomfit thee
We all will give our bodies to be slain
For thy sake and will honour those that fall."

He said: "I fear the Sháh and folk, ye chiefs!
Unless ye come before Ázargashasp,
And take great oaths to assure me that henceforth
Ye will be loyal to me; then will I
Abide here in all confidence and fear
Not Áhriman."

The warriors, when they heard
His words, all set forth for Ázargashasp.
They took the oath that he desired, protesting:—
"We hold thy love as precious as our eyes."

Assured about the chiefs he secretly
Sent agents everywhere to learn what said
His father of his flight and purposed next.

The Sháh, on hearing that Khusrau Parwíz
Had fled, sent hastily to put Bandwí
And Gustaham in bondage as suspects;
Both were the uncles of Khusrau Parwíz
Upon the mother's side and heroes bold.
All others of his kin beside these two
They also haled to ward without to-do.

[1] Two couplets omitted.

§ 28

How Hurmuzd sent Áyín Gashasp with an Army to fight Bahrám Chúbína and how he was slain by his Comrade

Then to Áyín Gashasp thus spake the Sháh :— C. 1861
" I lack advice and sorrow is my mate.
Now that my son hath gone how shall we treat
Bahrám Chúbína, that slight, self-willed slave ? "
Áyín Gashasp sought an expedient
To make his counsel gracious and replied :—
" Exalted Sháh ! Bahrám Chúbína oft
Hath spoken of me and of all things he
Desireth most my blood for I was first
To vex him privily, and to dispatch me
In fetters to him may prove serviceable."
The Sháh made answer : " This is not my work,
But miscreant Áhriman's. I will dispatch
A host ; be thou its leader and prevail ;
But send him first one of our counsellors
To learn his purpose. Fortune, if he seeketh
Power, crown, and throne, will turn from him at last,
While if he shall remain a loyal liege
'Twill be the better for him in the end.
Him will I give a portion of the world,
And set upon his head the heroes' crown.
The world hath scarcely such a warrior,
But, though like Rustam, he is still my thrall.
Inform me of his doings every whit ;
Proceed with diligence ; cut short the way."
The order given by the prudent Sháh
Áyín Gashasp obeyed.
There was a captive,
And fellow-citizen of his, within

The royal prison, eager for release.
On hearing that Áyín Gashasp, the horseman,
Was going to the war he sent to say :—
" O battle-loving warrior ! I am
Thy fellow-citizen and now in prison.
Thou art acquainted with my quality.
I, if thou wilt but beg me from the king,
Will fare with thee on this campaign and risk
My life before thee when I am released
From this strait prison-house."
Áyín Gashasp
Thereat sent to the monarch of the world
A man in haste to say : " There is in bonds
A fellow-citizen of mine in fear
And peril who will go with me if now
The Sháh will grant him pardon for my sake."
C. 1862 The Sháh replied : " How should this useless wretch
Fight in the front of thee ? Thou pleadest for
A murderer, a scamp, and thief ! Dost thou
Look for reward ? Still I have now no choice
Though 'twere the greatest of calamities."
He gave Áyín Gashasp that man compact
Of ill, that villain, thief, and murderer,
And then Áyín Gashasp led forth the host,
And marched like wind as far as Hamadán,
Where he encamped and asked : " Is any one
Skilled in astrology or presages
Within this noble city ? "
All replied :—
Our readers of the stars shall come before thee,
And earn thy praise."
An old, officious townsman
Came bustling up and said : " There is a dame
Both old and rich here, and thou mightest say :—
' She is the stars' eye.' What she saith is so ;
Her prophecies will surely come to pass."

Áyín Gashasp, on hearing this, dispatched
One with a horse for her and when she came
He asked her how the Sháh fared and of him
Who led the host, then added : " Bring thy lips
Close to mine ear and tell me if my soul
Will quit my swarthy body in its bed,
Or wounded by the weapon of a foe ? "
While thus he spake of secrets to the crone
With voice so low that none could overhear them
The man for whom he had obtained release,
And taken as companion on the journey,
Approached and, as he passed by that sage dame,
Looked at the general and went his way.
The ancient dame inquired : " What man is that ?
A blow of his will make one weep for thee.
Thy dear life lieth in his hand, and may
He perish, skin and marrow ! "
At her words
Áyín Gashasp recalled a former presage,
Which he had heard from readers of the stars
But had forgotten. Thus it ran : " Thy fate
Shall be in thy companion's hand—a man
Both mean and poor—who will go far with thee,
And in return for friendship shed thy blood."
He gave her presents and dismissed her quickly,
But could not sleep or eat for care. He wrote
A letter to the Sháh : " The man whom I
Send back should not have been released for he
Is worse than dragon's spawn, and so the Sháh
Informed his slave who lacked the imperial Grace.[1]
When this man cometh bid the ill-disposed[2] C. 1863
Behead him instantly."
He wrote and set

[1] The divine insight pertaining to lawful kingship.
[2] The executioner, according to Mohl, but execution sometimes was embittered by being entrusted to the hands of a private enemy.

His seal thereon. When it was dry he called
His fellow-citizen, much lauded him,
Bestowing gifts and many hearty blessings,
Then said: "Convey this letter unperceived
And quickly to the monarch of the world.
Bring his reply to me with all dispatch,
And see that thou remain not with the king."
The young man took the letter from the chief;
His mind was all surmises at that mission,
And thus he said: "I have endured enough
Of prison, heavy bonds, and want of food;
But God delivered me from my distress,
From grief, affliction, and mine evil fortune;
Yet now that I return to Taisafún
My blood and marrow seethe."
He journeyed sadly
Awhile, then broke the letter open, read it,
And marvelled at the process of the world.
He said: "My neighbour begged my life and urged:—
'The act is worthy of the prince,' so how
Should he be now insistent for my blood
Unless some dream hath moved him to this ill?
But now to bloodshed he shall see the way,
And rest from travail and endeavouring!"
He turned back musing, went as swift as wind,
And on arrival found the chief alone.
Áyín Gashasp was seated in his tent,
Without attendant, scimitar, and steed
Absorbed in thinking on the king and all
That fortune might inflict upon himself.
Now when his neighbour came within his tent
Áyín Gashasp knew that he proposed bloodshed.
The murderer drew his scimitar; the chief
Implored him much and said: "Deluded one!
Did not I beg thy lost life from the Sháh?"
The other answered: "Granted. What have I

Done that thou shouldst deal ill with me ? "
He smote
That noble chief across the neck, determined
His fighting and his feasting, and bore off
His bloody head unnoticed from the tent.
Let him that seeketh honour never be
Alone, in war-time more especially.
The miscreant left the murdered in his blood,[1]
Sped to Bahrám Chúbína and exclaimed :—
" See thy foe's head—the man's who sought to harm
thee !
He marched against thee, knowing not thy purpose."
Bahrám Chúbína asked : " Who is it ? Who C. 1864
Will mourn this head ? "
He said : " Áyín Gashasp,
The cavalier, who left the court for war."
Bahrám Chúbína said : " The man was good,
And he had come from court to reconcile
The Sháh and us, and thou hast ta'en his head
While sleeping ! Now will I requite thee so
That folk shall sore bewail thee."
He bade set
A gallows at the door in sight of all,
And gibbeted the wretch alive, thus rousing
The hearts of evil-doers. Many horsemen
Brought by Áyín Gashasp from court sought out
Bahrám Chúbína when their chief had perished,
While many others sought Khusrau Parwíz,
And some the Sháh. A flock will stray just so
Un-herded on a day of wind and snow.

[1] Or with Mohl . " Il sentit que le sang versé le rendait infâme."

§ 29

How Hurmuzd grieved, refused Audience to the Íránians, and was blinded by Bandwí and Gustaham

When tidings reached the king of that famed hero,
Áyín Gashasp, he shut the gate of audience
For grief; none saw him too with wine in hand;
He could not rest or eat or sleep; his eyes
Were full of tears. At court the talk ran much
Upon the Sháh and his secluded state.
One said: "Bahrám Chúbína seeketh fight,
Desirous of the throne of majesty."
Another said: "Aggrieved against the Sháh
Khusrau Parwíz is marching on Írán."
Confounded at the case the warriors
Each held a different view, and as the bruit
Arose from Taisafún the monarchy
Lost credit while its servants' heads were full
Of grief and wrath, preferring curse to blessing.
Few troops remained about the gate; the world
Grew strait to the Sháh's heart.
Then tidings reached
Bandwí and Gustaham: "The Grace of kingship
Is darkened."
All the captives loosed their bonds,
And sent forth one to ascertain and learn
What warriors' kept the portal of the Sháh,
1865 And having learned rebelled, threw off restraint,
And broke from ward; shouts rose that shook the plain;
The garrison were left remediless.
Appeared Bandwí and Gustaham in mail
With troops in arms. The cavaliers forthwith,

All unabashed, rode hot-foot to the court,[1]
And gallant Gustaham harangued the troops :—
" This is no trivial case, for if ye join
With us ye must ban reverence for the Sháh.
If ye will all gird up your loins in vengeance
For those Íránian chiefs, because Hurmuzd
Hath turned upon the innocent, henceforth
Hail him not, Sháh ; we will requite his deed,
And turn for him the waters of Írán
To colocynth. We will direct your course,
And set a new Sháh on his throne. If ye
Show weakness we will leave Írán to you :
A corner of the world will do for us,
And thither with our comrades will we go."
The whole throng at the words of Gustaham
Began to curse the Sháh's peace and exclaimed :—
" Down with a king that sheddeth his son's blood ! "
The troops thus heartened fired the palace-gate,
Made entry of the imperial hall, and reached
The presence of the Sháh, that man of Grace.
When they had ta'en his crown and flung him headlong
Down from his throne they set upon his eyes
The searing irons, and the radiant Lamps
Were darkened. Then they suffered him to live,
And gave his treasure shamefully to spoil.
Such are the doings of the exalted sky !
Affect not thou this Wayside Hostelry,
Wherefrom we have our whiles of wealth and woe,
And in the end must quit them both and go.
The hundredth and the hundred thousandth year
As soon as they are numbered disappear.
The man by whom good fortune would be won
Must speak no evil and must list to none.[2]

[1] Couplet omitted.
[2] In C. and P. the reign ends here.

§ 30

How Khusrau Parwíz heard of the Blinding of Hurmuzd

C. 1866 Then Gustaham sent to Ázargashasp
One with two roadsters to Khusrau Parwíz
In haste by night with tidings from Írán.
The messenger approached the youthful Sháh
(The moon was one night old) and told what he
Had heard of or had seen in that revolt.
The young prince paled like flower of fenugreek,
And cried: "Whoever quitteth wisdom's ways,
Obeying impulse through his lack of knowledge,
And fearless of the process of high heaven,
His life will profit not. If I found pleasure
In this thy tale of ill my food and sleep
Would turn to fire, but though, what time my father
Set hand to blood, I could no longer dwell
Within Írán yet I am still his slave,
And hearken to his words."
All seared at heart
He marched his host as swift as fire for fear
Lest that world-winner, great Bahrám Chúbína,
Should get the start of him, and so he led
His men from Barda' and from Ardabíl,
Troop after troop, while from Armenia
A power sped with the Sháh's son swift as wind.
As soon as tidings of him reached Baghdád:—
"The claimant of the throne of might hath come,"
The folk were all contented, and thereby
The atheling accomplished his desire.
The great men of the city—those that shared
The general joy—went out to welcome him,
Then going to the dwelling of the Sháh
Discoursed at large, and he approved their words.

They set an ivory throne upon the dais
With golden torque and with a sumptuous crown
That many a Sháh had worn: it had beheld
No lack upon the state. Khusrau Parwíz
Made entry of the city mournfully,
And visited his father with a sigh.[1]

[1] There is no break here in the original.

XLIII

KHUSRAU PARWÍZ

HE REIGNED THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS

ARGUMENT

The deposition of Hurmuzd leaves Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína rivals for the throne. After abortive negotiations Khusrau Parwíz is compelled to flee to Rúm and Hurmuzd is put to death. On the way to Rúm Khusrau Parwíz is saved from capture by the devotion of his maternal uncle Bandwí. Bahrám Chúbína assumes the crown and frustrates a plot against himself. Khusrau Parwíz is well received in Rúm, is given Cæsar's daughter in marriage, and returns to Írán with a Rúman army. He is joined by Bandwí and others. After a severe struggle Bahrám Chúbína is forced to take refuge with the Khán of Chín in whose service he greatly distinguishes himself but as he is preparing to invade Irán his death is compassed by Kharrád. son of Barzín, at the instigation of Khusrau Parwíz. The Khán avenges Bahrám Chúbína whose sister, Gurdya, he asks in marriage. Gurdya escapes with her brother's partisans to Írán. Khusrau Parwíz to avenge his father puts to death Bandwí whose brother Gustaham rebels and marries Gurdya. She murders her husband at the instigation of Khusrau Parwíz who marries her himself and accords pardon to her adherents. He treats the city of Rai harshly but relents at her request. He organizes the realm. Maryam, Cæsar's daughter, gives birth to Shírwí (Kubád) on which occasion Cæsar asks for the return of the True Cross but is refused. The poet then tells of the case of the fair Shírín, who murders Maryam, and that of Bárbad, the minstrel, and of the greatness of Khusráu Parwíz. Shírwí is imprisoned, but the troops at length revolt and release him. Khusrau Parwíz is dethroned and put in ward.

NOTE

Khusrau Parwíz (Chosroes II, A.D. 590–628) was contemporary with three Eastern Roman Emperors—Maurice (A.D. 582–602), Phocas (A.D. 602–610), and Heraclius (A.D. 610–642). The word "Parwíz" seems to be a variant of the Persian word "Pírúz" which means "victorious." Certainly Khusrau Parwíz did more to justify such a title than any Sháh since the days of Darius Hystaspis. Egypt and the whole of the Roman possessions in Asia fell into his hands, and Persian troops were encamped within a mile of Constantinople. The genius of Heraclius, however, at length turned the tide. On all these great events the Sháhnáma is silent and the bulk of the material of the reign is made up from the Romance of Bahrám Chúbína[1] which leaves his sister, Gurdya, firmly established in the favour of Khusrau Parwíz though with Shírín in the neighbourhood it seems doubtful whether she would be allowed to retain her position long.[2] The reign is the last great one of the poem and towards the end of it

"bad begins, and worse remains behind."

§ 4. Tabarí also states that the meeting between Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína took place on the Nahrawán.[3]

§ 5. The proverb is in the Persian Tabarí but is spoken by Khusrau Parwíz when about to combat with three Turks.[4] See below.

§§ 6–7. In the Persian Tabarí the three Turks are encountered by Khusrau Parwíz after his return from Rúm,[5] not as here and in Tabari.[6]

§ 8. "Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive."

probably about represents the share of responsibility that Khusrau Parwíz had in his father's murder. Bandwí and Gustaham were his maternal uncles.

§ 9. According to the Persian Tabarí Bahrám, the son of Siyáwush, had married Bahrám Chúbína's niece.[7]

Firdausí's description of Khusrau Parwíz' place of refuge is somewhat grandiloquent. It appears to have been a hermitage[8] or monastery.[9]

§§ 12. For the wife of Bahrám, son of Siyáwush, see above.

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[1] See p. 72.
[2] *Cf.* pp. 364, 389
[3] NT, pp. 274, 278.
[4] ZT, ii. 292.
[5] *Id* p. 291.
[6] NT, pp 274, 280.
[7] ZT, ii. 283.
[8] *Id.* 280.
[9] NT, p 281.

Mausíl, prince of Músh, was a member of the Mamigonian family, celebrated in Armenian history.[1]

§ 13. Khusrau Parwíz, on quitting Ctesiphon in his flight, crossed the Euphrates and went to Ambar, thence followed the course of the stream and recrossing it reached the Roman frontier-station of Circesium. Subsequently at the invitation of the Emperor Maurice he took up his residence at Hierapolis.[2]

According to the Persian Tabarí the Arab was Ijás, son of Kabísa. He was one of the chiefs of the Baní Tayy tribe[3] famous for its hospitality. He was made governor of Híra by Khusrau Parwíz after the execution of Nu'mán, the last prince of the dynasty, and commanded the Persians at the battle of Dhú Kár.[4] The Persian Tabarí omits the meeting with the merchant.

Kársán looks like a Persian form of Circesium but is a shortened form of Káristán, a busy place. The miracle is not in the Persian Tabarí.

Warígh, as appears from the account in the Persian Tabarí,[5] was Rakka (Nicephorium, Callinicus) now in ruins. Some miles to the south-west of it lay the city of Reseph or Rasafa, also now in ruins, in which was the shrine of the celebrated Saint Sergius who with his consort Saint Bacchus suffered martyrdom under Maximian. The town was in consequence known as Sergiopolis. Either from a genuine but temporary impulse or from policy Khusrau Parwíz during his exile in Rúm much affected Christianity, adopted Sergius as his patron Saint and after recovering his throne still continued to send gifts to, and ask favours of, that shrine. Tabarí makes Sergius the leader of the Roman army that effected the restoration of Khusrau Parwíz.[6] In the Sháhnáma the hermit=Sergius.

§ 17. The terms on which the Emperor Maurice agreed to help Khusrau Parwíz included the cession of Dárá, Martyropolis, and perhaps Nisibis.[7] Western authorities are silent about the marriage of the Emperor's daughter Maryam to Khusrau Parwíz, but Nöldeke points out that Shírwí's pre-eminence at the Persian court is best explained by the assump-

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[1] *Id.* 285, RSM, 319.
[2] NT, p. 282 *note*, RSM, p. 480 and *note*.
[3] ZT, ii. 286.
[4] NT, p. 333 *seq* ZT, ii. pp. 286, 318 *seq*.
[5] ZT, ii 288 For Dhú Kár see p. 190.
[6] See NT, p. 284 and *note*, ZT, ii. 288, GDF, v, 375 and *note*, RSM, p. 497 and *note*.
[7] NT, p. 285 *note*, RSM, p. 482 and *note*, GDF, v. 375 and *note*.

tion that his mother was a princess. Shírín, who naturally was antagonistic to him in the interests of her own son, Mardánsháh, was unable to prevail against him.[1]

§§ 19–20. These are not in the Persian Tabarí.

§ 21. The army lent to Khusrau Parwíz by the Emperor was commanded by Narses, a Persian in the Roman service, an able general who was afterwards cruelly put to death by Phocas.[2] Nivátús (Theodosius) was the seven years old son, and so described in the Persian Tabarí,[3] of Maurice and had already been crowned by the Emperor. He may have accompanied Narses.[4]

§ 23. The mission of Dárá Panáh is not in the Persian Tabarí.

§§ 24–26. Historically the events of the campaign seem to have been briefly as follows :—Khusrau Parwíz with his Roman allies marched to the lesser Zab in order to effect a junction with his native and Armenian supporters with whom were his two uncles and Mausíl. Bahrám Chúbína vainly tried to prevent this. He then offered battle with his back to the Zagros mountains but was compelled to retreat to higher ground where Khusrau Parwíz attacked him against the opinion of Narses, who, however, with his Roman troops saved the situation when Khusrau Parwíz was in imminent danger of disaster. This incident appears as the intervention of Surúsh in the Sháhnáma.[5] In the meantime a detachment of the allied forces had occupied Seleucia and Ctesiphon. The outcome of the situation was that Bahrám Chúbína retreated through the mountains in his rear to the neighbourhood of Takht-i-Sulaimán in order to maintain his communications with Rai and eastern Irán generally. He was pursued and after a further retirement was defeated decisively and escaped with the remnant of his forces by way of Rai and Dámaghán to the Turks.

§ 27. The Persian Tabarí lays the scene with the carline in the neighbourhood of Hamadán. Thence Bahrám Chúbína proceeds to Rai and Dámaghán. He then defeats a mountain-chief named Káran and takes him prisoner but releases him.[6]

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[1] NT, p. 283 *note*, RSM, p. 504 *note*.
[2] GDF, v. 373 and *note*, 391.
[3] ZT, II. 291.
[4] NT, p. 284 *note*.
[5] See p. 299.
[6] ZT, II. p. 296 *seq*.

§ 30. According to Sásánian usage Khusrau Parwíz inaugurates his reign by visiting the Fire-temple at Shíz.[1]

§ 31. The death of Firdausí's son took place apparently about A.D. 1004.

§ 32. In the Persian Tabarí the name of the chief that domineered over the Khán was Paighú—the word used for the races of the north in Dakíkí's portion of the Sháhnáma.[2] He was the Khán's brother and claimed to have a better title to the throne.[3]

§ 34. In the Persian Tabarí it is a bear that carries off the Khán's daughter and Bahrám Chúbína rescues her.[4]

§ 37. In the Persian Tabarí the queen is concerned directly in the murder of Bahrám Chúbína. She is heavily bribed and provides the assassin.[5] So too in Tabarí.[6]

§ 39. The crafty Kharrád, son of Barzín, as Firdausí calls him, but whose real name was Hurmuzd Garabzín or Galabzín, may be identical with the chief who commanded one of the Persian wings at the battle of Dhú Kár[7] and was killed,[8] but according to the Sháhnáma he was alive at the accession of Kubád (Shírwí).

The battle of Dhú Kár, though the forces engaged in it do not appear to have been large, was a very memorable affair. The events that led up to it are given at length in Tabarí. It will be sufficient to say here that a long series of intrigues resulted in the execution of Nu'mán bin Munzír by order of Khusrau Parwíz. This ended the dynasty of the princes of Híra, and Ijás bin Kabísa[9] was appointed the Persian governor by the Sháh who ordered him to collect and dispatch to the Persian court all Nu'mán's effects. The Arab chief, Háni bin Mas'úd, who had been entrusted with them refused to give them up. Khusrau Parwiz instructed Ijás to enforce compliance, and the battle of Dhú Kár, in which the Persians were overthrown, followed. Where Dhú Kár was is not clear but it was not far from the Euphrates and Kúfa, and had an all the year round water-supply which made it a great resort of the Arab tribes in the summer at which season the battle was fought. The Arabs celebrated their victory with songs of triumph, and its results and those of the Persian policy that

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[1] Vol. i. p 60.
[2] Vol. v. p. 21 and *note*.
[3] ZT, ii. 302.
[4] *Id.*
[5] *Id.* 303.
[6] NT, p, 289.
[7] See below.
[8] NT, pp. 289 and *note*, 335 *note*, 338, 341, 342.
[9] *Cf.* p. 188.

led up to it were very important. The destruction of the dynasty of the princes of Híra, which had formed a buffer-state between the Persians and the Arabs, was a political blunder. The defeat was a display of weakness on the part of the Persians in a region at no great distance from their own capital. It gave the Arabs independence, encouraged them to make raids into Persian territory, and was a glorious and stimulating memory with which tradition soon associated Muhammad himself when the time came for the great Arab invasion of Írán. For these reasons the battle called for some notice here although there is no mention of it in the Sháhnáma. It was fought some time between A.D. 604–610.[1]

§§ 40–42. According to Tabarí the Khán wished to marry Gurdya to his brother who pursues and is killed by her.[2]

§§ 44–47. On these see NT, p. 478 *seq.* The story of the revolt of Gustaham seems only to be known from various versions of the Romance of Bahrám Chúbína. Bandwí appears to have been killed early in the reign about the year A.D. 591. Gustaham rebelled shortly afterwards and held out till about A.D. 595.

§ 52. Shírwí seems to have been Khusrau Parwíz' eldest son but who his real mother was is unknown.[3] His troubles with his father sprang from Shírín's ambition on behalf of her own son, Mardánsháh.[4]

§§ 53–54. According to the Sháhnáma the Cross had been long indeed in the possession of the Persians. Here the carrying off is attributed to Ardshír not Dáráb.[5] Historically they took it when they captured Jerusalem in A.D. 614.[6] It was given back as one of the terms of peace between Heraclius and Kubád (Shírwí) in A.D. 628.

The statement that Jesus laughed upon the Cross is a corollary from the notion, common among the Gnostics, that he was not really crucified but some one in his stead. The more accurate form of the statement would be that quoted in Photius from a work called "The Journeys (or Circuits) of the Apostles" (Ἀποστόλων Περίοδοι) *viz.* that Christ was not crucified but another in his place, and that therefore he laughed at the crucifiers (Τὸν Χριστὸν μὴ σταυρωθῆναι ἀλλ' ἕτερον ἀντ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ καταγελᾷν διὰ τοῦτο τῶν σταυρούντων).[7] Muhammad in the Kurán

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[1] See for the above generally NT, p. 310 *seq.* and *notes*, ZT, ii. 309 *seq.*
[2] NT, p. 289. [3] *Cf.* p. 188. [4] NT, p. 357, *note.*
[5] Vol v. p. 306, and *note.* [6] NT, p. 291 *note.* [7] BPB, cod. 114.

adopted this view which of course became the belief of his followers :—" They slew him not and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness."[1]

§ 56. Shírín has been described by different authorities as of Roman, Greek, Armenian, and Persian descent. She has been identified also with Maryam, the problematical wife of Khusrau Parwíz—a view that receives no support from the Sháhnáma. There is a general agreement that she was a Christian.[2] According to the Sháhnáma the association of Khusrau Parwíz with Shírín began during his father's lifetime. This is affirmed also in some accounts quoted by Mír Khánd according to which Shírín was in the service of a Persian noble at whose house Khusrau Parwíz in his youth occasionally visited. There he saw Shírín, fell in love with her, and gave her a ring. The noble got to know of what was going on and ordered a servant to drown her. She saved herself, however, with the servant's connivance and took refuge with a hermit. After Khusrau Parwíz became Sháh she got the ring conveyed to him, and he carried her off to Madá'in in great state.[3] If Shírín really managed to retain her influence over Khusrau Parwíz for the best part of a lifetime she must have been possessed of a very exceptional personality. The devotion to her of her lover, Farhád, is celebrated in Nizámí's poem of " Khusrau and Shírín " (A.D. 1180). Farhád, famous for his architectural and engineering skill, seems to be an historical character. To him with some probability may be attributed the responsibility for Khusrau Parwíz' triumphal arch at Takht-i-Bústán[4] near Kirmánsháh and his palace at Mashíta (Mashetta) some twenty-five miles due east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. The date of the construction of this palace, of which the exquisitely carved stone façade is now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum at Berlin, however, is still disputed.[5] Farhád is not mentioned in the Sháhnáma. In the Persian Tabarí Shírín is stated to have been a Greek, to have predeceased Khusrau Parwíz, and to have been loved by Farhád, but it is not said that she was in love with him.[6] Firdausí does not suggest that she was of other than Persian

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[1] RK, p. 551 and *note*. *Cf.* SK, i. 62 and *notes*, 116 and *notes*.
[2] *Cf.* p. 195. [3] RM, Pt. I. Vol. ii. p. 399.
[4] For an illustration see PCHAP, p. 135
[5] A general view of the ruins, as they were, and a detail of the ornamentation, are given in RSM, p. 594 *seq*. [6] ZT, ii. 304.

origin, and she is said to have been a native of Khúzistán.[1] Her name is derived from the Persian word for milk "shír" and so comes to mean "sweet."

§ 57. A somewhat similar story is told of the Egyptian Amasis by Herodotus.[2]

§ 58. The murder of Maryam by Shírín is on the face of it a poetical fiction suggested by the known enmity felt by Shírín with regard to Shírwí who, as a parricide to be, is here represented in an unfavourable light. His imprisonment probably was brought about by Shírín in the interests of her own son Mardánsháh and nearly had the effect desired.[3]

§ 60. In the Persian Tabarí Sarkash is called Sergius.[4]

§ 61. The palace here referred to must be the Takht-i-Khusrau whose façade and vast hall on the left bank of the Tigris some twenty-five miles below Baghdád form the finest remains of Sásánian architecture. The palace, however, seems to have been built not in the days of Khusrau Parwíz but in those of his grandfather Núshírwán and, as Firdausi states, a Rúman architect may have been employed.[5] Khusrau Parwíz from about the time of the outbreak of the Roman war (A.D. 603), after the murder of the Emperor Maurice by Phocas till nearly the end of his reign, held his court at Dastagird not at Ctesiphon.[6]

§§ 63–65. The reign of Khusrau Parwíz bears a considerable resemblance to that of Assurbanipal (B.C. 668–626). Their seats of government were on the same historic stream—Dastagird and Madá'in in the former case, Nineveh and Chalah in the latter. Both reigns were long and the last great ones of their respective dynasties. The wars of both monarchs covered much the same ground—Syria, Armenia, Asia Minor and Egypt. In both cases a season of military brilliancy and territorial expansion was followed by one of cumulative disaster. In both cases the national resources were over-strained and in both cases the subsequent collapse came with startling suddenness.

The account given by Firdausí of the causes that led to the fall of Khusrau Parwíz and of the fall itself may be amplified from other authorities thus:—In A.D. 626 the Sásánian Empire, though it had suffered shrewd blows in the previous

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[1] NT, p. 283 *note*. [2] RH, Bk. ii, ch. 172. [3] p 196. [4] ZT, II. 305.
[5] For an illustration of the ruins see RSM, frontispiece.
[6] See p. 194.

campaigns of Heraclius, was still after nearly a quarter of a century of warfare far from being worsted. It was not Khusrau Parwíz but Heraclius that made several vain attempts to bring about peace. The Persian army under Shahrbaráz (the Guráz of Firdausí) still occupied Chalcedon, divided only by a mile, but an impassable mile, of sea from Constantinople. The Persians had good cause to deplore their lack of sea-power. To get over this difficulty they made arrangements for a mixed horde of Avars, Slavs, and other tribes, who had no straits to cross, to attack Constantinople. That city was besieged accordingly but proved impregnable to the resources of the barbarians. Heraclius, meanwhile, contented himself with operations in Lazica but his brother, Theodore, worsted the Persians in Asia Minor. In this connexion we have an instance of the way in which Khusrau Parwíz treated his unsuccessful generals. The defeat of the Persians on the occasion in question seems largely to have been due to the effects of a severe hail-storm. Khusrau Parwíz, however, was very wroth and when the Persian commander died of despondency shortly afterwards he had the body embalmed and sent to him to be maltreated.[1] In A.D. 627 Heraclius determined on a Winter-campaign against his enemy's capital. He defeated the Persians near Nineveh on December 12th and then marched on Dastagird, some seventy miles above Ctesiphon, where Khusrau Parwíz had held his court for the previous twenty years in consequence, it is said, of a prediction made to him when besieging Dárá in the days of the Emperor Phocas that he would perish on the next occasion that he entered Ctesiphon.[2] Nevertheless he retreated thither, abandoning Dastagird to its fate, and then crossed the Tigris to Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia), taking with him Shírín, two sons of his by her, and three daughter-wives.[3] His eldest son, Shírwí, and his other sons were in internment at 'Akr Bábil, a state-prison near Babylon.[4] At Bih-Ardshír the Sháh armed his personal attendants *etc.* and sent them to reinforce the defeated Persian army which had made no effective stand since the battle of Nineveh. These combined forces, with two hundred elephants, took up their position on the river Arba, a short distance from Ctesiphon and broke down the bridges.[5] On January 7th A.D. 628 Heraclius advanced from Dastagird, which he had devastated,

[1] CTC, Vol. i. p. 485.
[2] *Id.* pp. 494, 496
[3] *Id.* 496, 499.
[4] NT. p. 356 and *note*.
[5] CTC, p. 498.

and three days later encamped within twelve miles of the Arba. He sent George, the leader of the Armenian contingent, to reconnoitre the Persian position and on his report retreated northwards to the neighbourhood of Lake Urumiah where he passed the rest of the Winter. Shortly before he had made another of his appeals to Khusrau Parwíz for an accommodation: "I follow thee and am instant for peace, for I do not of mine own will consume Persia with fire but because I am forced thereto by thee. Now therefore let us throw down our arms and welcome peace. Let us put out the fire before all is burned." The Sháh refused the offer to the exasperation of his people[1] with whom he was already very unpopular because, according to Tabarí, he despised them and treated their great men without regard, had given the barbarian Farrukhánzád, son of Sumai, power over them, and ordered the execution of the captives, and intended to put to death the Persian troops defeated by Heraclius.[2] He had also, it seems, sent instructions for the putting to death of the Persian general Shahrbaráz, but the bearer of the letter was taken by the Romans. Heraclius informed Shahrbaráz who falsified the letter by making the order apply to forty other chiefs as well as to himself and read out the dispatch as altered to the assembled Persian leaders. In their wrath they renounced their allegiance to Khusrau Parwíz, made terms of peace with Heraclius, and decided to quit Chalcedon and return home.[3] Khusrau Parwíz also had managed to offend his native Christian subjects. In earlier days he had been disposed favourably towards them, and we have seen how he placed himself under the special protection of S. Sergius,[4] while his wife, Shírín, was a Christian of the Nestorian persuasion. She was, however, lured over to the Monophysites and used her influence against the Nestorians who in consequence were not allowed to choose a Catholicus. A very highly esteemed Nestorian named Yazdín was chief tax-collector. After his death Khusrau Parwíz seized his property and did not bestow by way of compensation the vacant post on Yazdín's son, Shamtá, who also was a Nestorian and afterwards took a prominent part in the revolt against the Sháh. Towards the end of the reign the Monophysites also had cause for complaint against

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[1] *Id.*
[2] NT, p. 356. The prisoners are said to have numbered 36,000.
[3] CTC, i. 497. [4] p. 188.

Khusrau Parwíz. Generally speaking, too, all Christians must have been horrified at the sack of Jerusalem and the carrying off of the True Cross.[1] There was therefore no lack of discontent throughout the army and nation generally. The retreat of Heraclius, however, at a moment when the state seemed threatened with imminent peril, might have staved off matters for a while had it not been for the question of the succession. It is said that Khusrau Parwíz when he fled from Dastagird to Ctesiphon was suffering from dysentery and wished to secure the crown for his son Mardásas (Mardánsháh), the offspring of Shírín.[2] Shírwí, the Sháh's eldest son, who was in internment with many of his brothers, was therefore in a situation of imminent peril. A conspiracy was formed to make him Sháh and rescue the captives in the prisons. Among the conspirators were two sons of Shahrbaráz, Shamtá, son of Yazdín, and Mihr Hurmuzd, the son of a former governor of Nímrúz who had fallen a victim to Khusrau Parwíz' jealous suspicions.[3] A party of the nobles hastened to 'Akr Bábil and brought Shírwí by night to Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia) where, at the bridge of boats, which it would be important to seize, he was met by others of the conspirators. The prisons were thrown open, and that night Khusrau Parwíz heard the shouts that hailed Shírwí as "Kubád Sháhánsháh." When the rebels approached the palace in the early morning the royal bodyguard fled and Khusrau Parwíz escaped into his garden which was called "The Garden of the Indians" but was discovered shortly and taken prisoner. The date, according to our reckoning, was February 25th, A.D. 628.[4]

§ 1

The Prelude

Of heaven's dome revolving rapidly,
And ever restless in its instancy,
What shall I say? It giveth one a crown,
Another to the fishes in the sea;

[1] See for the above NT, pp. 357, 383 and *notes*. [2] CTC. 1. 499.
[3] NT, p. 379 and *note*. Nöldeke does not consider the execution of the governor historical. [4] *Id.* p. 356.

To one man naked hands and head and feet, C. 1867
No where to dwell in and no while to eat,
And to another beaver-skin, brocade,
And silk, with milk and honey for his meat.

The end of both, ensnared in bale's dark net,
Is in the dust, and had the sage ne'er set
Eyes on the world, nor passed through days of strife
As lord or liege, his lot were happier yet.

I treat the matter of Khusrau Parwíz,
And proffer to the reader novelties.[1]

§ 2

How Khusrau Parwíz sat upon the Throne and made an Oration

Whenas Khusrau Parwíz sat on the throne
Of gold the men of noble birth repaired
To him. They summoned all the chiefs and showered
Gems over that new crown. He thus addressed
The archmages: "No one save the fortunate
Can win this crown and throne. May mine employ
Be right alone for from injustice cometh
All loss. We purpose well to all. Our head
Is void of evil-doing. This new throne,
And this new fortune bright and opulent,
Are mine from God. Do ye withal incline
Your hearts to obey and covenant with us
To observe three things in all contingencies:
To harm not holy men, not to rebel,

[1] There is no break here in the original.

And to abstain from others' goods forwhy
The pang will pass to him that did the wrong,
Whene'er it chanced, and sold his heart for naught.
Now must your hands be washed from things like these,
The path of right ensued. Moreover wisdom
Approveth what accordeth best to manhood.
I have no difference with any one
Although such sought my crown and signet-ring.
The man of high birth and of noble nature
Will speak but right. Your safety is assured :
I will not work the works of Áhriman."
All those that heard the Sháh blessed crown and throne,
And going forth rejoicing praised his fortune,
While he descended from the throne of might
Right glad and mused upon Hurmuzd all night.

§ 3

How Khusrau Parwíz visited his Father and asked Forgiveness

C. 1868 Now when the ebon Veil had disappeared,
And in the distance cock-crow reached the ear,
The winner of the world with stricken heart,
And deeply sorrowful, approached his sire,
On seeing him lamented, did obeisance,
And tarried long with him. Khusrau Parwíz,
Beholding his sire's face, sighed deeply, kissed
His eyes and head and feet, then said to him
With full heart and with face all wet with tears :—
" My father, fortune's mate, thou memory
Of Núshírwán ! thou know'st that none had pricked

Thy finger had I been but there to help thee.
See what thou wilt command me; grief hath come
Upon thee and my heart is full. If now
Thou biddest I am at thy gate a slave
To guard thy head. I seek not crown, I want
Not host, and lay my head before thy throne."
Hurmuzd replied: "O prudent one! my day
Of misery will pass from me, and he
That perpetrated this will soon be gone:
Both trouble and delight are transient.
I ask three things of thee, no more, and one
Is that each morning at the break of day
Thou wilt delight mine ears with thine own voice;
The second is that thou wilt send to me
Some noble cavalier scarred with long fight
To talk to me of warfare and the chase,
And some old sage to hold discourse of kings,
And bring to me the records to abate
My pain and misery; and my third wish
Is that thy mother's brothers, who are not
Thine equals but thy slaves, shall never see
The world henceforth: discharge thy wrath on them
For all this grief."
"O king!" he made reply,
"May that man perish who deploreth not
Thine eyes and be thy foes, though their ill deeds
Be secret, banished from the world, but still
Consider in that lucid mind of thine:
Bahrám Chúbína hath been paladin
While with him there are countless forces—horsemen
And gallant sworders—and if we lay hand
On Gustaham no refuge will be left us;
But as regardeth an old scribe to read C. 18
The annals, and some war-primed cavalier,
Skilled in the feast withal, I will dispatch
Such ever new to thee. Be no whit sad,

And hold not thou the action Gustaham's ;
'Tis God's because of senseless words and deeds.
May thy heart bear this anguish, and may patience
Consort with wisdom ; but should fortune serve
I will myself exact complete revenge
On Gustaham and reprobate Bandwi,
And give them shroudless to the dogs to eat.
Be of good cheer, O son of Núshírwán !
And may thy soul be ever young."
He spake,
And left the presence weeping but reserved.
The son was kindlier-tempered than the king
In which regard a man of wisdom said :—
" A bland youth, sweet-tongued, is a better friend
Than some fierce warrior ageing to his end,
Yet at the last dust is the common lot
Of one of parts and one that hath them not ;
Albeit to learn of one there is no need,
Who saith that wits and fools are of one breed,
For knowledge will ensure thy fair surcease,
And heaven in Paradise will give thee peace.
As victuals serve to keep the body whole,
So knowledge is all needful for the soul.
Cry to the Holy and Supreme in all,
And be all undismayed at great or small."

§ 4

How Bahrám Chúbína heard of the Blinding of Sháh Hurmuzd and how he led his Troops against Khusrau Parwíz

Bahrám Chúbína heard how fortune dealt
With that famed king : " They set the searing irons

To his bright eyes, and those two Lamps, those twin
Narcissi of his garth, are dead, his son
Is seated on his throne and his high fortune
Is trodden underfoot."
Bahrám Chúbína,
The hero, was amazed, grew wan, and pondered.
He said: "The time for me to fight hath come;
By daring I will seize the world."
He bade
To bear forth to the field the kettledrums
And flag of majesty. He packed the baggage,
He called his warriors to horse and spake
Of waging war against Khusrau Parwíz.
His host, as 'twere a moving mountain, marched
Audaciously as far as Nahrawán.
Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing, was in dudgeon C. 18
At such swift action and sent spies to note
The progress of events with these behests:—
"We first must learn the feeling of his troops:
If like Bahrám Chúbína they intend
To fight or whether we shall have delay,
And whether he be foremost at the centre
Or at the wings, his state at audience-time,
And if he hunteth while upon the march."
They went unnoted by the troops, gat news,
And came back to the Sháh all privily.
They said: "His troops are for Bahrám Chúbína,
All from the highest chieftains to the boys.
In marching he is sometimes at the centre,
And sometimes with the right or left or baggage.
We saw him long of sight and diligent—
A cautious warrior and cavalier.
His kinsmen all are in his confidence;
He hath no need of strangers, giveth audience
In royal fashion, hunteth on the plain
With cheetahs, knoweth but the usages

Of Sháhs, and readeth all the book of Dimna."[1]
Khusrau Parwíz said to his minister :—
" A long task faceth us. Bahrám Chúbína,
When he is charging at an enemy,
Would break the hearts of dragons in the deep,
And from the monarch of the world withal
Hath learned the methods of the kings of kings,
While, thirdly, with Kalíla,[2] so to speak,
As minister none hath so shrewd a scribe."
Then said he to Bandwí and Gustaham :—
" Our mates are grief and toil."
Now when Gurdwí,
Dármán, the monarch of Armenia,
Shápúr and Andamán, shrewd chiefs and fighters,
Were set in secret conclave with the Sháh
He thus addressed them : " Mighty warriors !
When wisdom is a light within the brain
Then knowledge is the body's coat of mail,
Which naught except the sword of death will sever,
A sword whereto a steel helm is as wax.
I am but young to you so cannot walk
The world aright ; instruct me what to do.
Who suffereth from these wounds ? "
An archmage said :—
" Thou wilt be happy and the Grace and provand
1871 Of empty brains. Now since the mystery
Of this our whirling world grew manifest
Hath wisdom been disparted into four.
One portion is the king's for Grace and wisdom
Fit him ; another is the pious man's ;
The third the loyal liege's who as near
The royal person tendereth advice ;
The wise account the small part left the thane's.
The impious and unthankful have no wisdom.
If now the king will hear the old sage's words,

[1] The Fables of Bidpai See Vol. vii. p. 382. [2] *Id.*

And fix his heart's eye on them, he will eat
Their fruit when they have passed within his heart."
The Sháh replied: "Were I to write this down
In gold its Grace and vogue would ask no less;
The archimages' utterances are gems,
But I have other purposes at heart,
For when our two hosts meet, and when our spearheads
Shall reach to Gemini, I shall not be
Blamed if I quit the centre and advancing
Before the host call to Bahrám Chúbína,
That impious and self-seeking general,
Show him a peaceful face, make much of him,
And praise him. If he shall receive my words
'Tis well, for who at court can be his peer?
But if he seeketh fight I too will fight,
And range my host against his."
All the leaders
Assented to his scheme, the great applauded,
And hailed him king of earth; all said: "Oh! be
The ills of fortune far from thee, O king!
Be victory, Grace, majesty, and crown
Of king of kings thine own."
He answered thus:—
"So be it; enough. May none of us behold
Disunion or defeat."
Then from Baghdád,
And with new camp-enclosures, he marched forth
Upon the plain. As the two powers drew near
Upon the march, the captain of the host's
On that side and on this the Sháh's, and when
The world's light had been taken in the toils,
And pitchy night had shaken out its locks,
Scouts went forth from both hosts to guard the approaches;
And when night, frighted by the sword of day
Had fled dry-lipped and quaking, rose the din

Of tymbals from both camps and Sol led forth
To war. Then at the Sháh's command Bandwí
And Gustaham put on their iron helms,
1872 And went with other chiefs of ardent soul
Toward the canal[1] of Nahrawán, whereat
The outpost came before Bahrám Chúbína,
And said: "There is a force two bowshots off."
On hearing this he ranged his host and called
His veterans and bestrode a piebald steed
With musk-black tail—a noble caracoller
With brazen hoofs. An Indian scimitar
Sufficed to arm him, and its stroke was like
The levin from the cloud. He urged his horse
As 'twere a lightning-flash. That miscreant,
Ízid Gashasp, was on his left. Withal
There came Hamdán Gashasp[2] and Yalán-sína,
All rage and enmity, while three bold Turks,
Sprung from the Khán, made ready to take vengeance
Upon Khusrau Parwíz and swore: "When we
Shall see the Sháh out-distancing his troops,
Him will we bring to thee in bonds or slain,
And thy realm shall repose in peace."
On one side
There was Khusrau Parwíz and on the other
The paladin, between was Nahrawán,
While on both sides the armies watched them meet,
And how the paladin the Sháh would greet.

§ 5

How Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína met and parleyed

Bahrám Chúbína and Khusrau Parwíz
Thus met, one cheerful and the other grim.

[1] "Spring" in the original. [2] Reading with P.

The world-lord rode an ivory grey and wore
A gold and jewelled crown; his robe from Chín
Was of brocade of gold. Gurdwí as guide
Preceded him, Bandwí and Gustaham
Were at his side, and therewithal Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, who wore a helm of gold.
They all were clad in iron, gold, and silver;
Their golden girdles were occult with gems.
Bahrám Chúbína paled with rage on seeing
The king of kings and thus addressed his chiefs :—
This whoreson miscreant from low estate
And boorish manner hath attained to manhood,
Grown powerful and girt himself for action.
The writing of the down is manifest
Upon the ivory rondure of his face;
So now he hath become Sháh Farídún
With mace and crown and caught the imperial style,
But speedily will this world end for him.
This dark-souled bastard leadeth on his troops
Like Núshírwán. Scan thoroughly his host
To see if there be of it one of name.
I cannot spy one warlike cavalier C. 1
That could confront me for a single breath.
Now shall he look upon the deeds of men,
Steeds charging, scimitars, the dust of war,
The clash of battle-axes, showers of arrows,
The heroes' shouts, the captives, give and take.
The elephants are driven from the field
When I march forth to battle. At our voice
The mountains melt and warriors lose their prowess.
I take the rivers with my sword and turn
Their waters into blood."
He spake and spurred
His pied steed, thou hadst said: "His flying eagle."
He chose himself a narrow battlefield,
The troops in wonder watching him, and thence

Went on to Nahrawán and there confronted
The glorious Great with certain of Írán,
Armed for the conflict with Khusrau Parwíz,
Who said: "O noble chiefs! who recogniseth
Bahrám Chúbína?"
Said Gurdwí: "O king!
Observe the warrior on the piebald steed,
With white juppon, black baldrick, and who rideth
About among the troops."
He recognised
The man at sight and said: "Yon lengthy one,
Smoke-hued and riding on the noble piebald?"
Gurdwí replied: "The same and bent on ill."
"If thou shouldst question," said Khusrau Parwíz,
"That crook-back he would answer churlishly;
With that hooked nose and half shut eyes 'he hath,'
Thou wouldest say, 'a wrathful heart.' Thou seest
That he is wicked by his looks, God's foe.
I mark naught of submission in his head,
And that none will command him."
To Bandwí
And Gustaham he said thereafter: "I
Will give an illustration of this saw:—
'If 'neath the load the donkey will not pass
Then take the weighty burden to the ass.'
If some bold dív hath gulled Bahrám Chúbína
How should he see God's way? All hearts that ache
With greed are helped not by the advice of wisdom.
When thou goest forth to war debate is over.
We must consider all from first to last:
Who knoweth which will conquer in the fight,
Which host be doleful or illustrious?
Considering those troops so well arrayed,
And with a leader eager for the fray,
Such as Bahrám Chúbína is—a man
Grim as a lusty dív—and militants

Like ravening wolves, I will, with your consent, C. 187
So that disgrace may not attach to me,
Be first to make advances; 'twill be better
For me than showing slackness in the fight.
If I receive from him a fair reply
His late misdoings shall be obsolete;
I will bestow some corner of the world
Upon him and by bounty earn his thanks;
Our warfare and endeavours in the field
Shall end in peace—a gain to us. No doubt
The wisest course is safest. Good folk joy
When monarchs act as merchants do."
"O king!"
Said Gustaham, "live happily while time
Shall last. Thou scatterest gems in talk and art
More wise. Do what thou willest. Thou art just,
And yon slave is unjust; thy head is full
Of brains and his of wind."
Khusrau Parwíz,
On hearing this, advanced before his troops,
Held distant parle with brave Bahrám Chúbína,
And sought for feast in war-time. Thus he said:—
"Illustrious man! what business hast thou here
Upon the battlefield? Thou art as though
The jewel of the court, the wealth of throne
And diadem, the army's prop in war-time,
And as a bright light at our festivals.
Thou art ambitious, brave, and servest God;
Ne'er may the Almighty take His hand from thee.
I have considered of thy case, approved
Thine acts, will entertain thee and thy troops,
And make my soul glad by the sight of thee.
I will appoint thee general of Írán,
As is but right, and I will pray to God
For thee."
When brave Bahrám Chúbína heard

He gave his black-tailed, piebald steed the rein,
Saluted from his seat, paused, and replied :—
" In good case, blithe, and fortunate am I,
And may the day of greatness ne'er be thine,
Who knowest not kingship whether just or not.
The Aláns' king in the conduct of his kingship
Is being helped by the unfortunate !
I have considered of thy case and suppled
A lasso for thy sake. I will erect
Forthwith a lofty gibbet, make thy hands
Fast in the coils, and hang thee up thereon
As thou deservest, giving thee a glimpse
Of fortune's bitterness."

Khusrau Parwíz
Heard and his cheeks became like fenugreek.
C. 1875 He knew : " Bahrám Chúbína will not yield,
And part with crown and throne," and thus replied :—
" Ingrate ! No good man would speak thus. When guests
Come to thy house from far dost thou revile them
At feasting-time ? This note is not the wont
Of Sháhs or of the exalted cavaliers.
No Arab and no Persian e'er have acted
Like this in thirty centuries. The wise
Would shame hereat, so go not thou about
The door of thanklessness. When guests give thee
A glorious greeting one must be a dív
To answer as thou dost. Ill days, I fear,
Await thee for thou knowest that thy counsels
Are troubled. Thy resource is in the hands
Of that Great King who liveth ever more,
Whose word is law. Thou sinnest in His sight,
And art ingrate, with person in disgrace,
And heart in fear. In calling me the king
Of the Aláns thou takest but one side
Of my descent unless I am unworthy

Of king of kingship and the cap of power
As having for my grandsire Núshírwán,
And for my sire Hurmuzd. Whom knowest thou
More worthy ? "
Said Bahrám Chúbína : " Wretch,
And mad in deed and word ! first, for thy talk
Of guests : thou art thyself new-fangled though
Thy talk is of the past. What have the words
Of Sháhs to do with thee ? Thou art no sage,
Or valiant cavalier. Thou wast the Aláns' king,
And now, though thou art chief thou art withal
Inferior to the slave of slaves. Thou art
A fruitless evil-doer in the world ;
No Sháh art thou or fit to lead the mighty ;
But me men bless as Sháh. I will not let thee
Set foot on earth. Moreover, when I said :—
' Thou art ill-starred, unfit for rule and kingship,'
I said it, worthless Sháh ! and may the state
Be never thine ! because the Íránians
Are foes of thine, will struggle to uproot thee,
Will rend thee, skin and veins, and give the dogs
Thy bones to eat."
Khusrau Parwíz replied :—
" Knave ! why so fierce and haughty, for foul words
Disgrace a man ? But from the very first
Thy disposition hath been thus ; clear wisdom
Is severed from thy brain. Blest is the noble
That eateth wisdom's fruits ! Fey dívs discourse
At large. I would not have a paladin
Like thee made weak and ruined by his temper.
I prithee banish anger from thy heart, C. 187
Be not so moved and charm away thy wrath.
Remember God, the just Possessor ; base
Thy wisdom on His justice. Thou hast now
A height before thee higher than Bístún,
And if a king shall ever come of thee

The Egyptian thorn will bear. Thy heart is full
Of thoughts of rule but we shall see what God
Ordaineth. Who hath taught thee such ill carriage,
Such principles of Áhriman, I know not,
But thy colloguer seeketh for thy death."

He spake and lighting from his ivory steed,
And taking from his head the precious crown,
Wailed with his face turned sunwards, put his hope
In God, and said: "O glorious Judge who bringest
The tree of hope to fruit! Thou knowest who
Is now affronting me, Thy slave, and how
We should for very shame bewail the crown.
If royalty is to desert our race
I will not strive but be a thrall within
A Fane of Fire and live on milk and herbs,
Hoard neither gold nor silver and at prayer-time
Wear woollen; but if rule is to be mine
Thee will I serve in truth and equity.
Oh! let my host prevail, give not my crown
And palace to a slave. If I succeed,
And haste to bring before Ázargashasp[1]
Crown, steed, and armlets, earrings, torque, and robe
Of gold adorned with gems, and pour withal
Upon the dome of lapis-lazuli
A hundred sacks of red dínárs, and give
The worshippers five thousand score of drachms,
When I become the monarch of the world,
Then will I strive to reinstate some city
Unjustly desolated and the haunt
Of onager and lion, leave it not
To thorns and weeds, but send on my return
From battle five score thousands of dínárs.
Those of the scions of Bahrám and others
That shall be brought to me as prisoners

[1] *i.e.*, when according to Sásánian custom he makes his pilgrimage to the Fire-temple at Shíz. *Cf.* Vol. 1. p 60.

Will I make servants of the glorious Fíre,
And glad the hearts of priest and archimage."
He spake these words and rose up from the dust;
That speaker sore-oppressed was justified.
Swift as a dust-cloud from the place of prayer
He came and shouted to Bahrám Chúbína:—
"Thou hellish, dív-like slave remote from wisdom,
And far removed from precedent and Grace!
Some rabid, tyrannous, and lusty dív C. 187
Hath blinded thee. Thou hast, in wisdom's stead,
Wrath and revenge, and won the dívs' applause.
A thornbrake is a city, Hell a garden
To thee; the lamp of wisdom hath died out
Within thy brain and robbed thy mind and heart
Of lustre. It was but a lying witch
That led thee thus through greatness to a fall.[1]
To-day thou settest hand upon a shoot
With leaves of bane and fruit of colocynth.
Thy stock ne'er so aspired nor is the aspirant
Applauded. God hath not bestowed on thee
The Grace and stature. Hast forgot Gurgín,
Son of Mílád ?[2] Thou unjust wretch! ne'er hope
For what will never be. The crab hath not
The eagle's wing nor doth the eagle soar
Aloft the sun. By holy God, by throne
And crown if I shall come upon thee hostless,
And if I blow a chilling blast upon thee . . . !
Thou hast not seen me yet in fight and I
Have heard but thy harsh words. I lean on Him
That giveth victory. If I am unworthy
To be a king let me not live a liege."
Bahrám Chúbína said: "Thou fool possessed!
Thy sire, that world-lord friendly to the Faith,
Who ne'er blew cold on anyone, thou knewest not

[1] *Cf.* p 156 *seq.*
[2] *Cf.* Vol. iii. p. 292 *seq.* and p. 72.

To prize but flungest vilely from the throne.
And thou wouldst fain be world-lord after him,
Be vigilant and wise! Thou art impure,
God's foe, and wilt experience naught but ill
From Him that giveth good, while if Hurmuzd
Had been unjust and time and earth exclaimed
Against him 'tis not fit for thee, his son,
To king it in Írán and in Túrán.
Thy life will not be passed upon the throne:
Content thee with the charnel for thou art
Afar from fortune. For Hurmuzd will I
Exact revenge; moreover, I am king
Within Írán. Now make this clear to me:
What upright man agreed that thou shouldst sear
The eyes of Sháhs or bid one do the deed?
Take thou henceforth the kingship to be mine
From Sun to Fish's back."[1]

Khusrau Parwíz
Replied: "May his sire's woe ne'er joy this slave.
Thus was it written and what was to be
Hath been; how long wilt thou add word to word?
C 1878 Thou makest thyself king, thou who at death
Wilt not possess a shroud! So far as folk,
And barded steeds can go thou art a monarch—
In expectation—but thou hast no house,
Home, land, and birth; thou art a windbag king.
With thy false title and such wares as these
Thou wilt not shine upon the royal throne.
There have been brave men ere thy time—aspirants
With massive maces—yet they never sought
The kingship, being lieges, nor pretended
To crown and throne, but thou becomest ever
More rabid and art lost to modesty.[2]
The World-lord maketh kings for justice-sake,
Or for their parts or on account of birth,

[1] See Vol. i, p. 71. [2] Couplet omitted

Bestowing kingship on the worthiest,
The wisest or the least injurious.
My sire made me the monarch of the Aláns
Since through thy wiles he was concerned for me,
And now God hath bestowed on me the kingship,
Throne, greatness, and the crown of power. I have them
From Him who is the Master of the world,
From Him who knoweth all, by the appointment
Of king Hurmuzd who from his sire received
The throne as heirloom, from high priest and sages,
The mighty men and the experienced chiefs,
According to the Faith which once Zarduhsht,
The wise and ancient, brought from Paradise,[1]
And gave Luhrásp the word of God, which he
Accepted and transmitted to Gushtásp.
All those that have aggrieved me, all whose treasures
I have received, are under my protection,
Be they my friends or foes. The mendicants
At lurk from wasted cities will I make
Rich, be they outcasts or of mine own kin,
And bramble-brakes like Paradise, fulfilled
With men, with cattle, and with tilth, ignore,
By way of compensation, no good thing
Until we quit this world for that, will make
Our heart the scales, will weigh, and use the might
Of our own arm. What time Hurmuzd, the world-lord,
Ruled justly, earth and time rejoiced in him.
The son past doubt should have his father's throne,
Should have the crown, the girdle, and the fortune,
But as for thee, thou wicked, crafty man,
Who wast the first to war against Hurmuzd!
No ill hath come unless by thy command,
Thy spells, thy guile, and plotting. If God will C. 1
I will make dark in vengeance for the Sháh

[1] See Vol. v., p. 33.

Bright Sol to thee. Now who deserveth crown,
And if not I who is there ? "

" Valiant one ! "

Rejoined Bahrám Chúbína, " he is worthy
That carried off from thee the sovereignty.
When, from the daughter of Pápak, Ardshír
Was born, and the Ashkánians had the sway,
Grew he not mighty and slew Ardawán,
Whose throne he won ? And now five hundred years
Have passed by and Sásánian heads and crowns
Are waxing cold. Now is my day for throne
And diadem ; the headship and the work,
Allied with conquering fortune, are for me.
When I behold thy fortune, face, and troops,
Thy crown and throne, like some led lion roused
Will I abolish the Sásánians,
Erase them from the roll and trample down
Sásán, both head and crown. The power should be
The Ashkánians' if the wise would hear aright."

Khusrau Parwíz replied : " Contentious fool !
If kingship is for those of royal race
What dost thou in their midst ? What are the folk
Of Rai but double-faced ? And what as men ?
But few at first they joined Sikandar's host,
And arming on the Rúmans' side soon won
The Kaian throne. It did not please the Maker,
And ruin came upon them from themselves ;
The Judge that giveth succour crowned Ardshír,
And he was worthy of the royal crown
Although he had no treasure and dínárs.
Those great men's work hath passed away, our words
Are wind. God choosing him for sovereignty
Saw naught but good in him. Now who deserveth
The government and who shall be the lord
Of this unstable world ? Inform me truly,
Choose the good path and shun perversity."

Bahrám Chúbína hearing changed his ground,
And said : " I am Bahrám, the warrior,
The rooter up of kings."
Khusrau Parwíz
Made answer : " Thou hast heard the sage's saw :—
' The equipage of greatness ne'er commit
To mean or wayward folk of little wit,
For they, when they have got it from thee, take
Their ease and if thou ask it back they quake.'
My father, who was rash and ill-advised, C. 188
Discerned not close from open and among
His many great and small gave men of straw
The royal equipage which came not back
Upon demand for he that was possessed
Thereof had grown intoxicate thereby.
What was the saying of the sweet-voiced sage ?
' 'Twill cause thee pain and toil to stablish men
Unstable : woo not the ungrateful then.'
Thou wast a brave man, keen and of high aims,
But thine ill nature made thee an ill-doer.
My father made thee first among the chiefs ;
Thou wast the greatest in the sovereignty ;
But royal favour and the silvern throne
Have made thee drunk and err. The name Chúbína
Is now Bahrám, the silvern throne become
A snare to thee. There seated thou art fain
To mount the moon ; thou wast the general,
And wouldst be Sháh. No sage e'er held such talk ;
I wot that thou consortest with the Dív."
Bahrám Chúbína answered : " Evil one !
Reviling is thy sole accomplishment.
Thou heedest not God's covenant, thou seekest
This state whereof thou art not worthy, and blindest
The Sháh ! How can such deeds as these be hidden ?
Thy friends are hostile, being thine in word,
But mine in heart. The Khán is mine ally

With all the armies of Írán and Chín,
For I am just and kindly with a hand
And sword. No enemy will conquer me.
I will transfer the power from Párs to Rai,
And ban the name of Kaian, set up justice,
And reinstate the customs of Mílád.[1]
I spring from famed Árash[2] and am in war
A fire unquenchable, the grandson I
Of great Gurgín and the consuming Flame
Upon Barzín. It was king Sáwa's mind
To leave not in Írán throne, crown, or signet,
To rase the Fanes of Fire and suffer not
Naurúz and Sada feast. The Iránians too
Were all enslaved till I girt up my loins,
And by an arrow from my bow determined
King Sáwa's life. If thou knowest not the sum
Of that rash monarch's troops go count a thousand
Four hundred times. Twelve hundred elephants
Of war had he. Thou wouldst have said: 'The earth
Will hold them not.' That great host fled while I
Roared like a lusty lion in their rear.
Know thou that none without accomplishment
Doth rashly seek the seat of mighty men.
My helmet savoureth of the crown, my sword
Will win the ivory throne, but if a gnat
Shall war with thee 'twill bring thee from thy throne
To earth."

Khusrau Parwíz replied: "Thou luckless!
Why not be mindful of Gurgín at Rai,
Whom fortune never succoured in the world,
And who had not throne, majesty, and state?
None knew thy name; thou wast obscure and poor.
The great Mihrán Sitád came and informed
The monarch of the age about thee, thus

[1] *Cf.* p. 72. [2] See Vol. vi. p. 197.

Exalting thee from darksome dust, but thou
Hast lost sight of that day! He furnished thee
With treasures, arms, and troops, and Rustam's banner
Resplendent as the moon. God did not will
That Turkmans out of Chín should waste Írán,
And helped thee in the fight with them; thy helm
Rose cloudward since the Lord of circling heaven
Willed the Great King success; but thou dost take
The merit to thyself who never sawest
The great and good. If kingship is to quit
The Kaian race why girdest thou thy loins?
'Twill need one like Sikandar to obscure
The fortune of the king of kings. Mayst thou
With thy dív's face and dusty hue attain
To naught except a ditch. Thy waywardness
And conduct dimmed the Sháh's days. Thou hast put
My name on drachms and striven to ruin me.
Thou art ill's source in this world and supreme
Among transgressors. Whereso blood is shed
The guilt is thine. Thou wilt not find by night
In slumber what thou seekest for all day
Beneath the sun. O luckless and unjust!
Give not thy whole time to perversity,
Inflict not rashly outrage on thyself,
And so remain unjust and miserable.
Think how to gain God's favour and make wisdom
And truth thy task for what is mine and thine
Will pass; time reckoneth our every breath.
Who will declare, when thou hast decked thy heart
With guile, that guile is better than the right?
At thy behest whate'er thou wilt is thine,
Thine to one half the realm. Then in this world
Thou wilt be happy, all at ease, and far

C. 1882 From hurt of foes, and when this Wayside Inn
Thou quittest thou wilt pass un-irked. No need
To labour this, for in the Zandavasta
Thus saith Zarduhsht : ' He that abandoneth
The holy Faith hath neither fear nor awe
Of God within his heart. Let him be counselled
For one year : if thy counsel profit not
Let him be slain by order of the Sháh,
And his offending corpse flung on the road :
But if he is the Sháh's own enemy
Let him be slain forthwith.' Men in good sooth
Will shed thy blood for thy perverted fortune
Requireth this. Now will a wretched life
Be thine and Fire thy place when thou departest.
If thou continuest long thus to revolt
From Sháh and from God's justice there will come
Remorse for thine unseemly words and deeds.
Thou ailest and the drug for thee is counsel ;
I am endeavouring to make thee whole,
But if desire and envy rule thy heart
Say so and I will send a different leech.[1]
Thy victories had made thee somebody,
But thoughts of treasure caused thee to rebel.
Heard hast thou that Zahhák was impious,
That dívs and warlocks filled the world with fear,
And how when he had vexed the nobles' hearts
The glorious Farídún entreated him.[2]
Thy troops, alive or dead, are all my slaves
At heart. Through thee they have obtained some glory,
And so have turned their heads from right, but when
I shall display my treasures, and incline
The warriors' hearts, not one of all this host
Will bide with thee because thou hast not name,
Or Grace or goods. When thou didst overcome

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] Vol. i. p. 168 *seq.*

King Sáwa all the troops believed that they
Would never see defeat, they were so drunk
And satiate with spoil. Thy warriors,
So fearless, must not perish by my hand;
I would not that the country of Írán
Should lose this mighty warrior-host—all chiefs
And nobles—and defeat befall the throne
Of might. Now tell me, in Árish's[1] days
Who was the Sháh for this may end our parley?"
Bahrám Chúbína answered: "Minúchihr
Was then the Sháh and had the host and crown."
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "Ill-natured one!
Thou know'st that he was monarch of the world;
Know'st thou not that Árish was but his slave, C 188.
And bowed to his directions and commands?
Just so it was with valiant Kai Khusrau
With such as Rustam for his officer,
For Rustam might have seized the world, the throne,
And style of Sháh, but held to precedent,
And never glanced that way. Then why dost thou
Not follow me and hail Khusrau Parwíz
As Sháh? Thou dust-face! thou art but a dív,
Like Áhriman; the crown and throne of Sháhs
Have stirred thy greed."
Bahrám Chúbína said:—
"Thou miscreant! rightly art thou from Sásán,
Who was a shepherd and was shepherd-born;
Pápak was not the first to make him one."[2]
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "Thou evil-doer!
Thine arrogance is not Sásán's. Thy words
Are wholly lies, and falsehood is no honour.
Thou comest of bad-natured, worthless men,
And spring'st not from Sásán."

[1] See Vol. v. p. 12.

[2] According to both the traditions given in the Sháhnáma Sásán's ancestors had been shepherds or in similar menial employment for generations. See Vols. v. p. 291, vi. 211.

"The shepherdship,"
Bahrám Chúbína answered, "of Sásán
Ne'er will be hidden."
Said Khusrau Parwíz :—
"Dárá, when dying, gave not to Sásán
The crown of majesty. Though lost was fortune
Was lineage lost ? No talk will turn injustice
To justice. Seek'st thou, having for thine own
Such prudence, rede, and Grace, the imperial throne ?"

§ 6

How Bahrám Chúbína and Khusrau Parwíz returned, how Gurdya advised Bahrám Chúbína, and how Khusrau Parwíz told his Purpose to the Íránians

He spake and smiled, turned from Bahrám Chúbína,
And set his face towards his host. Of those
Three valiant Turks who served the Khán of Chín,
Were savage as a wolf and had assured
Bahrám Chúbína : "We, to win renown,
Will on the day of battle bring to thee
The person of the Sháh alive or dead
Before the troops,"[1] one impious horseman, strong,
Fierce, fearless, rushed forth seeking fight and grim
With sixty coils of lasso on his arm,
And drawing near that steed of ivory,
And aiming at the splendid crown, flung forth
His lasso coiled, and caught the Sháh's crowned head ;
But Gustaham clave with his sword the lasso,
C. 1884 The Sháh's head 'scaped from harm, while brave Bandwí
Strung up his bow and with his arrows robbed

[1] p. 204.

The air of light. He loosed a poplar shaft
Against the Turk; that battle-seeker fled,
And to that miscreant said Bahrám Chúbína:—
"Be sombre dust thine only hiding-place!
Who said: 'Assail the Sháh?' Didst thou not see me
Upstanding in his presence with respect?'"
Sick, mind and body, he returned to camp.
His sister heard of his return, put off
Her splendid crown and, when a slave had brought
Her veil, ran forth in dudgeon sore of heart
To meet him and thus spake: "O warlike chief!
How didst thou fare, say, with Khusrau Parwíz?
If he be hot and hasty through his youth
Relax no effort in the cause of peace."
The brave Bahrám Chúbína answered thus:—
"One must not reckon him among the Sháhs.
No valiant cavalier or sage is he,
Not generous or brilliant. Parts are better
Than birth, and kings should have them."
His wise sister
Replied: "O shrewd, ambitious chief! if I
Say much thou wilt not hear me but display
Ill-temper and ill-nature. Call to mind
The saying of the aphorist of Balkh:—
'When any one shall truth from hiding bring,
And tell thy faults, truth is a bitter thing.'
Think not to waste thy country for thou hast
Thy share of earth. A very wise man said:—
'To have an ox's horn an ass once tried,
And lost forthwith his ears on either side.'
Court not the world's reproach; none of thy race
Hath worn the crown. Had this youth intervened not
I had not been thus seared and dark of soul;
But as it is his sire is living, the throne
Of sovereignty is still in place yet thou

Must interfere! How it will end I know not,
But all night long mine eyes are filled with blood.
Thine only aim is pain and malison;
Thou sniffest rashly at a poison-flower.
How folk will call Chúbína infamous,
The name Bahrám disfame! God will be wroth
Withal and Hell the prison of thy soul.
The world is not for every one, my brother!
And naught abideth save a fair renown.
C. 1885 Consider now, who was it sought thee out
Save king Hurmuzd? But since king Sáwa's throne
And goods came to thy hands thou didst assume
The crown, and having grown renowned through him
Art seeking for the imperial throne; but know
That every good thing is from God and be
Not ingrate to our Sháh; presume not thus
Upon thy stricken fields. Thou hast gained honour,
But be not arrogant. Thou hast at heart
Consorted with the Dív and hast grown guilty
In God's sight. When Hurmuzd was wroth and raved
Through what the foul Áyín Gashasp had said
Thou shouldest have been patient and not made it
A liege's opportunity for war;
And in his great affliction when his son
Came forth to fight from Barda' 'twas thy duty
To visit the young Sháh and ornament
His new throne as he wished. The youth had then
Adopted thine advice and thou hadst not
Seen evil days but quiet, joy, and triumph.
Why these designs upon the crown and throne?
Thou knowest that there still are princes left,
Both old and young, descended from Ardshír,
With wealth and countless hosts. Who in Írán
Will hail thee king? If any king with treasure
And troops could dare to eye this land of ours
It had been Sáwa, prince of Chín, none else,

Who marched upon the country of Írán ;
But holy God made thee his opposite,
And saved our land and elders. Since the World-lord
Made this world and spread over it high heaven
Men have not seen a cavalier like Sám,
Whom not the rending lion would confront,
Yet when it happened that Naudar became
Unjust and trampled on his father's ways,
And when the nobles called on Sám and had
The turquoise throne made ready, ' God forbid,'
He said, ' that ever captain of the host
Should contemplate the throne because the dust
Of Minúchihr is mine, my coronet
The footings of Naudar's.'[1] I recognise
In Sám thy better ; he sought not the kingship,
Not being ill-conditioned. So too Zál
And elephantine Rustam never sought
To rule our folk. Know, I have said this, brother !
Because the fortunate alone who hath
August hands, Grace, and high birth, and is wise,
Of ardent heart and just can take the throne.
I know not what will come on thee, for wisdom
Hath vanished from thy heart ! "

Bahrám Chúbína C. 1886

Made answer : " 'Tis all true and holy God
Is witness, but the thing hath gone too far ;
My heart and brain are sick with greed and I
Must grow whole or resign my head to death,
Which pierceth helms of steel. If I am stricken
By this young Sháh my troops will take from him
His throne and, black at heart with vengeance, set
Another there."

The youthful king for his part
Recrossed the bridge of Nahrawán, rejoicing,
Called all the captains of the host, set those

[1] See Vol. i. p. 340.

Entitled by their rank beside the throne
Of sovereignty, and said : " Good-hearted chiefs,
Adept and veteran ! of this my kingship
This is my primal act—a mere essay—
And none doth owe us praise though our intent
Be good, and ye have had no good from us
While we must now augment your toils and griefs.
Ye served mine ancestors and have seen much
Of this world's salts and sours. I will disclose
My purpose, hidden from the host, to you ;
My words must go no further, that would mar
My scheme if it were published to the troops.
I mean to lead the host to-night to battle,
For I have parleyed with Bahrám Chúbína,
Who is an active, skilful cavalier,
Though I discerned no wisdom in his head,
Or in the heads of his illustrious troops.
His fight with Sáwa is his only theme,
He telleth o'er and o'er the same old tale.
He thinketh me a foolish youth and fain
Would frighten me with mace and scimitar,
Not knowing that I attack by night and so
Gain confidence. If ye will share the fray
With me I will not loiter but, when night
Shall steep her face in ambergris and loose
Her musky locks, do ye mount armed and grasping
The mace and scimitar."
They all agreed
To do the Sháh's behest. When he had gone
Back to his tent he put all strangers forth.
He sent for Gustaham and for Bandwí,
And for Gurdwí, a veteran warrior,
And told his purpose of a night-attack
In hopes that they would aid. Said Gustaham :—
C. 1887 " O king ! why put such confidence in fight ?
A camisade may alienate thy troops.

Thy soldiers and the soldiers of the foe
Are one in heart and body; on one side
Are grandsons, on the other grandsires. What
Deception can there be? Here is a brother,
And there a father; they are all akin;
How shall son war with sire? Encourage not
The wishes of thy foes by this design.
This was no matter for the host; thy words
Have ruined all."

Gurdwí said: "All is over,
E'en as a wind that passeth o'er the plain.
Power, passion, treasury, and troops make err
A young man's head. Do not be thou to-night
Upon the field and suffer not the host
And treasure to be lost, because I doubt not
That all our secret plans and preparations
Will be reported to the other side;
Yield not thy head then to the enemy."

Pleased with the rede Khusrau Parwíz assented,
Selected certain chiefs devoted to him
For good and ill—Kharrád, son of Barzín,
And Gustaham, the Lion, and Shápúr,
And Andiyán, the valorous, Bandwí,
Kharrád, withal, the Lustre of the host,

Nastúh, the chief and burner up of heroes,
And others who would serve to guard the troops,
The treasure and himself. They sought a hill
That would avail if fight were toward—a place
All grass and apt for feasts. Khusrau Parwíz
Thence viewed the host from far.

Bahrám Chúbína,
The brave, for his part mounted and when great
And small drew near he questioned of the chiefs:—
"What tidings have ye of your kith and kin?
Send to them, ye that have such—men at one

With you in word and Faith. If they will come
And do my will, and stake their lives as pledges
Of their sincerity, I will enrich them,
And they shall all be nobles like yourselves.
The troops from Barda' and from Ardabíl,
And slack Armenians—a band or two—
Remain. We fear them not in fight while those
From Barda' are but as a pinch of dust."
The chieftains heard what brave Bahrám Chúbína
Proposed and chose a warrior from the host,
V. 1888 Sage, fluent, heedful, who thus charged departed,
And speeding onward through the longsome night
Declared his message to the Íránian chiefs,
And heard their answer: "Till the hosts engage
We will not leave Khusrau Parwíz. This matter,
We fear, will prove a long one. He will make
A night-attack, so feel not ye secure."
The envoy, hearing this, went swift as dust
Back to the army of the paladin,
And as a privy matter, every word,
He there reported all that he had heard.

§ 7

How Bahrám Chúbína attacked the Army of Khusrau Parwíz by Night and how Khusrau Parwíz fled

Now when Bahrám Chúbína was aware
That all the troops were well disposed to him
His host lit watch-fires and set lights ablaze
In every quarter. Then that Lion chose
A valiant band fit to subdue the world,
Six thousand Sabres as the leaders reckoned.
Bahrám Chúbína told them: "When the drum
Shall beat at cock-crow raise the battle-cry,

Attack and crown the nobles' heads with blood."
Led by the three proud Turks the troops sped forth
At his command and full of spite and vengeance
Fell on the army of the king. Arose
A din of mace and sword and battle-ax,
The earth was iron and the clouds were dust.
The troops all asked: "Where is Khusrau Parwíz?
The day and victory to-day are ours."
Khusrau Parwíz was on the hill in anguish,
His eyes were full of blood, his cheeks the hue
Of lapis-lazuli, and, till the shafts
Of dawn shot up, the clashing of the hosts
Confounded him, but when the dark night's skirt
Had vanished, and he saw the battlefield
All killed and wounded, to his chiefs he said:—
"Help and put forth your powers against the foe,
For God, the Victor, is mine aid and prop,
And now my work is blows and scimitar."
He charged amain at those three Turks. Turks? Nay,
Three fierce and savage wolves. One closed with him,
Unsheathed his glittering glaive and sought to strike
The king upon the head; the royal rider
Put up his shield to save it, thrust beneath C. 188
The guard, and laid his foeman low. "Famed fighters!
Slack not the struggle now," he cried, but still
His troops all turned away, abandoning
That world-aspirant shamefully who then
Said to Bandwí and Gustaham: "Hereof
I augur ill. I have no child grown up,
Or other kindred, fitted for the crown,
And if I should be slain in fight the world
Would have no king."
Bandwí made answer thus:—
"O noble prince! may this world yearn in love

For thee. Thy troops are gone, abide not thou,
For none is left to aid thee."
To Gurdwí
Then said the king: "Haste with Tukhár and take
The tent-enclosure, treasure, and brocade,
Crown, captives, purses, and the ivory throne,
All that thou canst, and take a thousand horse
Of those still left."
The nobles toiled to load,
And carry off, this treasure. Then appeared
A dragon-flag; the world turned violet.
Behind the flag rode brave Bahrám Chúbína,
Who robbed the world of lustre in the fray.
He and Khusrau Parwíz encountered, both
Redoubted warriors and savage lions.
Like elephants of war they raged and smote
Each other on the head. All lion-like
Bahrám Chúbína wheeled, his weapons failed
Against the foe, and thus till set of sun
The conflict passed all bounds. Then came Tukhár
To tell Khusrau Parwíz that he had drawn
The treasure and the baggage to the bridge,
Whereat the monarch said to Gustaham:—
"We have not any helpers in the fight;
We are but ten; this is a mighty host,
And led on by a valiant paladin.
Although we have the Grace upon our side
We lack for friends, so flee we. Timely flight
Is better than affray. I may not tarry,
For I am all alone."
The unpractised youth
Fared till he reached the bridge of Nahrawán,
Pursued all hotly by Bahrám Chúbína,
His head all vengeance and his heart all strife.
Khusrau Parwíz, when he perceived this, stopped

Upon the bridge and summoned to his presence
The veteran Gustaham. "Bring me my bow,"
He said; "'tis mine interpreter in war."
The treasurer, who was Gustaham himself,
Produced the bow.[1] The valiant chieftain took it, C. 189
And robbed the air of lustre with his shafts,
Showered them like hail and pegged with each a helm
And head together. Then Bahrám Chúbína,
That Lion, charged with lasso in his hand
And Dragon under him. With lasso only
He passed behind Khusrau Parwíz who saw,
Rejoiced, strung up his bow and with a shaft
Struck on the breast Bahrám Chúbína's horse;
Its task was done. That general afoot
Despairing took his buckler while Yalán-sína
Advanced like dust and charged. The atheling,
Who knew him valiant, aimed and hurt his steed.
Yalán-sína fled from the bridge afoot,
And with him fled the rest, both old and young.
Now when Bahrám Chúbína thus withdrew
Khusrau Parwíz, swift as a dust-cloud, broke
The bridge and went to Taisafún in dudgeon,
With pain at heart and eyes fulfilled with blood.
He barred the city-gates with iron bars,
Sat down amid a multitude of cares,
From every quarter called to him the Great,
And posted sentinels at every gate.

[1] "Son trésorier le lui apporta, et Gustehem était en cette affaire le lieutenant du roi." Mohl.

§ 8

How Khusrau Parwíz went to his Sire and fled to Rúm, and how Hurmuzd was slain

Thence weeping blood and liver-pierced he went
Before his sire, gave greeting, tarried long,
And said: "The cavalier, the paladin,
Whom thou didst choose, O king! came as do Sháhs
That have the Grace and brought a numerous host.
I counselled him but 'twas of no avail,
He only cared for war and conflict. Never
Be his name current! All against my will
Was fought a great fight, and the stars brought scath
On many. All my troops deserted me;
Thou wouldst have said they saw and passed me by,
And, not reflecting, hailed Bahrám Chúbína
As Sháh. Pursuing me he led his troops,
As 'twere a moving mountain, to the bridge
C. 1891 Of Nahrawán, and I, when mine estate
No longer flourished, fled and scaped the net
Of bale. As I account of gain and loss
The Arabs only may prove serviceable,
And, if the king bid, I will bring their horsemen
In countless numbers."
"This is ill-advised,"
Replied Hurmuzd, "for now thou hast no standing.
To go to them is labour lost, for we
Possess not men, or arbalists or treasure.
The Arabs will not help when there is naught
To gain or lose but in despite and dudgeon
Will sell thee to thy foes, yet God will aid,
And smiling fortune side with thee. If thou
Wouldst quit this land depart with speed for Rúm,
And tell to Cæsar what this slave in straits

Hath said. He will assist thee with his treasure
And troops. In that land are both men and stores,
And arms and host arrayed. Moreover all
That spring from Farídún are kin to thee,
And will assist thee in thy need."

Thereat
Khusrau Parwíz kissed earth and gave the praises
Due to the Great. Then to Bandwí, Gurdwí,
And Gustaham he said: "We must consort
With grief and toil. Take order, pack, and yield
Our country to the foe."

Said Gustaham:—
"Ne'er mayst thou see ill hap, O king!"

He answered:—
"The circling heaven produceth wrath and love
By turns."

With that the watchman cried: "O Sháh,
Just and auspicious! from the road hath risen
Dark dust. Amid a host a standard waveth
Charged with a dragon, and Bahrám Chúbína
Raised it beside the Nahrawán."

Thereat
Khusrau Parwíz gat on his steed like smoke,
And fled like flying dust with that blue banner
Behind him. Turning him about he saw
Bandwí and Gustaham proceeding slowly,
And shouted to them in an angry tone:—
"O villains! what hath happened that yon foes
Become like friends to you? If 'tis not so
Why ride at leisure with Bahrám Chúbína
Hard on your backs?"

Bandwí replied: "O king!
Be not concerned at him; he will not see
Our dust, the host's flag is too far away. C. 18.
Thy friends all say there is no cause for haste
Because Bahrám Chúbína, when he reacheth

The palace, will at once give to Hurmuzd
The crown and throne, will sit as minister
Beside him, and will angle to some purpose
By writing from his sovereign to Cæsar
To this effect: 'A worthless slave hath fled
This country; let him not obtain asylum
In Rúm. Each time that he hath raised himself
He hath done hurt and damage to your land.
When he arriveth put him into bonds,
And fill with trouble his rejoicing heart.
Return him to this court and tarry not
Until he have grown great,' and they will bind him,
And send him back in tears and strongly guarded."

Khusrau Parwíz heard this with troubled heart,
His cheek gloomed at their words and he replied:—
"Ill-fortune well may treat us thus, but words
Are long and deeds are strong; trust we in God."

He urged his steed and said: "What good and bad
The World-lord hath writ o'er our heads will come,
No musing can avert it. May our foes
Ne'er have their will."

When he had gone the two
Unjust ones turned back eager for revenge.
Arrived, they sought the palace of the Sháh,
All dudgeon and with hearts prepared for crime.
When they had passed the gate and reached the throne
They straightway took the string from off a bow,
Flung it forthwith around the monarch's neck,
And hung his honoured person. Passed that crown
And throne of king of kings: thou wouldst have said:—
"Hurmuzd was never in the world at all."
The custom of revolving time it is

To furnish sometimes sweets and sometimes bane;
Seek not for profit from a stock like this
Because the quest will bring thee nought but pain

When thus Hurmuzd's days ended and the throne,
That happy seat, remained unfilled, forthwith
Arose a sound of drums ; those murderers' cheeks
Became like sandarac. Upon the road
Bahrám Chúbína's standard came in sight
Amid his troops, and that outrageous pair—
Bandwí and Gustaham—fled from the palace,
And hasted till they reached Khusrau Parwíz,
Who, seeing their wan looks, knew that their hearts
Contained some secret, else would they have quitted
The master of the world ? His cheeks became C. 189.
Like flowers of fenugreek but he revealed
Naught to that savage pair. He bade his troops :—
" Turn from the highway for a host approacheth.
Take the long route across the unwatered plain,
And let your bodies grow inured to pain."

§ 9

How Bahrám Chúbína sent Troops after Khusrau Parwíz and how Bandwí contrived to rescue him from their Hands

On entering the palace of the Sháh
Bahrám Chúbína chose from his fierce host
Six thousand wielders of the scimitar,
Mailed, to pursue the king, and put Bahrám,
The son of Siyáwush, in charge of those
Famed, warlike troops, while on the other part
Khusrau Parwíz took to the waste to 'scape
His foes with life, and reached at length a hold
With battlements of viewless height. Folk called it
" The House of God "—a shrine, a blesséd spot,
With bishops and a metropolitan,

A place for penitents. He there addressed
A holy man: "What food is there to hand?"
A bishop said: "There are unleavened loaves
And watercress, my lord! If such thou needest
Let it be none save ours."
The king forthwith
Alighted with his escort. That aspirant
With his two courtiers took in hand for prayer
The sacred twigs, then on the soft, blue[1] sand
They sat and ate in haste of what there was.
Thereafter he addressed the bishop thus:
"Hast thou no wine, old sir whose steps are blest?"
He said: "We manufacture wine from dates;
We make it in the heat of summer-time.
There is a little left, clear as rosé-water,
And red as coral in the sun."
Forthwith
He brought a cup thereof and it eclipsed
The hue of Sol. Khusrau Parwíz drank three,
Partook of barley-bread and, when his wits
Were warmed with ruddy wine, slept with his head
Laid on Bandwí's lap on the yielding sand,
All sorrowful of soul and liver-pierced.
Just as he slept the senior bishop came.
C. 1894 "Black dust-clouds have arisen on the road,"
He said; "behind them is a mighty host."
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "It is bad luck
That foes should seek us just as men and steeds
Are spent. The inevitable day hath come."
Then spake Bandwí the good at need: "Yon chief
Approacheth."
Said Khusrau Parwíz: "Good friend!
Direct us in the matter."
He rejoined:—
"I will devise escape for thee, O king!

[1] For the sake of the rhyme, probably

In this strait, though I shall have sacrificed
My life to save the monarch of the world."
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "A sage of Chín
Hath uttered better things in this regard:—
'In Paradise shall be his future state
Who here hath tilled about a monarch's gate.
The plastering can not abide in place
When city-walls are levelled to their base.
When mighty cities perish out of hand.
Let not the hospitals be left to stand.'
If shift thou knowest use it; holy God
Will save thee from the need of other help."
Bandwí said: "Let me have the crown of gold,
The earrings, girdle, and the robe from Chín,
Gold-woven and tulip-hued, and while I don them
Abide not thou. Go with thy troops apace
As sailors speed a vessel o'er the deep."
The youth did as Bandwí advised and thence
Companioned with the wind. When he had made
Shift thus to flee, Bandwí, the veteran,
Turned to the bishop, saying: "Ye must tarry
Unseen of all upon the mountain-top,"
Then went himself dust-swift within the shrine,
And with all speed shut fast the iron door,
Assumed the gold-embroidered robe and donned
The royal crown. He went upon the roof,
And thence unwillingly beheld a host
On every side. He waited till they came
Up to the hold to fight. At sight of him
With gold crown, earrings, torque, and belt all cried:—
It is Khusrau Parwíz with his new crown
And robes."
Bandwí, when certain that the troops
Had taken him to be the Sháh himself,
Went from the roof, donned his own clothes with speed,

Then fearlessly returned and said: "Young braves!
To whom shall I address me as your chief
Because I have a message from the Sháh
To give in presence of the mighty men?"
C. 1895 The son of Siyáwush, on hearing this,
Said: "I am chief and I am hight Bahrám."
Bandwí replied: "The world-lord saith: 'My journey
Hath much distressed me; all our beasts are sore,
Foundered and all amort with lengthy travel.
I reached this house of penitents for rest,
But will at day-break give up worldly hopes,
And take with you the longsome road that leadeth
To great Bahrám Chúbína, and herein
I do not seek delay that heaven perchance
May succour me. Mine ancestors were wont
To keep the laws of honour and good faith,
And through their long and fortunate careers
They ne'er refused when subjects asked a boon.
So now that fortune is my foe I make
An open breast to you, for from bright Sol
To darksome dust the will of God is done.'"
The chief agreed and every one that heard
The Sháh's words grieved for him. The troopers all
Dismounted and kept guard on him that night.
Next day Bandwí went to the roof upon
The side that faced Bahrám and said: "The Sháh
Is praying and will do naught else to-day.
He spent last night in prayer. Besides, the sun
Is high, he must not suffer from the heat.
Leave him in peace to-day. At dawn to-morrow
He shall surrender."
"This may prove a trifle,"
Bahrám said to his chiefs, "or else of moment.
If we shall press him much he may be wroth
And fall on us. He is a host himself

A world-aspirant, shrewd and valorous.
If he be slain in fight Bahrám Chúbína
Will send too dust from us. 'Tis best to wait
To-day, although our stores are running low,
To see if he will yield without contention."
Thus was it till the night rose o'er the mountains,
And her host gathered, then both far and wide
The troops spread, kindling fires on every side.

§ 10

How Bahrám, the Son of Siyáwush, took Bandwí and carried him to Bahrám Chúbína

When earth grew sun-hued eloquent Bandwí C. 18
Went to the roof and thus addressed Bahrám :—
" Experienced one ! when dust rose from the plain
Khusrau Parwíz at sight of you departed,
He and his troops, in haste toward Rúm, and now,
Wert thou to wing it eagle-like and soar
Above the sun, thou wouldst not spy the Sháh
Unless in Rúm where he hath aged by now ;
But if ye grant me quarter I will come
Forth to thy valiant chief and I will answer
All questions ásked of me about ourselves,
But if not I will arm and send the dust
In combat to the sun."
The youth's heart aged
With grief when he heard this. " What will it profit,"
He asked his comrades, " if I send the reek
Up from Bandwí ? The better course will be
To take him as he is with mind unclouded
Before the paladin to tell whatever
He knoweth of the Sháh and either lose

His head or keep his crown.'
Then to Bandwí :—
" Discuss this question with Bahrám Chúbína,
Thou evil schemer ! "
Then Bandwí, the Lion,
Came down and went back with the valiant chiefs.
Bahrám Chúbína heard of their return,
And that Khusrau Parwíz bent on revenge
Had gone to Rúm, and vehemently raged
Against the son of Siyáwush, exclaiming :—
" Thou luckless miscreant ! thou hast disobeyed.
Fool that I am ! I have approved a fool ! "
He summoned next Bandwí, the ambitious one,
And turned the wrath on him : " Thou miscreant knave !
Blame-worthy liar who hast been so foolish
As thus to gull my troops ! Thou couldst not rest
Through thine ill nature and hast now become
One with accursed Khusrau Parwíz, hast made
A youth a veteran and hast come to boast :—
' I will renew this outworn age.' "
Bandwí
Replied : " Exalted chief ! look but for right
From me and be not fierce. Know that the king
Of kings is of my kin, his majesty
And greatness are mine own, and I have given,
As was my duty, mine own life for his.
If thou'rt a chieftain act straightforwardly."
C. 1897 Bahrám Chúbína said : " I would not slay thee
For this thy fault. Howbeit thou wilt perish
By his hand soon and know that I speak sooth."
They gyved Bandwí's feet, and Bahrám Chúbína
Consigned him to the son of Siyáwush
To keep him scathless, stayed till sunset there,
Then sought his own couch with a heart all care."

§ 11

How Bahrám Chúbína summoned the Magnates of Írán, how they discussed his Pretensions to the Kingship, and how he acceded to the Throne

When Sol unsheathed its sword, and when its veil
Of yellow showed, Bahrám Chúbína sent
And called the magnates, seating them upon
The dais of the kings on golden seats,
Which he had ranged around, and sat in joy
As conquering monarchs do. Thereafter he
Spake with a mighty utterance thus and said :—
" Ye that are worshipful ! now make response
In full assurance and auspiciously
Advise upon my words. Give them all heed,
And note my prompt dispatch. Ye will not find
A worse Sháh than Zahhák, search as ye may,
Who slew his sire for kingship's sake, whereby
Írán fell to his hands ;[1] and now again
Khusrau Parwíz, a man unjust and cursed,
Hath slain his father and hath gone to Rúm ;
And so till one of royal race appeareth,
One fit to claim the throne and make crown, girdle,
And fortune his who, think ye, is the man
To gird him at this present to restore
The precedents of kings ? I swear by Him,
Who is the Master of the sun on high,
That I will give you aidance in the quest."
The nobles heard the famous chieftain's words,
And none dissented. Then an elder rose—
Shahrán Guráz, a hoary warrior,
A chieftain eminent—and answered thus :—
" Thou art a benefactor to the world,

[1] See Vol. 1. pp. 136, 139.

Illustrious prince! Hadst thou not been at Rai
No one had matched king Sáwa when he reached
Our coast with forces to enslave the Free;
But bravely thou didst arm thee and that trouble
Passed from the Íránians, and a host equipped,
C. 1898 And warriors all, four hundred thousand strong,
Fled from thy wooden shaft, and thus Írán
Had rest from heat and strife; so now its throne
Befitteth thee as thine unsleeping fortune
Is witness. Him that disobeyeth thee,
Or shunneth thine alliance, will we cause
To do thy will, brave though he be, and though
The matter touch Khusrau Parwíz himself."

Thus spake he and resumed his seat, whereat
The chieftain Khurásán stood forth before
Bahrám Chúbína and thus spake: "I ask
This old, ambitious sage, who hath harangued
The assembly at such length, who hath inspired
His words? He praised thee so that all our hearts
Rejoiced, and yet there is a goodly saying
Used in the Zandavasta by Zarduhsht
For honest brains to hear: 'Whoe'er shall quit
The Almighty's way, admonish such one year,
Supplying all his needs, and after that
If he return not slay him with the sword
By order of the Sháh, while if he be
The just Sháh's foeman let him be beheaded
Forthwith.'"

He spake, ceased, and resumed his seat.
Then Farrukhzád stood up. "O helpful chief!"
He said, "just speech is better than mishap.
If justice then is better perish he
That joyeth in unjust words."

Then he spake
Thus to Bahrám Chúbína: "Blest be thou,
And may the sight of thee sustain the world.

If these my words find favour and if God,
The Conqueror, assist us live for ever
As our blest Sháh, and be the hands and tongues
Of bad men far from thee."
That valiant man
Sat down and Khazarwán, son of Khusrau,
Came forward lion-like and said: "Although
Both young and old talk much yet in the end,
If thou wouldst follow right, dispatch like wind
A cameleer and tarry not until
Khusrau Parwíz, the exalted one, shall tread
The longsome road a victim to injustice.
Excuse thy late behaviour and approach not
The throne thus boldly, for no general
Is worthy of it while the world-lord liveth.
If thou art fearful of Khusrau Parwíz
Break off thy love for Párs and Taisafún,
And live in ease and power in Khurásán. C. 18
Write letter after letter of excuse;
Perchance Khusrau Parwíz may prove amene."
When he withdrew stepped forward Zád Farrukh,
And said with justice: "Chiefs of noble race!
I have been listening to this debate
Of these the chosen leaders of Írán.
First, that proposal worthy of a slave
To make a paladin the Sháh is one
Distasteful to the wise, one to diminish
A man's renown. The words of Khurásán
Were grand and wedded, I maintain, to wisdom,
While those of Farrukhzád were violent,
Such as would hebetate the hearts of sages.
The fourth to speak was Khazarwán, the chief,
Whose words were also wise, for since God made
The world the course of time is manifest.
Start from Zahhák, the Arab, who was both
Unjust and foul of Faith. He slew Jamshíd,

That overweening one, and seized the world
Unjustly. Holy men grieved that a dív
Was Sháh till Farídún, that glorious king,
Abated him. Next came that miscreant,
Afrásiyáb, who for that purpose left
Túrán and crossing o'er the stream beheaded
Naudar, the noble, with the scimitar
In piteous fashion and o'erturned the state;
And, third, Sikandar who from Rúm invaded
Írán, laid waste our land, and slew Dárá,
The swordsman, so that food and slumber grew
Harsh to the Íránians, while, fourthly, came
Foul Khúshnawáz who robbed our fields and fells
Of mirth and joy when unexpectedly
The Haitálians slew Pírúz, a Sháh high-starred,
The conqueror of the world, the chief of rulers,
And overturned the throne of king of kings.
But none hath seen a wonder such as lately
Came on Írán when Sháh Khusrau Parwíz
Fled from the throne, from his own troops, to foes!"

This said, he sat and wept. Bahrám Chúbína
Turned livid at the words. The veteran
Sambáz, loin-girt, with Indian sword in hand,
Leapt to his feet. "This noble paladin,"
He said, "is great, just, ardent, so till one
Of royal race shall come and gird his loins
C. 1900 'Tis best for him to sit upon the throne,
For he is warlike, brave, and fortunate."

Bahrám Chúbína, chief of warriors,
Heard, clapped his hand upon his sword and drew it,
Exclaiming: "If we find within this quarter
A woman of the lineage of the Sháhs
I will behead her with the trenchant sword,
And let the breath of death pass over her.[1]

[1] Couplet inserted from P.

I will not wait for one to claim the realm,
And caracole amidst the cavaliers."
Whenas the chiefs possessed by Áhriman[1]
Heard their foul leader thus assert himself
They drew their scimitars, arose, and spake
In terms unheard till then: "Bahrám Chúbína
Is Sháh and we are subjects. We will not
Transgress his wishes and commands."
Now when
Bahrám Chúbína saw the scimitars
Drawn he did what was just and right, and said:—
"If any one shall leave his seat and touch
His scimitar I will cut off his hand
Forthwith and sober him."
This said, he left
The nobles for the pleasance. That great conclave
Dispersed with faces lined and broken hearts.
Whenas the pitch-hued, star-illumined Veil
Appeared, and watchmen's calls were heard, he asked
For pen and paper, and a noble scribe,
And wise, approached, to whom he handed pen
And inkstand, saying: "Write out on this silk
This declaration from the Íránians:—[2]
'Bahrám Chúbína is the Sháh, triumphant,
Deserving crown, adorning throne, and seeking
Right publicly and privily.'"
This written
They lighted links and passed an anxious night,
But when the Veil of lapis-lazuli
Had passed away and when the world was sun-gilt,
One fortune-favoured came and set a state
Within the palace of Bahrám Chúbína;
Upon that golden state they placed a seat,
And oped the court. He took his place as Sháh,

[1] Reading with P.
[2] Thus imitating the impious Zahhák. See Vol. i. p. 154.

And donned the royal crown. The scribe then brought
The declaration of his sovereignty
Inscribed upon the costly painted silk,
And each chief testified: "Bahrám Chúbína
Is monarch of the world."
When they had signed
He sealed it with his golden seal and said:—
"All-holy God will testify to you
That now this realm is mine and may its kings
Be of my lineage for a thousand years,
C. 1901 And thus ennobled hold in line direct
The crown and lofty throne."
'Twas on the day
Khurshíd of month Ázar that thus the Lion
Gave up the Onager's back.[1] Bahrám Chúbína
Thereafter thus harangued the Íránians:—
"Revengeful strife hath risen in our midst.
Whoe'er accepteth not this settlement,
Be he an honest man or not, shall spend
But three days in Írán and on the fourth,
What time the world's Light mounteth to the sky,
Shall go to join Khusrau Parwíz and sleep not
In our dominions longer."
Blessing him,
Not from their hearts, men said: "May earth ne'er lack thee."
Heart-broken that Bahrám Chúbína reigned
Those loyal to the kingdom's rightful lord
Departed Rúm-ward and dispersed abroad.

[1] Mohl has "lorsque le lion dévore le dos de l'onagre." It may mean "When the country (the onager) lost its natural tyrant the lion (Khusrau Parwíz) by the accession of Bahrám Chúbína."

§ 12

How Bandwí plotted with Bahrám, the Son of Siyáwush, to slay Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bandwí fled from Bond

For seventy days Bandwí, like cheetah bound,
Was in the prison of Bahrám Chúbína,
Watched by Bahrám, the son of Siyáwush—
A most unwilling jailor—whom Bandwí,
Still scheming though in bondage, thus beguiled :—
" Despair not of the monarch of Írán ;
Though night be dark 'twill turn to day and though
His fortune, like the fortune of Pírúz
With Khúshnawáz, shall tarry long. The Maker
Restored him in the person of Kubád,[1]
And gave him back the world. Bahrám Chúbína
In like wise will retain not crown and throne.
Doth he himself, this man of fortune, think it ?
Nay, perish any rustic who thus giveth
Himself in folly to the wind. Count thou
Two months upon thy fingers and thou'lt see
Troops from Írán in Rúm, and they will cast
Fire on this crown and throne, and break the jewels
On this man's head."
Bahrám said : " If the king
Will grant me quarter I will deck my soul
With thine advice and do thy will in all,
But I must have a great oath sworn to me
By moon, Ázargashasp, by throne and crown,
That if Khusrau Parwíz come to our coasts,
And bring a host from Cæsar and from Rúm,
Thou wilt ask him to spare my life, not slight C.
What so importeth me, lest he be led

[1] Kaikubád in the original.

By what the Íránians say and harm befall me."
He spake, then calling for the Zandavasta
He caused Bandwí to swear, who took the roll,
And said: "Let not Bandwí see aught but pain
And toil from the Supreme or e'er find rest
Within this Wayside Hostelry if I
Do otherwise. Else when Khusrau Parwíz
Bestir himself I will not look on him,
Or ever rest, unless he send to thee
Withal a signet and a chieftain's crown."
Bahrám, on hearing what an oath he swore,
And seeing his pure heart and loyalty,
Said: "I will tell thee all my schemes aloud.
I will achieve revenge and set a snare
To catch Bahrám Chúbína. Where I set it
There will I do mine utmost to destroy him
With bane of scimitar. Our streams are dry
Since we have had to hail him as the Sháh."
Bandwí replied: "Know, O experienced man!
That I am shrewd and prompt and wise, and when
Khusrau Parwíz returneth with a host
From Rúm, and sitteth on the state, thou'lt find
That he will not refuse me anything.
I will ask pardon for thy past offence,
And he would give his crown at my request.
If thou wilt keep thy word and not ensue
Guile in thy heart unfetter me and thus
Begin to recognise Khusrau Parwíz;
'Twill prove thy secret bent; that plain appeal
Will reach his ear."
Thereat Bahrám's face brightened,
And he removed the fetters.
When night's veil,
Musk-hued, turned bright and dawn laid hand thereon
Bahrám said to Bandwí: "If my heart fail not,
What time Bahrám Chúbína playeth polo

To-day I have engaged me with five friends
To slay him."
Calling for a coat of mail
He donned it 'neath his dress and rode away.
Bahrám, the warrior, had a wicked wife
Who wished him hewn to pieces. In her heart
She was enamoured of Bahrám Chúbína,
While hatred of her husband filled her soul;
So to Bahrám Chúbína she dispatched
Some one to say: "O thou that succourest!
Protect thyself because Bahrám hath donned
His mail beneath his robe and buckled it.
I know not what may be his ill intent, C. 19
But thou hadst better keep aloof from him."
Bahrám Chúbína, hearing her advice
Not to play polo with her spouse, tapped all
Who came upon the ground with polo-sticks,
And drew anear him, gently on the back
With kindly greetings in a pleasant tone
Until he reached the son of Siyáwush,
Found him to be in mail and said: "O thou
Worse than a biting snake! who weareth mail
Beneath his silk upon the polo-ground?"
This said, he drew his vengeful scimitar,
And clave the son of Siyáwush in two.
'Twas bruited in the city that Bahrám
Was slain, and when the tidings reached Bandwí
The daylight failed him. Putting on his mail
He mounted, quaking girt his warlike loins,
And taking all the kinsmen of Bahrám,
With all that looked for safety to himself,
Fled from the city and the Day of Doom.
When they had gone one stage their numbers grew;
They pressed along the road to Ardabíl.
Bahrám Chúbína, when he left the ground,
Trailed in his wrath his robe in blood, then ordered

Mahrwí to guard Bandwí. The people said :—
" Fret not for him, O king ! for when he heard
News of this slaying verily he took
The wind for waymate, knowing that the matter
Concerned himself and that Bahrám was slain
For their intrigue. He sorrowed to have caused
His comrade's death and saw the outlook dark."
The king said : " May he lack both skin and brain
That knoweth not foe from friend. One will repose
Upon the points of elephants' tusks, another
Trust to the billows of the dark blue sea ;
A third will brave a monarch's wrath, a fourth
Take lion by the foreleg. Let thy soul
Feel for all four ; their fortune is averse.
Another would move mountains and inviteth
All to his aid. He wearieth himself,
And as the outcome clutcheth but the wind.
To voyage in a ship unseaworthy
Is better than to be precipitate,
And if thou seekest and dost find a spring
Wilt thou grow daft and turn therefrom in wrath ?
The man whose guide is blind will tarry long
1904 Upon his way. The handler of a dragon
Would die, the dragon 'scape, while pain and death
Are his who eateth bane for trial's sake,
And yet I did not slay Bandwí at first,
So he hath schemed and hath escaped my hands !
My act is one for which I needs must weep,
And see what is God's will."[1]
Bandwí the while
With his small band sped on like rushing wind.
Each carried with him what he could toward where
Mausíl, the Armenian, dwelt along a road
Infested by wild beasts and waterless.

[1] The import of the speech is : " There are many sorts of fools but I am the greatest of them all."

Bandwí perceived a camp-enclosure pitched,
Saw that it was Mausíl's, found streams and food,
And hurried forward to that fertile spot
Alone, beheld Mausíl, did him obeisance,
And told him privily the case, who said :—
" Stay here, for here the latest news will reach thee
Of what Khusrau Parwíz doth in fair Rúm,
And if he contemplateth peace or war."
Thereat Bandwí was minded to remain,
And called up his companions from the plain.

§ 13

How Khusrau Parwíz went toward Rúm by the Desert-route and how a Hermit told him of the Past and Future

Khusrau Parwíz led on in haste where guide,
And grass and water, were not. Slack of rein
They went in dudgeon till they reached Bábil,
Where all the well-disposed among the chiefs
Went forth to welcome him. As he drew near
He made his men dismount outside the city,
And scarce had done so when a courier came
Out of Írán in haste. He bore a letter
Concealed upon him from Bahrám Chúbína,
And written to the ruler of Bábil :—
" Detain a company if one shall come ;
My troops pursue and will arrive anon."
The ruler, seeing the letter's purport, sought
Khusrau Parwíz in haste, who looked and read,
Astounded at the process of the world.
He feared pursuit and mourned his own fatigue,
But mounting presently departed thence, C. 19(
And girding up his royal loins pressed on

Until he came to the Farát; no rest
Saw he in his own realm. His followers,
Both old and young, were famished. Then they spied
A wood and water while a caravan
Of camels led on by a cameleer
Appeared anon. That youth, when he beheld
Khusrau Parwíz, called blessings down upon
That noble one, who asked: "What is thy name?
What is thy trade and whither goest thou?"

He answered: "Kais am I, son of Háris,
And heir of Arab chiefs. From Misr have I
Come with a caravan and am myself
Chief cameleer. I dwell beside the waters
Of the Farát and came thence to this forest."

Khusrau Parwíz asked: "What hast thou of food
And stuffs, for we are wearied out and famished,
Not having food or packs?"

The Arab said:—
"Stay; I am one with thee, share, soul, and body."

In his affection for the Sháh he brought
A fatted cow; they slaughtered her and lit
A fire by kindling sticks both green and dry.
He grilled kabáb; the comrades of the Sháh
Were eager to partake, consuming much,
But had no bread. Each chieftain then made ready
A sleeping-place. They slept awhile, then rose
And offered up their orisons anew
To that just Judge who made the world, made mighty
And weak alike, and then the Sháh addressed
His comrades thus: "The most in fault are they
That are my noblest and most famous subjects:
Still those that have done worst, rebelled, and left
God's way, may trust with confidence to me.
See that ye give to them the fairest hopes."

His comrades blessed him, saying: "O thou pure
Of heart and Faith! bright be thy heart and jocund

Thy lot, and may the just Judge give thee back
The throne. He hath bestowed on thee such Grace
And mien that love and justice are increased
For every one: thou art the sum of wisdom,
For thou replacest ill by good."
The Sháh,
Though pleased at this acclaim, was in his heart
Concerned about his route and asked the Arab:—
"What is it like? How shall I fare with troops?"
He answered: "Seventy farsangs and more C. 19
Of waste and mountain front you. With thy leave
I will find meat and water for the road
If thou wilt hurry not."
Khusrau Parwíz
Replied: "There is no other course, for this
Will furnish provand and a guide."
The Aráb
Dispatched a cameleer to fare before
The troops. He hurried over waste and mountain,
All care and travail, with that company.
Withal afar another caravan
Appeared upon the route before the troops.
A wealthy merchant sought the king, who asked:—
"Say, whence art thou and whither hastening?"
He said: "I am a merchant and a scribe,
And I have come from Khurra-i-Ardshír."
"How did thy father name thee?" said the Sháh.
The merchantman replied: "Mihrán Sitád."
The king requested of the man supplies
Because the leader of his troops had said:—
"He hath, O Sháh! provisions past compute,
But may not be best pleased."
"To find a host
Upon the way is so much to the good,"
The Sháh replied. The merchant loosed his bales
Of cheap and costly wares, brought provand forth,

And sat himself upon the ground, invoking
A blessing on the king. The eating done,
The hospitable merchant brought the Sháh
The water for his hands, but when Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, saw that he rose, ran up,
Took the warm water from the merchant's hand,
That no respect toward the Sháh might fail,
And when the merchantman made haste to bring
Wine lucent as rose-water then again
Kharrád, son of Barzín, took from his hand
The goblet and presented it himself.
In due observance servants profit find,
For all such service is repaid in kind.
" Which is the army's route," the Sháh then asked
The merchant, " and, O hospitable man !
Where dwellest thou in Khurra-i-Ardshír ? "
He said : " O Sháh ! live in prosperity.
I of these traffickers am from Káraz."[1]
The Sháh enjoined Rúzbih, the scribe, to note
The young man's name and village. " Go thy ways,
And be at heart the warp and woof of wisdom,"
He said. The army left that verdant spot,
And hurrying toward the Rúman marches reached
The town which Cæsar named Kársán. The Christians,
C 1907 On seeing the troops afar, went hurrying
Across the waste to carry their effects
Within the walls and firmly barred the gates.
The Sháh, the lustre of the world, chagrined
Remained outside for three days with his troops,
And on the fourth dispatched a man to say :—
" Our troops are few, send provand, succour us,
And treat us not in this high-handed wise."
They scorned his words, his troops were weak and famished,

[1] " Je suis le courtier des marchands." Mohl.

When suddenly there rose a murky cloud,
Which roared like some great warrior-lion ; a storm
Swept o'er the place ; from every quarter came
Din and a cry for help. By midnight half
The walls had gone ; the town was all amaze ;
The bishop offered prayers ; in every quarter
They gathered food together, and three priests,
Three venerable men, went forth in haste
With native produce and with Rúman robes,
And brought a led horse to the Sháh. They said :—
" Our fault, O Sháh ! is manifest to us,"
And he, a noble youth, reproached them not.
There was within the city's walls a palace,
Whose summit was at home among the clouds ;
'Twas built by Cæsar and had many slaves.
The Sháh went thither when he left the plain,
And oft-times used to go about the city.
The Rúmans all acclaimed him and strewed jewels
Beneath his feet. Possessed of this fair dwelling
He rested for a while and wrote to Cæsar
Of that storm, rain, and darksome cloud, then went
Toward Mánwí which he renamed Mínú.[1]
The shrewd and wise, the great and powerful,
Among its citizens, with priests and monks,
Went to the king with gifts and offerings,
Spake of the storm and of that ancient town,[2]
And all said : " We are slaves and bow before
Khusrau Parwíz' behest."
He stayed three days,
And on the fourth when Sol, the world's light, rose,
And thrust its bright sword through the clouds, departed
Toward Warígh ;[3] it was a city's name,
And had the true Cross[4] and a hospital.

[1] *i.e.* Paradise.
[2] Kársán.
[3] Spelt also Aurígh.
[4] *Cf.* Vol. v. p. 306 and *note*.

Upon the waste he saw a hermitage ;
He heard the hermit's voice, approached, and asked :—
" What blessèd one is here ? "
They made reply :—
" An ancient man grown wan with many years,
A skilled astrologer ; there is not aught
Concealed from him, and what he saith will be."
The Sháh drew nigh the door forthwith and cried :—
" Be thine to worship God, and may He bless thee
If thou wilt come forth from thine ancient cell."
Forthwith the hermit, when he heard the words,
Descended from his cell and seeing the Sháh
Said : " Of a truth thou art Khusrau Parwíz
Brought by the hand of an ill-doing slave,
Impure, Armenian-like, a servitor,
To this affliction for thy father's throne."
He spake at large ; Khusrau Parwíz became
Cheered in his heart through all that kindliness,
And all in wonder at the words invoked
The blessings of the Maker on the man,
The devotee, and, mounted, greeted him
With outstretched hand, whereat the man of God
Did reverence and spake long. By way of proof
The Sháh said : " Of the Íránian host am I,
A subject, bearing a dispatch to Cæsar,
And I shall carry to my lord his answer.
See if my journey will be prosperous,
And how result."
He answered : " Say not so ;
Thou art the Sháh, make not thyself a courtier.
I told thee all at sight so never prove me.
Thy Faith alloweth no falsehood, and deceit
Is not thy way and wont. Thou hast endured
Much toil and suffered, and at last hast fled
Before thy slave."
Astounded and confused

Khusrau Parwíz began to make excuse.
The hermit said: "Forbear, and question me
Of what will be. As to thy coming hither
Be glad and confident, and to the world
A fruitful bough for God will satisfy thee,
And give to thee high fortune and high place,
While thou wilt have from Cæsar arms and troops,
And daughter worthy of the crown of state.
The World-lord, who ne'er sleepeth, will assist thee
In battle with thy slaves, while in the end
The miscreant will flee and oft recall
The days of his success. He will alight C. 1905
Far from that field of battle and there dwell;
Yet still, though rather than submit to thee
He will choose exile, they will shed his blood
At thy behest."
Khusrau Parwíz replied:—
"God grant it, ancient sage! but tell me this:
Will it be long ere I obtain the kingship?"
He said: "Twelve months and thou wilt have the throne,
Then fifteen days and thou wilt light the world
As king of kings."
"Who of this company,"
The Sháh inquired, "will bear most toil and care
On mine account?"
The hermit said: "Bistám,[1]
A lofty spirit and a prosperous,
And thy maternal uncle who, thou knowest,
Hath made thy lifetime pleasant; but be ware
Of that unprofitable man, the source
Of all thy plaints, affliction, and mishap."
The Sháh was wroth and said to Gustaham:—
"Thy name revealeth thee! Thy mother called thee

[1] The Arabic form of Gustaham. He was no true Persian and therefore not to be trusted.

Bistám but thou proclaimest in the fight
Thyself a Gustaham ! "
Then to the hermit :—
" This is mine uncle on my mother's side."
The hermit answered : " Yea, it is the same ;
Thou wilt see pain and strife through Gustaham."
" And after," said the Sháh, " what will ensue,
My counsellor ? "
He answered : " Heed not that,
For thenceforth thou wilt have but praise ; no ill
E'er will befall thee, and if hardship cometh
'Twill be from God. This rebel will disturb
Thy peace, but after thou wilt be content,
And, bad as this malicious one may prove,
His fate is in thy hands."
" Be not concerned
Hereat, O king ! " said Gustaham. " By God,
The Holy One, the Maker of the moon,
Who made a Sháh like thee to rule the world ;
By sun, by moon, and by Ázargashasp,
And by the life and head of our famed Sháh,
While Gustaham shall live he shall not seek
Aught but the right or knock at evil's door ;
And if he should be minded otherwise
Then may the soul of Gustaham depart.
No human being since the World-lord made
The world hath looked upon His secret's key ;
Why shouldst thou credit then a Christian's words,
And heed his idle talk ? Suspect me not
Through speech of his, and seek not for a pretext
Against me now that I have sworn to thee."
Khusrau Parwíz made answer : " Holy men
1910 Speak to the point. Withal I have not seen
Ill from thee ever, and thou catchest not
At guile or folly, yet high heaven's process
May make thee harmful and no wonder too,

For when God willeth wit and wisdom swerve."
Then said he to the hermit: "Be thou glad
In heart and prosperous."
From that hermitage
He went like levin flashing from a cloud
Toward the city of Warígh, and thence
There met him those of worth and eminence.

§ 14

How a Cavalier of Cæsar came to Khusrau Parwíz and how Khusrau Parwíz sent a Letter by Gustaham, Bálwí, Andiyán, Kharrád, Son of Barzín, and Sháp̀úr to Cæsar

When he arrived there came from noble Cæsar
A cavalier to say: "Ask what thou wilt
Within our coasts and see that thou refrain not
Thy will from kings, for though this realm is mine
I hold thee as mine equal. Stay secure,
And happy in yon city, apprehending
No ill. All Rúmans, haughty though they are
And chiefs, shall serve thee, and I will not seek
Food, sleep or rest till I have furnished thee
With arms and troops."
The Sháh heard and rejoiced;
His soul was eased; he bade call Gustaham,
Bálwí, aspiring Andiyán, Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, and lion Sháp̀úr, and thus
Spake that brave monarch: "Saddle up at dawn
With golden saddles on the horses led,
Put on your tunics gold-inwoven from Chín,
Be one in heart and honesty, depart,
And parle with Cæsar. Be ye wary, shrewd,

Attentive, bland, and courteous. If he goeth
Upon the Ground for archery or polo
Exert you to the utmost 'gainst his chiefs,
For ye must not be worsted: let him know
That horsemanship proceedeth from Írán,
While from its Lions there come might and valour."
The Sháh then bade Kharrád, son of Barzín:—
"Bring hither silk from Chín and black musk; I
Must write a letter like resplendent Sol
In jocund Paradise to Cæsar, brief
C. 1911 But to the purpose, such as all men's hearts
May recollect. He hath philosophers;
Be instant that they hear no foolishness.
They measure not their words in anything;
Let them not find a fault in our dispatch.
When he hath read the letter loose thy tongue;
None of them can compete with thee in speech."
Then to Bálwí:[1] "If Cæsar speak of us
In public with regard to an alliance,
Oath, treaty or affinity, reply
As sweet as honey for thou art my tongue
Before that folk and mine interpreter
For good and ill. Endeavour by all means
To save us from defeat; be diligent;
Take mine assurances and bear in mind
My words."
Those ardent, veteran warriors
Heard the instructions of that glorious youth,
And blessed him saying: "May none wear the crown
But thou."
They fared with cheerful hearts to Cæsar,
Who when he heard: "Some nobles of Írán,
The envoys of the monarch of the world,
Have reached Yúnán," sent many troops to meet
them.

[1] Reading with P. and below.

He decked a palace with brocade of Rúm,
The pattern jewelled on a ground of gold,
And sitting on the famous ivory throne
Assumed the heart-illuming crown and bade
Withdraw the curtain and to introduce
The envoys from the vestibule, rejoicing.
First came the noble Gustaham, behind
There were Bálwí and brave Shápúr, Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, and valiant Andiyán,
All crowned and girdle-girt. They came anear
To Cæsar and on seeing did obeisance,
With one consent called blessings down on him,
And on that golden throne besprinkled gems.
He first inquired about the Sháh, Írán,
The host and toilsome journey. Hearing this,
Kharrád, son of Barzín, approached the throne,
And brought the letter of the Sháh. They set,
By order of that noble sovereign,
Four golden seats, and of the envoys three,
Men of illustrious rank and well advised,
Sat down, but still Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Stood. Cæsar said: "A traveller should sit."
"The Sháh hath not conferred on me the right,"
He answered, "in thy presence while I hold
His letter: mine abasement may commend C. 1912
Itself to thee and aid mine embassage."
Said Cæsar: "Speak. What said the prudent prince?"
Kharrád, son of Barzín, what while he spake
Observing what Khusrau Parwíz had said,
First praised the Maker and besought His help,
"Who is above all height, all wise, all mighty,
Who hath revealed heaven's host and given us
Soul, wisdom, love. He bade and heaven was,
For He is over space and time. The sphere
And stars revolving are His work. When He

Created servants out of worthless dust
He gave life first to Gaiúmart.[1] The race
Went on to Farídún whom God most favoured
Of all those noble chieftains. Once obscure
His stock became illustrious in the world,
And lasted up to Kai Kubád who donned
The crown of majesty. His race ne'er saw
Calamity and ever kept God's way;
But now a worthless slave hath come and sat
Upon the royal throne. I seek for justice
Against the unjust, not crown, throne, cap, and girdle.
Whoever sitteth on a throne hath need
Of wisdom, fortune, and nobility.
This man shall learn to whom the fortune, Grace,
And diadem of king of kings pertain.
Help me and quell this traitor for I roam
Despised by small and great."
When Cæsar heard
His cheeks became like bloom of fenugreek;
That bloom of fenugreek grew charged with hail,
And from his tongue and soul there burst a wail."

§ 15

How Cæsar answered the Letter of Khusrau Parwíz

He read, his grief increased, the throne appeared
All mournful[2] to his eyes, and thus that world-lord
Said to Kharrád, son of Barzín: "That I
Esteem Khusrau Parwíz above myself,
Above my kindred and my fluent soul,
Is not a secret with discerning men.

[1] See Vol. i. p. 117 *seq.* [2] Like lapis-lazuli in the original.

I have arms, troops, and treasure. Now consider
What ye require. If he will have mine eyes C. 19
I will not say him nay though they are better
Than wealth, dínárs, and sword."
Then Cæsar summoned
A well-experienced scribe and, seating him
Upon the royal dais, bade him write
An answer decked like meads of Paradise
With many a counsel, promise, and kind word
About past times and present. When the scribe
Had finished Cæsar chose a cavalier
Brave, fluent, ardent, and of heedful mind,
Wise, learned, a warrior, and scribe withal,
And said: "Go to Khusrau Parwíz and say:—
'Thou seeker of God's way, shrewd-hearted Sháh!
I have men, arms, and treasure, and no need
To trouble any one but, if need were,
Would requisition drachms from every lord
Throughout the realm that thou mightst have thy wish,
And go hence to thine own home in Írán.
Grieve not while here, 'tis circling heaven's way,
Which is by turns our refuge and our bale,
By turns our loss and profit. While I find
Arms, troops, and money do thou take thine ease.'"
The envoy went and told Khusrau Parwíz.

§ 16

How Cæsar wrote to Khusrau Parwíz, declining to help him, and his Answer

Then Cæsar cleared the audience-room and sat
Deliberating with his counsellor,
And said thus to that priest: "This suppliant

Hath made choice of ourselves to refuge with :
What shall we do that he may gather strength,
And feel no more his subject's insolence ? "
The counsellor thus answered : " What we need
Is that a few shrewd-hearted men of those
That are our well-advised philosophers
Shall act with us herein."
So famous Cæsar
Dispatched a messenger and four arrived
Of those philosophers, two young, two old,
All Rúman-born, and thus they spake at large :—
" The Íránians, since Sikandar passed away,
Have deeply wounded us by frequent raiding,
By war and strife, and causeless, reckless bloodshed ;
Now holy God requiteth their ill deeds
In kind. Since the Sásánians' fortune halteth
Forbear to intervene. Khusrau Parwíz,
If he shall gain the royal crown and raise
C. 1914 His forehead to the moon, will ask for tribute
From Rúm anon and trample on our land.
Reflect if this be wise. Hold their words wind."
When Cæsar heard he changed his mind and sent
The Sháh a letter by a cavalier
To tell what course the sages had advised
In long debate. He reached Khusrau Parwíz,
And told what he had heard the famed king say,
Delivered Cæsar's letter too and uttered
Words past compute. Khusrau Parwíz grew strait
Of heart thereat, his face turned wan with care.
He thus replied : " If we must lay to heart
All that can be alleged from days of yore
Then all our travail will but catch the wind.
Consider now if my progenitors,
Those chosen world-lords, men of holiness,
Made wars with justice or unjustly ; ask
Of ancient men who bear such things in mind.

Vouchsafe to question the wise men of Rúm
If 'twas the crow or owl that did the wrong.[1]
Although the Maker hath not left in want
The Great of Rúm mine ancestors withal
Were men of name, in their own days supreme,
Who were no brookers of insurgency,
Pride, wrong, or foolishness from any one;
But what can this avail now that my head
Is in the dragon's maw? Greet Cæsar for me,
And say: 'The Great speak only to the point
In wisdom's presence though both good and ill
Pass in the end. I will not rest till I
Have drawn my skirt forth from this turbid stream,
And if the Rúmans will not succour me
I will send envoys to the Khán. My words
Have naught availed because my river-bed
Was fouled, and when my messengers return
My sojourn in this city will be short.'"
He said to the Íránians: "Obey
My hests; let not this matter break your hearts,
For God, the Conqueror, is aiding us;
Our part is fortitude and manliness."
He took the matter lightly and dispatched
His answer by Tukhár. He wrote as though
He recked not either good or ill. Tukhár
Departed from Khusrau Parwíz and came
To where was Cæsar's court, that man of name.

[1] Alluding to a story in the book of Kalíla and Dimna (see Vol. VII., p. 382). The owls, having an ancient grudge against the crows, one of whom had prevented the owl from being elected the king of the cranes, made a treacherous night-attack upon the crows. A counsellor of the king of the crows, acting somewhat as an Haitálian chief is said to have done in the war against Pírúz (*id.* p. 161), succeeded in avenging them.

§ 17

How Cæsar wrote the second Time to Khusrau Parwíz about giving him Aid

Now Cæsar having read the letter pondered,
And then addressed his noble minister :—
" Expound these problems. Call the Great and Brave,
Tell what hath passed at large and ascertain
If now Khusrau Parwíz in this contention
Will be successful or will writhe at fortune.
If ye shall say : ' He will not be victorious,
Henceforth there is no New Year's Day for him,'
Then will we let him journey to the Khán,
And go, since he is ailing, to that cure ;
But if he is to triumph and possess
The kingship, like his father, it were well
In all ways that he go hence with a host,
And so not contemplate revenge at heart."
The prudent minister, on hearing this,
Gave orders and the readers of the stars
Came with their ancient tablets and consulted
Until three watches of the night had passed,
And in conclusion an astrologer
Spake thus to Cæsar : " O illustrious !
I have consulted these old tables made
In astrologic wise by Falátún.[1]
Ere long Khusrau Parwíz will have the realm,
The kingship start afresh, and darksome dust
Receive him not for eight and thirty years."
Thereat said Cæsar to his minister :—
" Our doubts are cleared about Khusrau Parwíz.
What shall we say ? What answer shall we give ? "

[1] Plato.

" Let us apply a salve," he made reply.
" If he betake him to the Khán's domains,
Get aid from him, perceive himself secure,
And levy soldiers elsewhere than in Rúm,
He never will forgo revenge on thee.
Advise thou who art wiser and more potent
In compassing thy will."
" We must," said Cæsar,
" Dispatch him troops forthwith. When all is weighed
'Tis well to hold wealth cheap and keep from harm."
He wrote forthwith, bestowing praise on praise :—
" We have consulted loyal, honest priests
On all points bad and good, and have returned,
Discussion over, to our former view.
All is arranged and now we will unlock
Our ancient hoards. Within Kastantaniya[1] C. 19
We have but force enough for garrison,
But have ta'en order and have requisitioned
Troops from the other provinces. As these
Arrive I will not fail to send them to thee.
All this delay and great deliberation.
This pricking with a fleam the lion's jaws,
Arose from sages' tales about the past,
How under Sháh Shápúr, son of Ardshír,
Our youths' hearts aged with toil, much ravaging,
Assault and slaughter and unjust revenge ;
Then passing to Kubád[2] and to Hurmuzd,
Both reckless of God's justice, of our cities
Were nine and thirty turned to bramble-brakes
By the Íránians, and the waste became
Filled with the blood of chiefs whose wives and children
Were carried captive ; so thou must not marvel
If Rúmans mused revenge. Howbeit to owe
A grudge is not according to our Faith,

[1] Constantinople. [2] Kaikubád in the original.

And God forbid that we should practise ill.
We know no better thing than uprightness,
And lack of all deceit and knavery.
We have convoked the chiefest sufferers,
And spoken much to them in this regard;
Their evil passions have been charmed away,
For gnawing bane hath turned to antidote.
Thus then have we secured that none will use
The language of revenge about the past,
And pledge our lives to further thy commands.
Thou too must pledge thy word that none will bear
Ill will to us, must say: 'While I am king
I will not think your labours slight or mean,
Will not demand a tribute from the Rúmans,
Or sell for aught these services of theirs.'
Go further in complaisance: treat and make
Affinity with us. Whate'er ye do,
E'en in an unjust war, let us be friends
And brothers still through all vicissitudes
Of power. Now when ye need our help no longer,
And thoughts of vengeance shall recur to you,
There will be talk again of Túr and Salm,
And of the follies of the past, so now
I ask a binding pact, fit for thy seal,
As a reminder that from this time forth
We will not speak of vengeance for Íraj,
Or of the past. Írán and Rúm shall be
One realm; we will not seek to sever them.
1917 There is a daughter in our ladies' bower—
A fit match for the greatest of the great;
Ask her according to our holy Faith,
According to our rites and ritual,
That when thou hast a child of Cæsar's line
He may not think of vengeance for Íraj:
Then earth will rest from war and strife, and seek
The right way in the Faith. Regarding this

With wisdom's eye thou wilt esteem it just.
Affinity will make alliance sure,
Such is the precept that we have of God.
Good sooth, it is a long day since Pírúz,
Or Khúshnawáz.[1] They gave their heads to wind,
But perish any treaty-breaking king!
Our Prophet, the Messiah, said thus: 'If thou
Quit justice wisdom warpeth.' Many a plan
Tried Khúshnawáz to keep the other's head
From coming to the shears, but when Pírúz
Used force against him, in that fight the Sháh
Saw but black reek while host and royal throne
Went to the winds because his head was turned
From right. Thou art a youth new to affairs,
And if thou wouldest gather fortune's fruit
Make not a treaty-breaker thine ally;
Dust is the shroud of such, and crown and throne
Curse treaty-breaking, strife-provoking kings.
Peruse my letter o'er and, if thy fingers
Possess the needful skill, write heedfully
A fair and good response. I would not have
This known to any scribe, so write thyself,
And take good heed. When I shall read thine answer,
And see therein the heart of one resolved,
I will dispatch forthwith arms, troops, and money
To ease thy heart of care. As touching those
Who are with thee most honoured or renowned,
And those withal 'gainst whom thou harbourest vengeance,[2]
Put manfully such hatred from your hearts.
Leave their[3] ill doings to almighty God,

[1] With a slight change of reading. Mohl translates: "Depuis Pirouz jusqu'à Khouschnewaz, il s'est passé bien du temps, pendant lequel les deux peuples ont livré leurs têtes au vent."

[2] Or "And him withal," *etc.*, referring to Bahrám Chúbína.

[3] Or "his."

And be not masterful with friend or foe.
If thou wouldst have victorious fortune hold thee
Lord of the world with host and crown and throne,
Lay not thy hand on others' goods but make
Thy soul a pathway toward the light, indulge
Thy kindred, and protect the labouring poor.
If thou art bounteous and a friend in need
None will attempt thy crown and throne. Of Sháhs
The vigilant have kept the world from foes.
1918 The magnates that desire affinity
Themselves or for their virtuous children ne'er
Have suffered ill from foemen, and God's Grace
Hath magnified them.[1] Now we all court thee,
And deck our tongues to give thee good advice."
Whenas the address was dry they sealed the letter
With musk. Now when with tidings of a league
That he expected not the letter reached
Khusrau Parwíz he told the Íránians :—
" The sun revolveth otherwise to-day !
A letter of high policy hath come
From Cæsar in most favourable terms :
He seeketh to abate the ancient feud
Between Írán and Rúm."
They answered him :—
" Whene'er this feud is o'er no chiefs will seek
The Sháh's crown, or such numbers live in want.
If in thy days such righteousness come down
Men will inscribe thy name on every crown."

[1] Couplets transposed.

§ 18

How Khusrau Parwíz answered Cæsar about the Alliance

Now when they had approved this policy
Khusrau Parwíz put strangers forth and called
For inkhorn, pen, and silk of Chín, and bade
A scribe attend. He wrote, as Sháhs were wont,
Thus in the olden tongue in royal script :—
" Khusrau Parwíz doth swear by holy God,
By circling sun and stable earth that while
I sit as Sháh upon the seat of state,
Lord of Írán, its treasures and its troops,
I will not ask the chiefs of Rúm for tribute,
Or send a host against those fields and fells.
I will restore to Cæsar all the cities
Thereof however tradeless they may be
And worthless, and thereafter will return
Their documents and records. Further, I
Am well content to ask of him a daughter
Whose mother is both pure and of his race,
And by so asking illustrate my heart.
Entrust to those Íránians at thy court,
And under thy protection—Gustaham,
Kharrád, son of Barzín, of royal race,
Shápúr and Andiyán—thy daughter, wise
And high-renowned, when thou dost send the troops.
I am through mine affinity to thee
As my great family were heretofore.
The first was Gaiúmart, the next Jamshíd— C. 19
A source of hope and terror to the world—
Then followed others of the glorious stock,
Great men in wisdom and in royalty.
From those old monarchs, wearers of the crown,

The story runneth on to Kai Káús,
And Kai Khusrau, and by the selfsame token
To mighty Kai Kúbád[1] whose justice made
The sheep and wolf akin. Pursue the tale
To Sháh Luhrasp through whom to Sháh Gushtásp
There came the glorious Asfanfiyár,
That chief of chiefs, from whom sprang great Bahman,
And thus we come to Ardshír Pápakán
'Neath whom our ancient star regained its youth.
Now when Khusrau Parwíz, son of Hurmuzd,
Is one in heart and sentiment with Cæsar,
Among whose distant ancestors was Salm
(I seek no fables and I tell no lies)
We shall abolish all the feud between us,
And Rúman and Íránian will be one.
I do accept from Cæsar Cæsar's daughter—
The crown of all his daughters. Whatsoever
May be her faults or virtues it is well,
And holy God is witness to this letter,
Writ in mine own hand known throughout the world,
And I have sealed the letter with my seal
According to our customs, ways, and faith.
For thy successors—world-lords crowned and throned—
That which is written here shall be my pledge,
With mind and wisdom to corroborate,
That I will keep my word in great and small.
That what I say is true my heart and star,
And holy God, bear witness, so delay not
To act upon thy words, for I have lingered
Long in this city."
All being said, he gave
The letter to Khúrshíd, son of Kharrád.
As swift as wind that chieftain rose and mounting
His chestnut steed sped till he came to Cæsar,

[1] Kai Kubád really preceded the two Sháhs previously mentioned.

And gave the message of Khusrau Parwíz.
Then Cæsar, having snapped the band and read
The words of that exalted Sháh, commanded
The wise men and the eloquent to meet
Before him and inquired of them in turn :—
" What cure shall I adopt ? How shall I make
A treaty with the monarch of Írán ?
His letter leaveth us without excuse ;
All we of Rúm and of Írán are one."
The chiefs and sages rose to answer him,
And said : " We are but subjects ; thou art Cæsar, C. 192
The world-lord throned and crowned. Do thou advise,
Who hast both counsel and authority :
Our bodies and our souls are thine."
When Cæsar
Heard he commended those shrewd, pious chiefs,
And waited till in the revolving sky
The lamp of day had lost its radiancy.

§ 19

How Cæsar made a Talisman and deceived the Envoys of Khusrau Parwíz, and how Kharrád, Son of Barzín, solved the Mystery

When circling Sol grew pale, and in the tower
Of night the stars were stationed, Cæsar bade
His warlocks muse and frame a talisman—
A marvel—somewhere, such as none would know
From real—a woman modest, fair, and seated
In trailing raiment on a goodly throne
With handmaids on both sides of her and slaves
Before her and behind. She was to sit,

That moon-faced one in silence, to appear
A woman weeping, and from time to time
To raise one hand and dash her tears away.
The warlocks, as they were instructed, made
The semblance of a woman with long hair,
And all that from a distance gazed thereon
Took it to be a woman lovelorn, bright,
That sorely wept o'er Christ, her cheeks aflame,
Her lashes like Spring-clouds. When of the adepts
That talisman was set up in its place
One went and said to Cæsar: "We have finished
The matter in accord to what thou badest."
When he had heard this from the expert, Cæsar
Came from his throne in haste and visited
The talisman. He marvelled at that feat
Of sorcery and sent for Gustaham.
He bounteously rewarded those magicians
With money and with divers other gifts,
Then said to Gustaham: "Famed warrior!
I had a daughter beautiful as Spring:
She grew up to a marriageable age.
I had a kinsman, an aspiring one,
To whom I married her with Christian rites.
I countenanced him unadvisedly,
And sent her to his palace. That youth's soul
Hath gone to Heaven; she is deeply grieved;
Bright day for her is lapis-lazuli;
C. 1921 She will not take my rede or speak a word,
And our young world hath agéd through her trouble.
Concern thyself to see her, and employ
The words of men of lore, for thou art wise,
A paladin by race, and she may speak
To thee"
He said: "I will: it may be I
Shall banish this affection from her breast."
With cheerful heart and charged with potent words

That chief approached the guileful talisman,
Which bowed to greet him as he neared its throne.
Illustrious Gustaham sat humbly down,
And spake to that sad dame, beginning boldly
With such advice as seemed to him of profit :—
" O daughter born of Cæsar's race ! " he said,
" The wise exclaim not at the course of nature :
The flying eagles, lions in the forests,
And fishes in the waters, are not free
From death," but all his words were wind ; no soul,
Or tongue had she but ever and anon
Would dash away the tear-drops from her eyes
As her physician talked. While Gustaham
Was lost in wonder Cæsar summoned him,
And asked : " How didst thou find that child of mine,
Whose pain and mourning cause me this distress ? "
He answered : " I advised her much but vainly."
The following day said Cæsar to Bálwí :—
" Go thou with Andiyán. Shápúr withal,
The nobly born, may help to make my heart
Glad in my daughter. Go to that sorrower,
And speak to her about the famous king.
She that is heaping fire upon my head
May answer thee. Be good enough to aid me
By converse with my mourning child ; perchance
In view of your high rank she may accept
Your counsels. Sure I am that she will speak
To-day, and when she maketh fair reply
I shall be freed from this disconsolate,
Who raineth tears of blood upon her breast."
Then those three noble Persians went to her,
And each one strove, but answer gat they none ;
That tongueless dame was mute. The baffled three
Went back to Cæsar, that just judge, and said :—
" We spake and gave advice as best we could,
But there was no improvement."

" 'Tis ill hap
For us," he said, " to grieve for one in grief."
C. 1922 Since these great men had failed he had recourse
To great Kharrád, son of Barzín. " Thou art,"
He said, " one of these chiefs and thou mayst hear
Her voice forthwith," then sent him to the mourner
From court attended by a trusty servant.
When he arrived he looked upon the mien
Of that crowned form and waited in its presence
No little while. The guileful talisman
Made him a bow of greeting. He observed
The woman, head and foot, most heedfully,
And marked the attendants standing round. He spake
At large; she answered not a word; that man,
That scion of the chiefs, grew full of thought.
" If grief hath robbed her of her wits," he said,
" Why do her servants hold their peace the while?
If these be very tear-drops from her eyes
One would expect her passion to abate.
She letteth fall the drops upon her breast,
And knoweth not to move to left or right;
Her tears fall on one spot; she hath not used
One hand or stirred a foot! Had this form life
She would move more than foot or hand, would shed
Her tears, and stretch her other hand, elsewhere.
I see life stir not in her body; 'tis
A talisman of these philosophers."
He came to Cæsar with a smile and said:—
" This moon-faced lady is not rational;
It is a talisman of Rúman make,
And hath deceived Bálwí and Gustaham.
Thy purpose was to laugh at us or charm
Our eyes. Our Sháh when he shall hear will smile
With open lips and show his silvern teeth."
Said Cæsar: " Live for ever! Thou art fit

To be the minister of kings. I have
A wondrous chamber in my palace, one
Can not imagine aught more marvellous.
When thou beholdest it thou wilt not know
Its secret—talisman or work divine."
Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing this,
Went to that ancient chamber and beheld
A cavalier upstanding, poised in air,
And going back to famous Cæsar said:—
"The cavalier is iron and the chamber
Withal is fashioned of the famous ore
Called loadstone by the sages. Those of Rúm
Have mounted him upon an Indian steed.
Whoe'er shall read the Indians' books will find
Both pleasure and enlightenment of mind."

§ 20

How Kharrád, Son of Barzín, expounded the Faith of the Indians and exhorted Cæsar

"In what regard," said Cæsar, "do the Indians C. 19
Err from the Path? Those that are worshippers,
Are they idolaters or what are they?"
Kharrád, son of Barzín, replied: "In Hind
They worship ox and moon, put not their trust
In God and circling heaven, and regard not
Their persons, look no higher than the sun,
And reckon not men like ourselves as wise.
Whoever kindleth fire, shall enter it,
And shall consume himself therein, believeth
That in the air there is a fire ordained
By God, whose word is law, which fire the sage
Of Hind entitleth 'Ether' and hath much

Of worth and interest to say thereon,
As thus: when earthly and etherial fires
Combine man's sin is purged; they must be kindled
Since burning is accounted righteousness.
Withal ye too speak not aright; hereto
Christ's life is testimony. Mark'st thou not
What Jesus, son of Mary,[1] said when he
Was bringing secret things to light? 'If one
Shall take thy skirt from thee resist him not,
And if one buffet thee upon the face,
So that thine eyes are darkened by the blows,
Be not enraged or let thy cheek turn pale,
But shut thine eyes and speak no chilling word.[2]
If thou hast little food let it suffice,
And if thou hast no carpet seek one not.
Hold not this kind of evil to be bad,
And ye without a pang will quit this Gloom.'
But now with you desire is king o'er wisdom,
Your hearts have erred through overweening greed,
For ye have raised your palaces to Saturn,
And camels bear your treasuries' keys. Besides
The treasures ye have mighty hosts with coats
Of mail from 'Ád and Rúman helms. Ye lead
Hosts everywhere unjustly and allow not
Your swords to rest. The wilderness is all
One fount of blood: Christ led you not to this.
He was a poor, unfurnished man who earned
His bread by toil and lived on curds and milk
With butter for his only other food.
Now when the Jews gat hold of him and saw
Him friendless and without resource they slew him,
A.D. 1924 And having slain him set him on the gibbet
To make thereby his Faith contemptible.
His father was an ancient man, his mother

[1] "Ísá son of Maryam" in the original.
[2] S. Mat. v. 39, 40. S. Luke, vi. 29.

A temple-keeper and a trier out
Of good and ill.[1] Grown ardent and desirous
Of knowledge, eloquent, instructed, mindful,
He made withal disciples by his teaching,
And compassed in his youth his will by shrewdness.
Thou sayest that he was God's son and smiled
When slain upon the gibbet![2] At such things
The sage doth smile. If thou art wise fear God,
Who hath no need of consort and of son,
And unto whom all mysteries are clear.
Why turn'st thou from the Faith of Gaiúmart,
The path and precedent of Tahmúras,
Which tell us that the Judge of earth is One,
And that our only course is serving Him?
The experienced thane and worshipper of God,
When muttering prayer he taketh in his hand
The sacred twigs, may taste no drop of water
Albeit for very thirst he dream thereof;
He trusteth God upon the day of battle,
And asketh not cold water in the fight.
Withal he taketh for his cynosure
The highest element which is above
Earth, air, and water. Our Sháhs barter not
Their Faith but list to Him, the Lord of all.
They joy not in dínárs and gems but seek
To make their name and mark by justice only,
By gifts of lofty palaces or joying
The hearts of mourners. Fourthly, they pronounce
None wise but one that on the day of battle
Doth veil the bright sun's face with dust and guardeth
The land from foes. Be curses his, not blessings,
That seeketh from religion aught but right."

When Cæsar heard this he approved; the words

[1] According to the Kurán Mary had been dedicated from the first to the service of God. Zacharias built for her a chamber in the temple and provided for her. SK, i. 58 and *notes*.

[2] See p. 191.

Seemed profitable to him, and he said :—
" The Maker made thee foremost of the great ;
One needs must hearken to thy pure discourse.
Thou hast the key that openeth the door
Of mysteries. The head of one with liege
Like this is higher than the moon's own crown."
Then from his treasury he bade to bring
Dínárs and drachms and crown magnifical,
Bestowed them on Kharrád, son of Barzín,
And uttered many praises : " Cultured be
The country of Írán," he said, " through thee."

§ 21

How Cæsar sent a Host and his Daughter to Khusrau Parwíz

Now Cæsar, when he heard that troops had come,
And that the world was black with horsemen's dust,
Chose from those Rúmans five-score thousand men,
All famed in battle, requisitioned arms,
War-steeds and drachms, and thus much time elapsed.
He had one daughter Maryam hight, wise, grave,
Well counselled and resolved, and later on
Brought forth such stores of bridal bravery
That e'en the speedy baggage-beasts grew slow—
Gold trinkets, jewels that a king might wear,
Gems, gold-embroidered raiment, carpetings,
Brocade of Rúm with golden patterns wrought
Upon a ground of silk, torques, bracelets, earrings,
And three most costly and bejewelled crowns.
He had four gilded litters too made ready,
Their curtains decorate with royal gems,
And forty others made of ebony

All jewelled like the eye of chanticleer.
Then came three hundred moon-faced waiting-maids
All colour and perfume, five hundred slave-boys
Intelligent and bright with ornaments
Of gold and silver, forty Rúman eunuchs
Fay-faced, illustrious, attractive men,
And four of the philosophers of Rúm,
Wise, learned and famed. He gave them their instructions,
And privily withal charged Maryam
To be obedient, order her desires,
To do her duty, to be bountiful,
As to her food and how to bear herself.
There was, as reckoned in the Rúman way,
More than three hundred millions' worth[1] of goods.
To every envoy at his court he gave
A crown inlaid with jewels, robes withal,
Steeds and dínárs and much of all things fitting.
He bade write to the Sháh on painted silk : —
" Well may they raise their necks up to the moon,
These subjects of the Sháh ! No man more courteous
Than Gustaham hath sprung from small or great.
Is there a champion like the chief Shápúr
To act as arbiter ? Bálwí withal
Can keep a secret for he would not sell
His folk for aught, while none though he live long
Will see one like Kharrád, son of Barzín,
Whom God created to solve mysteries. C. 1(
He is as bright and faultless as the sun,
Divine in rede and deed."
This written, he summoned
His counsellors and readers of the stars
To fix a lucky day for setting forth,
And started on Bahrám with favouring stars
And auguries. He went himself three stages,

[1] " *de dirhems.*" Mohl.

And then resigned the conduct of the host,
Bade Maryam come to him, conversed with her
At large, and said: "Be ware of putting off
Thy girdle till thou comest to Írán.
Khusrau Parwíz must see thee not unveiled
Till then or things unlooked for may befall thee,"
Then bade her tenderly farewell: "May heaven
Protect thee on thy way."
He had a brother,
The valiant Niyátús, who led his host
In that campaign, and "Maryam is akin
To thee," he said, "in blood and, I would add,
In Faith. I charge thee with her, with this wealth,
And this well ordered army."
Niyátús
Accepted all from Cæsar who, this said,
Turned back in tears. The host marched toward Warígh,
Led on by Niyátús with mace and sword.
Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing that the host
Had come, set out with forces from that city,
And when the leaders' dust-clouds and the flags
Of those mailed cavaliers appeared, and when
The troops came onward cloud-like, lapped in iron,
In helmet and cuirass, his heart laughed out,
Like Spring-tide roses, at that fine array;
He plucked up heart and gave his steed the heel.
He saw, embraced, and greeted Niyátús,
And testified his gratitude to Cæsar,
Who had endured such toil and with that toil
Of ordering the host had rendered void
His treasury; then going to the litter
Beheld the face of Maryam through her veil,
Saluted her and kissed her hand, rejoicing
To look upon the Fair. He bore her off

To his encampment where he gave his Moon
A bower and passed three days in converse with her.
Upon the fourth when Sol, the world's light, shone
They gat in readiness a choice pavilion,
And summoned Niyátús, Sarkab, and Kút,
The bold, with other chiefs both great and small,
Whom thus the Sháh addressed: "What chiefs and warriors C. 192
Are here, such men as brandish sword and mace,
In battle reck not of their lives, and turn not
From lion or from leopard in the fray?"
Then Niyátús made choice of seventy men
To lead in fight; each had beneath his banner
A thousand chosen, lance-armed cavaliers.
Khusrau Parwíz beheld this picked array
Of noble horsemen eager for the strife;
He praised the Maker of heaven, time, and earth,
He praised too Niyátús, his troops withal,
And noble Cæsar and his realm, and said:—
"If God almighty aid me in this war
I will display my puissance and make
Earth like a sea for jewels; ye shall joy
At having come and rather tell thereof
Than hold your peace: heaven's airs shall breathe love-fraught
From pleasance, friendship be our only thought."

§ 22

How Khusrau Parwíz led his Host to Ázar Ábádagán and how Bandwí met him on the Way

Upon the seventh day that comely Sháh
Arrayed his host as 'twere the turning sky,
The din of tymbals went up from the court,

And air grew ebon with the dust of troops.
He chose a force of Persians and set out
Toward Ázar Ábádagán. There passed
Two weeks what while by order of the Sháh
The soldiers concentrated at his camp.
He pitched it on the plain of Dúk; the army
Was great and under Rúman discipline.
He gave the whole host up to Niyátús,
Thus saying: "Thou art master of the flock,"
And thence with certain valiant cavaliers
Let his swift steed have rein and made toward
Khanjast—an anxious journey—till he reached
Mausíl, the Armenian, who could hold his own
Among the great and had with him Bandwí,
The Sháh's maternal uncle. Now these twain,
On hearing that Khusrau Parwíz was stirring,
Sped from the waste to meet him on the way,
Preceding their own troops. To Gustaham
The Sháh said, seeing them upon the road:—
"O warrior! two are hurrying o'er the field:
1928 See who they are and wherefore in such haste."
He answered: "Sure am I, O king! that he
Who rideth on the piebald is my brother,
The brave Bandwí: his friend is not of us."
The Sháh said: "What! How canst thou know him? Nay,
Seek him in ward if living and if slain
Upon a gibbet in the riding-ground."
Said Gustaham: "O Sháh! regard him well
From this side: 'tis thine uncle: let me die
For saying so if it prove otherwise."
Afoot the twain approached the shady spot
Where was the Sháh, praised him and did obeisance.
He gave Bandwí a welcome and observed:—
"I said that I should find thee hid in dust."
He told the Sháh all that had chanced to him,

His ruse of putting on the royal robes,
And all Bahrám Chúbína's clemency.
Khusrau Parwíz wept greatly at the tale,
Then asked him: "Who is this?"
"O sun-faced Sháh!
Hast thou no kindly welcome for Mausíl?"
He answered. "Since thou left'st Írán for Rúm
He hath not slept in lands inhabited,
But camped upon the plain, his palace been
Tent and pavilion. The troops with him
Are many; he hath all the gear of greatness,
With drachms and treasures. Now he hath been waiting
Upon the road and longed for thy return."
"How came it," asked the world-lord of Mausíl,
"That all thy toil was hidden? We will strive
To give thee happy days and make thy name
The greatest of the great."
Mausíl replied:—
"Give me new life, O king! Let me approach
And kiss thy stirrup while I praise thy Grace
And splendour."
"For these words," replied the Sháh,
"I will make bright thy gains to pay thy pains,
Will grant thy wish and set thy name on high
Above the great."
Then he withdrew one foot
Out of the stirrup, and that ardent soul,
All eagerness, kissed foot and stirrup both,
O'ercome by veneration for the Sháh,
Who, when that loyal liege was satisfied,
Bade him remount and urged his own steed on
Across that barren waste until he reached
Ázargashasp. With muttered prayer he entered C. 192
The Fire-fane, with an aching heart. A priest,
The Zandavasta in his hand, approached

The pious Sháh who, loosing from his loins
His golden belt, flung jewels on the Fire,
And in his prayers outdid the priest himself.
"Just Judge!" he said, "bring my foes' heads to dust.
Thou knowest that I justly plead and purpose
To keep the path of good. Approve not Thou
The injustice of the unjust."
This said, he girt
His golden belt and sought the plain of Dúk
With wounded heart in trouble for his way:
Night fell ere he reached camp.
He sent shrewd spies
To learn the posture of the world's affairs,
And when the army of Nímrúz had heard:—
"The Sháh, the lustre of the world, hath come,"
They bound the drums upon the elephants,
And earth became as 'twere the river Nile.
All folk at that intelligence, which made
Them young again, drew near to give him aid.

§ 23

How Bahrám Chúbína had Tidings of the Coming of Khusrau Parwíz and wrote to the Chiefs of Írán, and how the Letter fell into the Hands of Khusrau Parwíz and his Answer

Bahrám Chúbína heard: "The Grace of kingship
Hath been revived," and cast his eyes on one
Devoted to himself, one of the host,
Aspiring, sage, fair-famed—Dárá Panáh—
Then called a scribe of note whom he instructed
To write him letters of great charge to all

The valiant leaders—Gustaham, Bandwí,
Gurdwí, the warrior (for he had won
That name from all the other chiefs), Shápúr,
And Andiyán, the cavalier, and all
That were the living memories of the great.
The letters[1] ran: "I offer to the Maker
Mine adoration privily that ye
May all awake from sleep and hasten not
To ill on this wise for from verge to centre,
With this Sásánian race in evidence,
Things worsen through their wrangling and self-seeking.
Ardshír, sprung from Pápak, was first to bring C. 193
Confusion on the world, his scimitar
O'ershadowed all his age and mazed the Great;
And first of all I instance Ardawán
With other chiefs of ardent soul whose names
Are lacking on the earth to this throne's grief.
Then surely ye have heard of what befell,
Through ill-advised Pírúz, to Súfarai.
He freed Kubád from fetters and Kubád,
Of all the chieftains, gave him to the wind;
For when malevolent Kubád grew strong
He put away his virtues, took to crime,
Slew this illustrious and devoted man,
And soured the nobles' hearts. He that aggrieveth
His kin, preferring passion to his child,
Would injure strangers more. No one would look
For ivory in ebony; so put not
Your only trust in the Sásánians,
Or seek for jewels in red willow-trees.
When they shall bring this letter unto you
May your Urmuzd prove gracious. Ye possess
A place illustrious in my regard;

[1] The word is used here sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural. Several copies were made of the letter actually written.

The breast and sleeves are all one with the shirt;
Our place for rest and sleep by dark or day
Is one, and when ye join me ye will brighten
My gloomy soul. I reck not of the Rúmans,
Or of their king, and will tread down their heads
And throne."
They sealed the letters with his seal,
And then the envoy went in merchants' guise
In haste to where Khusrau Parwíz held court.
He had a caravan of various goods,
And with the letters carried presents too.
He marked the grandeur and great host wherefor,
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth hath no thoroughfare,"
And thought: "With such a king who will confide
In brave Bahrám Chúbína? I am Persian,
I carry thirty camels' loads of goods,
And have no foes; why should I wreck myself
When majesty hath risen from the abyss?
I will deliver to Khusrau Parwíz
The letters—an unlooked for offering."
Perturbed he reached the Sháh's court with those letters,
And all the presents of that hostile liege;
He brought the drachms, the letters, and the gifts,
Revealing all. The world-lord having read
Assigned the messenger a golden seat,
And said to him: "O man exceeding wise!
Speak of Bahrám Chúbína as one vile
1931 In our regard. Thou hast attained thine end,
But make it not a feather in thy cap."[1]
Then sending for a scribe he had an answer,
Such as the case required, drawn up at large:—
"Brave and exalted chief! we have perused
Thy letters and been privy with thine envoy.

[1] By boasting of it.

In word we battle for Khusrau Parwíz,
But are to thee like new Spring in our hearts.
When thou hast led thine army hither who
Will reck of Rúm or Rúmans ? We will draw
Our scimitars and slay them in the fight.
Khusrau Parwíz, when he shall see thine host,
Thy prowess and pre-eminence, will quail
At heart upon the battle-day and flee
Like fox before thee."
Having sealed the letters
He gave them to that loyal chief and said :—
" For this thy conduct, sage ! thou shalt have fruit
From toil," then gave him jewels and dínárs,
And many precious gems. " Convey," he said,
" These to Bahrám Chúbína and recount
What thou hast heard, and thou shalt want for nothing
When my high fortune brighteneth."
From court
Dárá Panáh departed and achieved
His journey like the wind. The youth delivered
The letters which the paladin received.
When that aspirant had perused the letter
He summoned greed and banished rede, and led
By what the letters said prepared to march.
The Íránians were amazed. The elders went,
On seeing that blind act, and said : " Depart not,
Or thy young day will age. Khusrau Parwíz,
If he invadeth us, will only find
The maces and the scimitars of war ;
But do not thou betray the royal throne,
Or fortune will beguile thee forwardly."[1]

[1] The meaning seems to be :—" If you remain on the defensive you may rely on the people supporting you against Khusrau Parwíz backed up, as he will be, by foreign troops ; but if you assume the offensive you will throw away this advantage and so betray your own cause."

Their words were vain ; he bade the host assemble ;
He loaded up the baggage, called to horse,
Struck up the drums, and led the army forth.
That valiant armament of Persians reached
Ázar Ábádagán. Host drew near host,
And ant and fly were barred from thoroughfare.
That warring subject said : " I fain would scan
Yon host and see what Rúman cavaliers
Are like, and if their troops are troops or what."
C. 1932 Then with Yálán-sína and with the chief,
Ízid Gashasp, the warriors all mounted
Upon their steeds. These magnates went to view
The hostile host, saw and returning told
Their chief : " Yon host is boundless ! The affair
Is other than we deemed."
Upon their side
The Rúman horsemen of the Sháh arrived
In all haste at the place of audience,
And girding up their loins exclaimed : " We long
To battle with the Íránians," which thing
Accorded to the wishes of the king.

§ 24

How Khusrau Parwíz fought with Bahrám Chúbína and how Kút, the Rúman, was slain

When Sol rose o'er the darksome hills the war-cry
Ascended from both hosts ; thou wouldst have said :—
" Earth is a turning sky and swords eclipse
The sun ! " The troops drew up to left and right ;
Earth was an iron mountain. At the neighing
Of chargers and the shouting of the hosts
The desert fled for shelter to the hills.

When brave Bahrám Chúbína saw he drew
His glittering glaive, his heart conceived no fears
Though raging lions' hearts were rent asunder.[1]
He went himself to view the left and right,
And told Yalán-sína: "Take thou the centre,
And keep before the army for I champion
The troops to-day and tarry though they flee."
Khusrau Parwíz surveyed the battlefield,
And saw the whole world blackened by the hosts;
The bright sun's face was like a lion's maw,
And thou hadst said: "The clouds are raining swords!"
Then Niyátús, Bandwí, and Gustaham
Went with the Sháh from battlefield to height.
Those leaders took their station on Mount Dúk,
Their eyes upon their followers, and thence
The Sháh surveyed his host, the right and left,
The centre and the wings. The tymbals sounded
From both sides and the eager warriors
Advanced to fight. "Earth is an iron mountain,"
Thou wouldst have said, "heaven lost in foemen's dust!"
Now when Khusrau Parwíz saw matters thus,
Saw heaven as woof and earth as warp, he prayed
Thus in the olden tongue: "O Thou more pure, C. 1933
And higher than the high! who but Thyself,
O holy Judge! can tell which will return
Exulting from the fight to-day? The spear
Of him whose fortune halteth hath but thorn
Or weed for point."
Khusrau Parwíz was full
Of care, both heart and soul; the world appeared
A brake to him, for from among the troops
Kút, like a dark hill in his iron mail,
Brake from the centre to the height and cried:—

[1] Couplet omitted.

" Illustrious monarch ! point me out the slave,
The doer of dív's work, 'gainst whom thou foughtest
When in Írán and fleddest while he triumphed.
Look to the army's left and right, and find him
Among the chieftains. I will teach him warfare,
And show what hearts and might true warriors have."
Thereat all mindful of the former fight
The Sháh was vexed at heart because Kút said :—
" Thou didst let fall thy knightly equipage,
And flee before a slave," but answered not ;
His heart was full, he sighed. At length he said :—
" Approach yon rider on the piebald steed ;
He will attack thee when he seeth thee ;
Then fly not lest thou bite thy lips in shame."
Kút sped back like the wind and spear in hand
Came furious as a maddened elephant
Upon the battlefield. Yalán-sína
Called to Bahrám Chúbína, saying : " Beware,
Brave cavalier ! A dív armed with a lance,
And with a lasso in his straps, hath come
Like elephant gone mad."
He heard, unsheathed
Like wind his falchion and proclaimed his name,
Which when the Sháh observed he rose and peered
Down from the mountain-top upon the pair,
Wet-eyed and wroth of heart. Now when the Rúman
Charged with his lance the aspirant gripped his steed,
Escaped the thrust, raised to his face his shield,
And clave his foe asunder to the breast.
The sword's clash reached Khusrau Parwíz who laughed
To see the stroke struck by Bahrám Chúbína,
While valaint Niyátús frown-blinded raged
Because the Sháh had laughed, and said : " Great sir !
One should not laugh in war whereof thou knowest

Naught but the sleights, and when thou wouldst avenge C. 19
Thine ancestors I see thy heart asleep.
Men will not see in any peopled part
Of Rúm or of Írán one like to Kút,
Hazára's son, whose slaying made thee laugh.
Know this, that fortune hath deserted thee."
He made reply: "I laugh not at his slaughter,
Or at his body which is cleft in twain.
Know this that he who mocketh shall receive
Himself a buffet from the turning sky.
He said to me: 'Thou fleddest from a slave
With whom thou hadst not prowess to contend.'
But fleeing from this slave who striketh blows
In such wise in the battle is no shame."
Bahrám Chúbína for his part exclaimed:—
"Ye chiefs of glorious birth—Yálán-sína,
Rám and Ízid Gashasp! bind ye the slain
Upon his charger and thus send him back
To his own camp for their own Sháh to see."
They hasted to secure upon the saddle
The corpse of Kút, and then the charger sped
Back to the camp with that exalted chief.
Khusrau Parwíz was grieved at heart for Kút.
They loosed the knotted lasso from the slain,
Then by the Sháh's direction dried the body,
And having filled with musk and stitched the wounds,
Sewed up the corpse in linen and dispatched it,
All armed and girded, unto Cæsar, saying:—
"If this infernal slave can give such blows
In time of battle with his scimitar
I am not shamed for having fled from him."
The Rúmans were heart-broken ere they fought,
And sorely stricken; their patricians wept;
They all were tearful and dispirited.
Ten thousand of the mighty men advancing

All prelates,[1] warriors, and cavaliers,
Charged so that hills split at the cry of them.
The clash of arms, the shoutings of the chiefs,
The blows of scimitar and massive mace,
Rose. Thou hadst said: "It is a raging sea,
And heaven as it turneth crieth 'Blood.'"
The hosts were blocked and sundered by the slain;
An army of those Rúman chiefs had fallen.
Khusrau Parwíz was stricken to the heart,
And had the wounds of those still living dressed.
They piled the corpses mountain-high; men called it
"The harvest of Bahrám." Khusrau Parwíz
C. 1935 Lost faith in Rúmans for he said: "If they
Bear them like this again know that their host
Will cease to be and all their swords of steel
Prove merely wax."
Then said he to Sarkab:—
"To-morrow take no Rúmans to engage,
But rest and I will lead the Íránian host
To battle."
To the Íránians he said:—
"No more delay; to-morrow ye must fight,"
And one and all replied: "We will not fail
To level to the plain mount, waste, and dale."

§ 25

How Khusrau Parwíz fought with Bahrám Chúbína the second Time, was defeated, and escaped from him by the Help of Surúsh

When day's white banner rose aloft the main,
And when the stars grew hopeless of the dark,
The drummers went forth from both camp-enclosures

[1] *Cf.* Vol. 1. p. 373.

With elephants and clarions. There rose
The sound of pipes and horns, the trumpeting
Of elephants, and clash of brazen cymbals.
Thou wouldst have said: "The plains and uplands heave,
The sun's face is like raven's plumes," and when
The Íránians ranged their ranks and grasped their spears,
And Indian swords, thou wouldst have said: "The earth
Is all cuirass, the spear-heads light the stars!"
Whenas Khusrau Parwíz arrayed the centre
The troops took heart. Gurdwí, that brave aspirant,
Commanded on the right, and on the left
A famed Armenian[1] with cuirass and sword
Like Áhriman's. Shápúr with Sipansár
And Andiyán drew tight their loins for battle,
While close beside the Sháh was Gustaham
To guard him from the foe.
Bahrám Chúbína,
The hero, seeing not the Rúmans, paused
In silence, then commanded and they bound
The drums upon the elephants; the world
Was like the Nile. The elephant he rode
Was white and his antagonist despaired.
He charged the Sháh's right, shouting to Shápúr:—
"O knave! 'twas not thy promise in thy letter
To come against me on this field of blood!
This is not Persians' usage, and thou givest
Thy body to be slaughtered all for naught."
Shápúr replied to him: "Thou dív-like one!
Thou hast lost all thy wits in slavery.
Whose name and token did the letter bear C. 19.
Of which thou speak'st in presence of the lords?"
Then great Khusrau Parwíz said to Shápúr:—

[1] Mausíl.

"That letter was to match with his designs;
I and the other nobles of the host
Will compensate thee for it. In due season
I will explain and purge thee of suspicion."
Bahrám Chúbína heard Khusrau Parwíz,
Perceived the ruse, was both enraged and shamed,
And in his wrath resolved on fight. The usurper
Charged all alone upon his elephant
The centre of the army of the Sháh,
Who saw and said to Andiyán: "Fierce lion!
Shower arrows on yon elephant and make
Your bows like clouds in Spring."
The Íránians,
All that were fortune-favoured, strung their bows.
The elephant's trunk was riddled so with shafts
That thou hadst said: "It is a Nile!"[1] Forthwith
Bahrám Chúbína called for horse and helm,
King-worthy, and the arrows showered anew
Upon that proud one's steed. The warrior
Alighting, girt his mail-skirts round his waist,
And then with buckler raised above his head
Brought Doomsday with his trenchant scimitar
Upon the foe who dropped their bows of Chách,
And ran. They brought a horse. He mounted raging,
And shouting charged the centre of the foe—
The station of the Sháh—and pierced it through:
The standard of the leader disappeared.
Thence went he toward the foe's right and outflanked
The Persians and the baggage.[2] Now Gurdwí
Commanded there—a man of valiance
And of ambition. When he saw his brother
He strung and drew his bow. Those men of blood
Closed; thou hadst said: "They mingle." Long they strove,
And neither would give way. Bahrám Chúbína

[1] "*de sang.*" Mohl. [2] Couplet omitted.

Cried : " Miscreant ! wherefore girdest thou thy loins
To shed thy brother's blood ? "
Gurdwí replied :—
" Old wolf ! hast thou not heard the weighty saw :—
' A brother as a friend is good : forego
Both skin and vein if he become thy foe.'
Thou art a man of blood, a miscreant, C. 19
An Áhriman, the Maker's enemy
At heart. No one of honour and repute
Will come against his brother in the fight."
Bahrám Chúbína, hearing this, withdrew
In anger and high dudgeon, while Gurdwí,
His martial countenance a-gloom with iron,
Proceeded to the Sháh. Khusrau Parwíz
Commended him right lovingly and said :—
" May turning heaven reward thee."
Then the Sháh
Made toward the centre, where his warriors reeled,
And sent one to Shápúr. " Assist Mausíl,"
He said, " put forth your power, fight back to back,
And ye may compass shining fortune yet."
At that time said the king to Gustaham :—
If any Rúman shareth in this fight
Then when Bahrám Chúbína hath been worsted,
Or even wounded, they will raise their heads
Up to the sky and brag immeasurably.
I would not have the Rúmans waxing proud,
And glorying over us about the war.
I have seen all their prowess ; they are like
A flock in Winter. 'Twill be best for me
To fight with him short-handed ; I require not
Aid from another for I trust in God,
The Succourer."
Said Gustaham : " O king !
Conspire not thou against thine own sweet life ;
But if thou art determined choose some comrades ;

Wreck not thy person on this battlefield."
Khusrau Parwíz rejoined: "What thou hast said
Is well, so make thy choice of some to help[1]
Out of the army."
Gustaham selected
Twice seven Íránian horsemen brave and proud.
He wrote himself down first upon the list,
Then brave Shápúr with Andiyán, Bandwí,
Gurdwí—the prop of kings—Ázargashasp,
And then Shírzíl, Rangwí who could outface
The lion and the elephant, Tukhára—
A help in fight and to Yalán-sína
A mortal foe—illustrious Khusrau,
And Farrukhzád, Ustád son[2] of Pírúz,
Who caused his enemies to melt away,
Urmuzd and fortunate Khurshíd—a pair
To whom their foemen were as grass. Their chief
Was gallant Gustaham expert in war.
On this wise he made choice of fourteen men,
And hurried with them from the host apart.
Khusrau Parwíz harangued those chiefs and said:—
1938 "My noble followers! look ye all to God,
Be blithe of heart and smiling. Naught will chance
But as He willeth while this ancient sky
Endureth. Better perish in the fight
Than have a slave to rule us. Ye must be
My body-guard and instant in the fray."
All blessed him, hailed him king of earth and vowed
That none of them would quit him in the strife.
The monarch heard, was reassured, rejoiced,
And well contented with those warriors.
He left the host with glorious Bahrám,
And went forth with those fourteen combatants,
While from the look-out rose a shout forthwith:
They told Bahrám Chúbína: "Troops have come."

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id.*

That vigilant aspirant gat to horse
With lasso in the straps and sword in hand.
When from his steed he saw the sum of them
He chose him some few warriors and spake
Thus to Yalán-sína : " Yon miscreant
Hath proved that he is hardy in the fight,
For now I know that none but he would venture
Upon this field of vengeance. He hath come
Attended by a troop like this to battle,
But it may be to face the crocodile !
There are not more than twenty cavaliers,
And not one of them do I recognise ! "[1]
Then to Ízid Gashasp[2] and to Yalán-sína
He said : ' Men hide not valour. Four of us
Will do, for fortune is a greater friend
To me than to Khusrau Parwíz."
He gave
The host to one hight Jánfurúz, who loved
The night's gloom more than day, and then went forth
Himself and sped on with the wary three.
Khusrau Parwíz perceived Bahrám Chúbína,
And told his comrades : " There hath come a troop.
Be not perturbed for 'tis my time to stand.
Leave it to me and with my mace to deal
With vile Bahrám Chúbína : be it yours
To combat with his chiefs. Ye are fourteen
To three and may ye never see defeat."
Then with his Rúman soldiers Niyátús
Must needs gird up the loins and from the field
Of fight they made their way toward the heights
To view both companies and all exclaimed :—
" Why bartereth the great Sháh life for crown ?
Abundant horse are left and yet he goeth
To fight in person recklessly ! "
All raised C. 193

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] Reading with P.

Their hands to heaven because they deemed him slain.
Now when Bahrám Chúbína and his comrades—
Yalán-sína and brave Ízid Gashasp[1]—
Charged, all the comrades of Khusrau Parwíz
Took flight. Bahrám Chúbína was the wolf,
These nobles were the flock and full of dudgeon
When they beheld that dív escaped from bonds:
Howbeit Bandwí, Gurdwí, and Gustaham
Stayed with the Sháh till, with a prayer to God,
He also, left resourceless, turned his steed,
Pressed by Ízid Gashasp.[2] "My fate," he said,
Is on me! Why in folly did I court
This Doomsday, for the folk have looked upon
My back in flight?"
Said Gustaham: "The horsemen
Approach us: wherefore shouldst thou fight alone?"
The Sháh looked back and saw Bahrám Chúbína
The foremost of the four, and then to save
Himself cut loose his charger's sable mail.
His three[3] companion-horsemen lagged behind;
His vengeful foe pursued. A narrow gorge
Confronted him. Behind him warriors three
Came on like pards. The gorge was barred by rocks.
The world-lord was afar from his own troops.
That glorious youth dismounted fain to scale
Afoot in haste the heights. His path was barred:
The heart of that famed man was sore thereat.
He might not tarry and he could not flee,
While after him came fierce Bahrám Chúbína,
Who called to him: "O knave! the abyss is yawning
Before thy height of greatness! Why hast thou
Thus shouldered thine own fate and brought it me?"
Then straitened with the scimitar behind,
The rocks in front, the Sháh cried: "God almighty,
Who art above the processes of time!

[1] *Id.* [2] *Id.* [3] *Id.*

Thou art my succour in my helpless strait :
I cry not unto Mercury and Saturn."
Or ever from the mountain rose that cry
Surúsh, the glorious, grew manifest
Upon the pathway, garbed in green and riding
A white steed. At that sight Khusrau Parwíz
Recovered confidence. Surúsh drew near,
And having grasped the prince's hand (such things
Are not a marvel with all-holy God)
And borne him from his foe, placed him in safety,
And then let go his hold.
" What is thy name ? "
Khusrau Parwíz inquired and spake and wept
By turns. He said : " Surúsh. Thou art in safety ;
Lament no more. Henceforth Great King art thou, C. 194
And shouldst be naught but holy."
Having said,
He vanished : none hath looked on such a marvel.
Bahrám Chúbína saw and, all astound,
Invoked the Maker oft. A trembling came
Upon him when he saw his purpose foiled.
He said : " May pluck ne'er fail me while I fight
With men, but now that it hath come to fays
I needs must weep for my beclouded fortunes."
For his part Niyátús upon the mountain
Asked God's protection, Maryam tore her cheeks
In anguish for her world-lord spouse. The host
Filled mountain, plain, and dale, the Rúmans' hearts
Were grieved and seared. Said Niyátús to her :—
" Stay here ; I fear me that the Sháh is lost."
With that upon the mountain's further side,
Far from the troops, Khusrau Parwíz appeared.
That famed host joyed and Maryam's heart was eased.
He came to her, informed her of that marvel,
And thus he said : " O spouse of Cæsar's line !
The just Judge hath done justice unto me ;

'Twas not through slackness or through cowardice,[1]
For cowards show their slackness in the fight.
I was companionless within the gorge,
And in my trouble called upon the Maker,
And He that ordereth the world's affairs
Revealed to me, His slave, His hidden purpose.
Not glorious Farídún or Túr or Salm,
Or yet Afrásiyáb, e'er dreamed such things,
For, nobles! what I looked upon to-day
Betokeneth victory and sovereignty.
Renew the struggle and remember me."

§ 26

How Khusrau Parwíz fought the third Time with Bahrám Chúbína and defeated him

Forthwith the host descended from the mountain;
The world was blackened by the horsemen's dust.
Bahrám Chúbína for his part was troubled,
Repenting all his conduct, but advanced,
Not having any choice, his powers apace.
There was no daylight left. He said: "All those
Commanding troops need wisdom, mastery,
And courage. Seeing how I ply the dart,
And have the making of a paladin,
C. 1941 The brave preferred me to Khusrau Parwíz,
And I will bring the crown of Núshírwán
To dust."
Advancing rashly toward the Sháh
He strung his bow and loosed a whole wood arrow,
Which in a moment struck the Sháh's belt whence
It dangled point-arrested by the silk.

[1] "*que je me suis enfui.*" Mohl.

A slave that saw came and extracted it
From the brocade. The Sháh's spear struck his foe
Upon the belt which was of mail and broke not,
But though the spear-head snapped the usurper quailed.
The Sháh, indignant that his spear was broken,
Brought down his mace upon his foeman's casque.
The mace's head was broken by the blow,
And stuck upon the crest, while all that saw,
Or heard the iron ring, acclaimed the Sháh,
Whose troops were heartened, for Bahrám Chúbína
Had had a check, who, when the sun and moon
Loured on him, turned reluctantly away,
Aware how hard his task had grown—one past
Both prowess and endeavour. The Sháh's host,
When they beheld his lion-manlihood,
All—Rúmans and Íránians—unsheathed
The sword of vengeance and charged mountain-like
In mass. The magnates followed in his steps,
And utterly o'erthrew those mighty powers.
Bandwí came to the Sháh and said: "O thou,
Whose crown is higher than the sky and moon!
This host like ants and locusts is dispersed
Upon the plain, the sands, and stony ground.
It is unworthy to shed needless blood,
And for the Sháh to strive against his slave.
'Tis better that they should appeal to us
For quarter than be slain or maimed in fight."
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "I seek not vengeance
On any that repent. I grant them grace;
They are the earrings of my crown."
Night's flag
Rose o'er the darksome hills, both hosts withdrew,
The sentries challenged, bells rang, and the troops
Had little sleep. Bandwí, the ambitious, went

Between the hosts, chose from the troops a chief—
A herald fluent, with a goodly voice—
Bade him to mount upon his Arab steed,
And make him ready to proclaim. They rode
Between the hosts till close upon the foe,
And then the herald shouted: "O ye slaves,
In fault yourselves and followers of fortune!
C. 1942 By God! the Sháh will pardon all, e'en those
That have done worst and in the war achieved
Most fame, be their faults patent or concealed."
The sound went through the darkness of the night,
And all gave ear. Bahrám Chúbína's chiefs
Girt up their loins to quit him. When the sun
Rose o'er the hills, and day spread taffeta
Upon the ground, the tents upon the plain
Were all abandoned, but Bahrám Chúbína
Was not aware of what had passed that night.
None but his friends were to be seen in camp.
On hearing of the troops he visited
The tents and told his comrades: "To retreat
Is better now than waking on a Doomsday."
He bade the master of his camels furnish
Two thousand lusty and foam-scattering,
And all his treasures that were portable,
The hangings and the carpets and the plate
Of gold and silver, with the ivory thrones,
The golden torques, the armlets and the crowns,
They loaded up and then themselves took seat
Upon their steeds and girt them for retreat.

§ 27

How Khusrau Parwíz sent an Army under Nastúh[1] *after Bahrám Chúbína, and how Bahrám Chúbína captured him and reached the Khán of Chín*

Whenas the bright sun had arrayed its throne
Exploring parties went out from the Sháh;
They found the chieftain's tent unoccupied,
While of the other tents not many stood.
The scouts came in and told Khusrau Parwíz,
Who grieved the more about that battlefield.[2]
He choose three thousand cavaliers in mail
On barded steeds, then bade Nastúh to mount,
And gird his warlike loins for the pursuit.
He went in dudgeon; he was not the man
To fight Bahrám Chúbína who the while,
Uncertain of his kingdom and his rights,
Kept with himself his silver and his gold,
And marched all fearful by a trackless route.
Yalán-sína and brave Ízid Gashasp
Rode by the soldiers' side conducting them
Along those wayless ways and as they went
Told stories of the Sháhs. They saw afar C. 194
A ruined hamlet where no chief could dwell,
And as Bahrám Chúbína rode ahead,
Remorseful and in dudgeon, he and all
His men athirst, he found a carline's cot.
In courteous terms they asked for bread and water.
She brought a worn-out sieve, laid down a sheep-skin,
All tattered, and set out upon the sieve
Dry bread. Yalán-sína then handed him
The sacred twigs who thought not in his grief

[1] Reading with P.
[2] Because Bahrám Chúbína had escaped.

Of muttering prayer.[1] They ate, then asked for wine,
And prayed.
"If ye would have wine," said the crone,
There is some, and I have too an old gourd,
The end of which I cut off even now,
Have made a cup, and set it by the wine."
Bahrám Chúbína said: "If wine is there,
What better cup could be?"
She went and fetched them,
And he was well content to use that cup.
He gave it brimming to her that she might
Be festive too, and said: "My gracious mother!
What tidings hast thou of the world's affairs?"
"My brain is worn out, I have heard so much,"
She answered. "Many came from town to-day,
And talked but of Bahrám Chúbína's battle,
How all his troops deserted to the Sháh,
And how the chief fled hostless."
"Pious dame!"
He answered, "say if he hath acted wisely
Or followed his desires."
"Famed man!" she said,
"How is it that the Div hath dimmed thine eyes?
Dost thou not know that since Bahrám Chúbína,
Son of Gashasp, urged on his steed against
Khusrau Parwíz, son of Hurmuzd, the sages
Laugh at him? None accounteth him a chief."
Bahrám Chúbína said: "Since his desires
Have made him quaff wine from a gourd do thou
Keep barley-bread for him on this old sieve
Until next barley-harvest."[2]

[1] Couplet omitted.

[2] *i.e.* "Since I have been led into wrong-doing by my desires let me continue to fare badly"—words put into Bahrám Chúbína's mouth by the author or redactor of the Romance. This is another instance of the legitimist feeling pervading this portion of the poem. See Vol. vi. p. 251.

Having eaten
He passed withal the night there in his tunic,
His shoulders on his breastplate, but sleep came not:
He found no rest—to vain desires a prey.
Whenas the sun in heaven made secrets clear
The warlike chieftain had the tabor sounded,
What troops he had he gathered, and those nobles C. 194
Set forth and came upon a goodly reed-bed,
And many folk were harvesting the reeds,
Who when they saw afar Bahrám Chúbína
With his large body of determined men,
Said: "Blest be thou! Why take the reed-bed thus?
In front are many troops with hands blood-bathed
For fight."
"They must be horse," he made reply,
"Sent by the king. I heard, when we resolved
To quit our camp, that he had chosen Nastúh,
A man ambitious but inapt, to lead
Three thousand cavaliers—stiff opposites
In battle—in pursuit of us. When I
Behold him I will end his days. Now tighten
Your girths and ring him in."
The cavaliers
Drew tight their girths and grasped their Indian swords.
They fired the reed-bed and o'erthrew their foes:
That bed of reeds was utterly consumed,
This man was slain, that burnt. Bahrám Chúbína,
The warrior, perceived Nastúh and gave
His fleet steed rein, and with the lasso's noose
Unhorsed Nastúh whose feckless hands they bound.
He begged for quarter, saying: "Famous king!
Why wish to shed my blood? Compassionate
My luckless fortune. Slay me not that I
May run before thee and approve myself
Thy wretched mendicant."

Bahrám Chúbína
Replied: "I would not carry from the field
Of fight such men as thee. I will not sever
Thy head because I shame at having fought
A cavalier like thee. When thou art set
At liberty be off with you and tell
Khusrau Parwíz what thou hast seen of me."
Nastúh, on hearing, kissed the ground and gave
Abundant thanks. This done, Bahrám Chúbína
Departed with his warriors good at need
To Rai, reposed, then sought the Khán with speed.

§ 28

How Khusrau Parwíz pillaged the Camp of Bahrám Chúbína and wrote a Letter to Cæsar who answered it with a Robe of Honour and Gifts

c. 1945 Khusrau Parwíz on his side visited
Bahrám Chúbína's lines and pillaged them,
Bestowing on his soldiers purse and crown.
He mounted a fleet steed and girt himself
For prayer. Before him was a bramble-brake.
He entered that befitting place afoot,
And wallowed in the dust before his God.
"O righteous Judge!" he said, "Thou hast delivered
The country from the burden of the foe,
And hast surpassed our whole imaginings.
I am thy worshipper and worthless slave:
I walk according to the Lord's command."
Thence he returned to camp; his counsellors
Assembled, and he called a scribe to write
A letter out on silk from Sháh to Cæsar,
Detailing what had passed in that campaign.

He first praised God—the Source of manliness,
Of prowess, and success, then said: "In secret
Much hath God favoured me. I and my host
Came to Ázargashasp. I hurried onward,
Returning for the fight. Bahrám Chúbína
So pressed me that I had not room to strive;
But when all-holy God ceased to assist
My foe the flaming blast of war died out,
And with resources failing and with troops
Deserting he withdrew at break of day.
I have destroyed his whole host, fired his camp,
And intercepted too by God's behest
His line of march."
They set upon the letter
The Sháh's seal, and the messengers departing
Bare it to famous Cæsar's court where he,
Whose fortune was awake, on reading it,
Descended from his throne and cried to God:—
"O Guide! Thou changest never. Thou hast made
Thy slave triumphant and restored the outcast."
He lavished alms and provand by the ass-load,
And wrote withal an answer like a tree C. 194
In Paradise, beginning: "In the name
Of God, the Lord of victory, of Grace,
And justice, Lord of moon and sun and might.
Know thou that greatness and good fortune come
From Him, what while thou livest give Him praise,
And in this world in public and in private
Ensue but justice and beneficence."
He sent a crown—an heirloom of the Cæsars,
Reserved for fit occasions—with a pair
Of earrings and a royal torque, of robes
Eleven hundred broidered all in gold,
A hundred camel-loads of gold dínárs,
As well as many pearls and precious stones,
A jewelled cross and throne all royal gems,

A green robe shot with gold whereof the fringe
Was finished off with jewels. With the gifts
And offerings went four philosophers
Of those of Rúm. Khusrau Parwíz dispatched
A thousand cavaliers of noble birth
To meet and welcome them. Those magnates reached
With their new gifts Khusrau Parwíz in safety,
Who, having viewed them and perused the letter,
Was lost in wonder at that wealth and said
To his own minister: "These robes of Rúm,
Adorned with jewelry are not the wear
Of wealthy thanes but Christian priests! If we
Have Crosses on our dress we shall conform
To Christian fashion. If I wear them not
'Twill anger Cæsar who will of a truth
Misconstrue me, while if I put them on
The magnates all will say: "This king of men
Perchance hath turned a Christian for wealth's sake,
Because he is all Cross.
His counsellor
Replied: "O Sháh! clothes constitute not Faith.
Though Cæsar be thy kin thy Faith is still
That of Zarduhsht, the Prophet."
Then he donned
Those royal robes, hung up the jewelled crown,
Bade raise the curtain, and bring in the envoys.
Both Rúmans and Íránians crowded in
Without distinction. When the sages saw
The Sháh's attire they knew that he desired
To pleasure Cæsar, others said that he
Had of a truth turned Christian privily.

§ 29

How Niyátús was wroth with Bandwí and how Maryam made Peace between them

Next day Khusrau Parwíz prepared his throne, C. 11
And donned his crown of state. The festal board
Was spread within the rosary. "Invite,"
He said, "the Rúmans."
Niyátús arrived
With the other Rúmans and they took their seats
Before the board with the philosophers.
Now when Khusrau Parwíz came from his throne
Of audience in the jewelled robes from Rúm,
Advanced with smiles and sat down at the board,
Bandwí came quickly, sacred twigs in hand.
The world-lord took them with intent to join
The other nobles in their muttered prayers,[1]
While Niyátús, on seeing that, threw down
His bread and all disordered left the board,
Exclaiming: "Muttered prayer and Cross at once
Insulteth Christ through Cæsar!"
Seeing this
Bandwí, still at the board, back-handed smote
That servant of the Cross upon the face.
Khusrau Parwíz was grieved, beholding this;
His cheeks grew like the flower of fenugreek.
He said to Gustaham: "This valiant fool
Should wrangle not when drinking. What hath he
To do with Rúman Niyátús? He recked not
His person in this quarrel."
Niyátús,
Departing, mounted and returned half drunk
To camp. He donned his Rúman mail and thought

[1] See Vol. i. p. 80.

To mar that feast. The Rúman cavaliers,
All eager for the fray, set face to where
Khusrau Parwíz held court, and Niyátús
Sent on a cavalier of Rúman race
Withal to go like wind to him and say :—
" Bandwí, the worthless, with a back-hand blow
Smote on the cheek God's servant. Now if thou
Wilt send him to me—well. If not, expect
A tumult of the folk. Thou wilt writhe more
At me than at the slave[1] ambitioning
The throne of king of kings."
Khusrau Parwíz
Was wroth on hearing this. " None should ignore
The Faith of God," he said. " From Gaiúmart
And from Jamshíd to Kai Kubád none spake
Of Christ, and God forbid that I shall quit
My fathers' Faith, those world-lords choice and holy,
Adopt the Faith of Christ, and murmur not
A prayer at meals but be a Christian !
If thou wilt take account thou art alone :
I saw of late what Rúman prowess is ! "
C. 1948 Then Maryam spake thus to Khusrau Parwíz :—
" I will abate the brawling of these folk.
Commit illustrious Bandwí to me,
So that the Rúmans may contemplate him
From head to foot. I will restore him whole.
None ever made a point of senseless strife."
The king dispatched Bandwí to Niyátús,
Escorted by ten horsemen, with Maryam,
That prudent lady on whose lips good counsel
Ne'er failed. He said : " Approach thy father's brother,
And say : ' Thou quarrelsome, ill-meaning man !
Hast thou not seen how Cæsar hath assisted
The Sháh to majesty, hath fought his battles,

[1] Bahrám Chúbína.

Hath made affinity and league with him,
And furnished men and means and hoarded treasures ?
Wilt thou destroy affinity and league,
And take away from me the Grace of Cæsar,
Who told thee that the Sháh would not abandon
His Faith on his return ? Why speak raw words ?
Now take Bandwí's head to thy breast and utter
No word ungracious. Give not to the winds
The toil and work of Cæsar, and God grant
That thou mayst not recall my words too late."
She went and spake to that effect. Her cheeks
Were like a rose in bloom, and Niyátús,
Who thought her words of profit, took her counsel.
He pacified his heart about Bandwí,
And shamed on his account, at sight of him
Arose and bade his treasurer bring forth
A noble led horse and received Bandwí
With smiles and welcome, and they visited
The king together. When Khusrau Parwíz
Saw Niyátús he said : " The heart of one
Of ill condition seeketh not for good.
Bandwí hath ne'er ensued but strife and tumult :
Make not the world both dark and strait to me ;
Give not the toil of Cæsar to the wind
In passion ; let me have a moment's joy.[1]
If he hath spoken ill of thy religion
Expect not wisdom from a foolish man."
" Expect not wisdom from a Rúman drunk,
O Sháh ! " said Niyátús. " Keep thy sires' Faith,
For wise men change not such."
When in this strain
Much talk had passed he sought his camp again.

[1] Two couplets omitted.

§ 30

How Khusrau Parwíz gave Presents to Niyátús and the Rúmans, how he dismissed them to Rúm, and wrote Patents for the Nobles of Írán

C. 1949 The Sháh then bade Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
"Hold a review and call a court. Let all
The Rúman troops be mustered, young and old.
Bestow on them two thirds of all my treasures;
They must feel well content with what we give."
For all deserving of a robe of honour
By prowess shown in fight he bade make ready
Such, and to requisition splendid steeds
From his own court. He gave to Niyátús
Such jewels, steeds and handmaids girt with gold
That they exceeded measure and surpassed
Withal what potentates were used to give.
All cities taken by Kubád from Rúm,
Or captured by Hurmuzd and Núshírwán
Of glorious birth, he gave to Niyátús,
Had patents drawn for them and filled the cup
Of colocynth with honey. Then the Rúmans
Set forth for Rúm, that prosperous coast and land.
The great Khusrau Parwíz escorted them
Two stages, farewelled Niyátús, and then
Turned back. Next week he took ten cavaliers,
Both shrewd and true to him, and quitting camp
Fared to Ázargashasp. On seeing the dome
He lighted down and went afoot, his eyes
All wet, his cheeks sun-yellow. When he passed
The portal and approached the Fire his visage
Was hidden by his tears. There he recited
The Zandavasta for a se'nnight's space,[1]

[1] Reading with P.

And humbly danced attendance on the Fire,
Departing on the eighth day for the feast
Of Sada was at hand. As he had promised
Before his lords he gave his share of spoil,
Of gold and silver, jewel-work, and gems
Fit for a monarch, to the Fire. He gave
Drachms to the poor abundantly and left
No one dissatisfied throughout the land.
He went thence to the country of Andív
To have his portion in the day of joy:
That province was the salt waste's boundary,
And none could put a value on the soil.
Within the palace built by Núshírwán,
Who dwelt there much, he had a splendid suite
Of rooms prepared, the golden throne arrayed,
And then the conquering, God-fearing world-lord C. 19
Came and sat down upon his grandsire's seat,
And bade a scribe and his own minister—
A helpful archimage—attend. They wrote
Out patents for the Íránians as the Great
And Mighty used to do. Bandwí, the chief.
The well advised, the veteran, managed all.
The Sháh gave Khurásán to Gustaham,
And bade him reinstate both law and justice,
Assisted by Burzmihr, the experienced scribe
Of beauteous face, and since heaven favoured him
Bestowed by grant Istakhr and Dárábgird.
He set his golden signet on the patent,
Then handed it to Rám Barzín forthwith,
And bade him bear it to Shápúr to whom
He gave withal both slaves and robe of honour.
He bade convey a patent under seal
To Andiyán, as was the royal use,
And gave him all the country of Kirmán
Because Khusrau Parwíz esteemed him great.
He gave another province to Gurdwí,

And sealed the letter with the golden seal.
He gave Bálwí the town of Chách and sent
The patent with an ivory throne. He counted
The treasury-keys and to Tukhára's son
Committed them. The monarch of the world,
This matter ended, turned to folk at large,
And bade the chieftains all obey Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, whose rule should be world-wide,
And name be countersigned on every patent.
The soldiers all that in the time of action
Held by the famous king were given from him
A robe of honour and dismissed with joy.
A herald fluent and a chief withal
Of sweet voice and shrewd heart went round proclaiming :—
" O ye, the subjects of the king of earth !
Praise justice only, seek not vengeance, shed
Not blood, and prompt not unto deeds of ill.
If any of our subjects be aggrieved,
Or injured by the troops, the wrongers' place
Shall be the gibbet here and penal fire
Hereafter. Ye are all lords of the treasure
That cometh to you from your proper toil.
Enjoy and give away, ye that have means !
And ye that have none ! ask. In every city
We have a treasure through our fathers' travail,
Or ours, and we have bidden the treasurer
Give food and clothes withal to such as lack.
C. 1951 When food is requisite they shall receive
From him three mans[1] at dawn upon condition
That they shall make thanksgiving and shall strive
To keep the earth in culture."
Through his justice
The world became a Paradise on high,

[1] " trois man de blé." Mohl. *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 290 *note*.

And one may well acclaim Khusrau Parwíz,
For better is a great king of that kind
Than one impure albeit sage in mind.[1]

§ 31

Firdausí's Lament for the Death of his Son

At sixty-five 'tis ill to catch at pelf.
Oh ! let me read that lesson to myself,
And muse upon the passing of my son.
My turn it was and yet the youth hath gone,
While I for sorrow am as soulless clay.
I will make haste, perchance o'ertake, and say
Reproachfully : " My turn it was to go ;
Why hast thou gone then 'gainst my will and so
Robbed me of all my peace ? Thou didst abate
My cares ; why hast thou left thine agéd mate ?
Didst thou perchance find younger company
That lightly thus thou hast abandoned me ? "
Seven years and thirty o'er the youth had sped
When he distasted of the world and fled.
Harsh comrade proved he of my pilgrimage,
And, having turned his back on me in rage,
Went, but he left me his calamities,
His griefs, a full heart, and blood-weeping eyes.
Now whither he hath passed he doth aspire
To choose a habitation for his sire
In Light. Since then a weary time hath gone,
And of his way-mates hath returned not one.
Good sooth ! he looketh for me wrathfully
Because I loiter. Five and sixty I,
He thirty-seven. He asked not agéd me,

[1] In the above passage the last couplet of the section is read with P. before the two preceding ones.

But hurried off alone. I stayed to see
The outcome of my labours. May God grace
Thy soul with light and wisdom's breastplate place
Before thy life. It is my prayer that He,
Who giveth all and ruleth righteously,
The Holy, will forgive each fault of thine,
And cause thy moon now overcast to shine.

§ 32

The Story of Bahrám Chúbína and the Khán of Chín

1952 Tell now old tales, tell of Bahrám Chúbína.
When he drew near the country of the Turks,
Toward the Lions and the Khán, there went
Ten thousand shrewd and wary cavaliers,
Led by the son and brother of the Khán,
Each with a priest as counsellor, to meet him.
On reaching the Khán's throne Bahrám Chúbína
Gave praises to him and did reverence.
The Khán, upon beholding him, rose, kissed,
And stroked caressingly, his face, inquiring
At large about the travail of the way,
And of his warfare with the Sháh and host,
Then gave a welcome to Ízid Gashasp
Withal and to Yalán-sína—those chiefs
No longer hostile. When Bahrám Chúbína
Was seated on the silvern throne he took
In his the Khán's hand, saying: "Glorious prince,
The captain and ruler of the Turks
Of Chín! thou know'st that no one is secure
Within the world by reason of malign
Khusrau Parwíz who vexeth those that fain
Would rest from toil and doubleth it for those

That live at ease. If now thou wilt accept me,
And be mine aid in good and evil, I
Will be thy comrade in this priceless land,
And friend in good and ill, while shouldst thou suffer
Through me I will depart and seek a cistern
Elsewhere, and if thou wilt have none of me
Then I will journey unto Hindústán."

The Khán said: "Noble chieftain! never mayst
Thou need that day. Like mine own kin will I
Hold thee. My kin? Nay, better than my child.
My whole land will co-operate with me
Herein, both lord and liege. Pre-eminence
I give thee o'er my chiefs and furthermore
I make thee independent of my lords."

Bahrám Chúbína further asked an oath
To bind his soul, for so far all was tongue.

The Khán said: "By the most high God, the Guide
Of me and thee, I am thy mate indeed,
What while I live, and friend for good and ill."

Thereafter they prepared two palaces,
And furnished them with vessels of all kinds.
Slaves, food, and raiment, needful carpeting,
With serviceable plate of gold and silver, C. 1
Dínárs and royal jewelry, the Khán
Sent to Bahrám Chúbína whose dark soul
Grew bright, and save with whom the Khán went not
To polo, the assembly, and the chase,
Remaining in this mind and lauding him.

The Khán possessed a chief who was his friend,
His help in war and of a stronger nature,[1]
Named Makátúra, by whose means the Khán
Had won success and fame. He used to visit
The Khán at dawn with fingers on his lips,
For thus did subjects offer reverence,
To those illustrious potentates of Chín,

[1] "un homme de plus haute naissance que le prince." Mohl.

And each time from the veteran monarch's treasure
Would carry fifty score dínárs away.
Bahrám Chúbína marked this for a while,
Astonied at the Khán, then laughed and said
One day: "Exalted one! thou art esteemed
Among the potentates, yet every morn
At audience-time this Turk thus beareth off
These fifty score dínárs! If he receiveth
A mine 'tis not for rendered services,[1]
The Khán replied: "This is a way of ours—
The glory of our Faith—that all our bravest,
And stanchest on the day of stress, should meet
With no refusal when they ask for more,
And plead with importunity. His power
Is more than mine. I charm him with dínárs.
If I refused the troops would mutiny,
And dim my shining day."
Bahrám Chúbína,
The world-aspirant, said: "O king of men!
Thou hast made him a master o'er thyself.
When world-lords are both valiant and alert
They must not let a subject have the reins.
If I should rid thee of him wouldst thou be
Well pleased or dost thou care for his support?"
"'Tis thine to order this," replied the Khán,
"And thine to plan and compass this desire.
If thou canst free me from him thou wilt bring
The question to an end."
"To-morrow morn,"
He made reply, "when Makátúra cometh
For his dínárs, smile not, regard him not,
And answer not or, if at all, in wrath."
That night passed and at dawn came Makátúra
Before the Khán. That world-lord neither saw him,

[1] "Que ce soit un cadeau, que ce soit sa paye, faut-il donc que sa part soit tout l'or d'une mine?" *Id*

Nor heard what that bold Turk had got to say,
Who, angered, raged and glared at him, and cried :—
" Why is it that to-day I have grown vile, C. 19
My lord ? Assuredly this Persian prince,
Who reached our land with thirty friends, is striving
To turn thee from the right and would consign
Thine army to the wind."

Bahrám Chúbína
Replied : " O warrior ! why so fierce in talk ?
I, if the Khán will follow mine advice,
And prudently regard our covenant,
Will let not thee come hither every morn
To waste his treasures with impunity.
Thou mayest be three hundred cavaliers,
And hunt the Lions on the battlefield ;
It followeth not that thou each morn shouldst come,
And claim dínárs by ass-loads from the king."

When Makátúra heard his head became
All vengeful at Bahrám Chúbína's scheme.
In wrath and passion he put forth his hand,
And plucked a poplar arrow from his quiver.
" This is my token and interpreter
In battle," said he to Bahrám Chúbína,
" So look out for my point when thou shalt come
To court to-morrow morn."

On hearing this
Bahrám Chúbína, growing mettlesome,
Gave him a poplar arrow tipped with steel,
And said : " Receive this keepsake and observe
Its usefulness."

Then Makátúra went
Forth from the Khán and hurried to his tent.

§ 33

How Makátúra was slain by Bahrám Chúbína

When night withdrew its sombre skirt, and dawn
Brake o'er the gloomy mountains, Makátúra
Put on his battle-armour and went forth,
Túránian sword in hand. Bahrám Chúbína,
On hearing, called for steed and royal breastplate.
The spot they chose was one whose plain and waste
No leopards e'er resorted to for fight.
The Khán, on hearing, mounted on his steed,
And went accompanied by the loyal Turks
To see which raging Lion of the twain
Would have the better fortune. Makátúra,
On coming to the scene of strife, dispatched
Dust cloudward from the plain and shouted thus
To haught Bahrám Chúbína: "What hast thou
To say of manhood now? Wilt thou begin,
Or shall the loyal, lion-hearted Turk?"
Bahrám Chúbína said: "Begin thyself,
For thou didst start this quarrel by thy words."
Then Makátúra called on God and strung
C. 1955 His bow, grasped joyfully the string and arrow,
Drew to the point and then released his thumb.
He struck the cavalier upon the belt,
But that bright iron point pierced not the mail.
Bahrám Chúbína held aloof awhile
That Makátúra might grow tired of fight,
Who, thinking that his enemy was shent,
Turned shouting from the field.
"O warrior!"
Bahrám Chúbína cried, "thou hast not slain me;
Depart not to thy tent. Thy say is said;
Stop and hear my reply and, if thou livest

When thou hast heard it, go."
With that he chose
A breastplace-piercing shaft of poplar-wood,
One to which stone and iron were as wax,
And hit the valiant horseman on the girdle.
That chief grew satiate of dínárs and fight,
And wept and slept upon his bast-bound saddle,
For he, on mounting for the fray, had tied
His two feet to the saddle and thus kept
His seat though wounded, while his wounder rode
Up to the Khán and said: "Imperious!
Yon noble needeth one to dig his grave."
The Khán said: "Look more closely. He is swooning,
But living on the saddle."
Thus replied
Bahrám Chúbína: "Puissant sovereign!
His body cometh even now to dust.
May all thy foemen swoon as he is swooning
On his Túránian steed."
The valiant Khán
Dispatched a cavalier to that famed Lion,
Whom they saw bound, slain vilely, and released
From fate's vicissitudes. The Khán thereat
Laughed to himself in secret, wondering
At that chief horseman of the world's exploit;
Then full of thought returned to his own palace
With crown that soared to Saturn in his joy.
He called for arms and drachms, for steeds and slaves,
Gemmed trinketry, imperial crown, dínárs,
King-worthy jewels, and all kinds of gear
Of war. These from the Khán a messenger
Bare to Bahrám Chúbína's treasurer.

§ 34

How the Lion-ape slew a Daughter of the Khán, how it was slain by Bahrám Chúbína, and how the Khán gave him a Daughter and the Kingdom of Chín

Time passed and peace was tutor night and day.
There were at that time in the hills of Chín
C. 1956 Wild animals past count. One was a beast
Out-bulking horses and upon its head
Were two black locks like cables. It was tawny
Of body while its ears and throat were black.
None saw it save at noon-tide and it had
Two claws resembling those of mighty lions.
Its roar rose o'er the clouds, it swallowed stones,
And turned the day of mighty men to gloom.
Folk called it " Lion-ape : "[1] the land was all
Confounded at the ill it wrought. The Khán
Possessed a moon-like daughter, had the moon
Two raven locks, two rubious lips, a nose
As 'twere a silvern reed, two smiling cheeks[2]
Of coral, and dark eyes. Her parents used
To weep for terror lest the sun should strike her.
One day she went forth to the plain and roamed
The meadows while the Khán, the world-lord, followed
The chase elsewhere. The queen was in the palace
Engaged in converse with a counsellor.
Thus went her daughter to that meadow-land
With other damsels, wine, and revellers.
The lion-ape descried her from the heights,
Descended to the plain and gulped her down :[3]
That fair-cheeked damsel ended in a breath.
The Khán heard and his face turned black, his queen

[1] " Sher-kappí " which Mohl translates " le lion Keppi."
[2] " deux lèvres " (Mohl) but they have just been mentioned.
[3] *Cf.* Vol. v, p. 233 and *note*.

Tore out her hair: they mourned the maid for years,
As if they had been burning in fierce flames,
And sought to slay the monster and relieve
Chín from that stress. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
Fought with and sent the dust from Makátúra
The queen went forth to watch him and discoursed
To all about his prowess. Meeting him
One day with five score nobles of Írán,
And many men on foot preceding him,
While he rode with a counsellor, she asked:—
"Who is this with such height and Grace divine?"
A servant answered: "Thou hast much to learn,
Not knowing brave Bahrám Chúbína's name!
He once was Sháh within Írán; his crown,
Out-topped the moon. Chiefs title him 'Bahrám
The brave,' for he hath borne the fame of valour
From other kings, and now that he hath quitted
Írán for Chín earth quaketh 'neath his charger.
Our sovereign would have him for a chief,
So setteth on his head a royal crown."
She thus made answer: "Since his Grace is such
Well may we nestle underneath his wings,
And well may I request a boon of him; C. 19:
He will not act with slackness like the Khán,
But venge me on the monster when he heareth
The reason for my grief and malisons."
He answered: "If the queen of upright folk
Will speak to him she will not find a trace
Left of the lion-ape except a corpse
Dragged by the feet by wolves."
She heard and joyed:
Pain for her daughter left her. She made haste
To see the Khán and tell him all. He said:—
"Where there is horseman such as I, and where
A lion-ape hath battened on my child,
'Twere shame for us to tell it; 'twould disgrace

My stock. Bahrám Chúbína knoweth not
That that terrific monster will make budge
An iron mountian with its breath. Although
The daughter of a king be famed life too
Is dear to him."
She said: "I want revenge
For her who was mine Eye, so speak I will,
Shame or no shame, and haply gain mine end."
Much time thus passed away. She kept her rancour
A secret. Now the Khán chanced to prepare
A feast and summoned thereunto his chiefs.
He sent and called the brave Bahrám Chúbína,
And seated him upon the silvern throne.
Now when the queen behind her curtains heard
She entered quickly, saw the hero, praised
And blessed him much, and said to him: "May Chín
And Turkistán be prosperous through thee!
Fain would I ask a favour of my lord;
May he accord it me."
He said: "'Tis thine
To order and to will and win thy wish."
She said: "Near by there is a meadow-land—
The very spot for feasting—and therein
The youths of Chín keep merrymake each Spring.
A bow-shot past the wood thou mayst behold
A mount more black than pitch. Upon that mount
Of flint there is a monster, and the realm
Of Chín is in distress because of it.
A lion-ape I term it for I know not
What else to call it. By the Khán I had
A daughter whom the sun was wont to praise.
She left the palace for that feasting-place
What while the Khán was hunting with his men.
Came from the mountain that ferocious monster,
And gulped down her that was our very Eye.
Now every Spring it visiteth that meadow

In quest of prey. No youth or paladin C. 195
Of any name is left in this our city
Since through the mischief of this lion-ape
They have been slaughtered, and it hath sent up
The dust from this fair land. Our cavaliers
Of war and men of action have gone forth
In numbers to that mountain-height but when
They see afar the monster's claws and breast,
Its back, its shoulders, ears and head, it roareth
And shattereth those warriors' hearts, for what
Are lions, tigers, crocodiles thereto ?
No counter of the cost will venture near."
Bahrám Chúbína said : " At dawn to-morrow
I will go forth and view this pleasure-ground,
And by the strength and might that God hath given,
The exalted Fashioner of sun and moon,
I will relieve the pleasance of this monster
If some will guide me thither when 'tis dawn."
Whenas the moon's disk shone forth from the sky,
And dark night shook abroad its dusky locks,
They broke up and departed on their ways,
Bemused, each to his palace. When the glory
Of golden Sol appeared and plaited up
Night's azure tresses, brave Bahrám Chúbína
Put on his gambeson and then committed
His honoured form to God. He took his lasso,
His bow, a hundred shafts and one forked dart
As used in hunting. When he neared the height
He bade his retinue turn back, and when
Hard on the lion-ape thou wouldst have said :
" The mount loured o'er him." There mid rocks of flint
He girt himself and mounted on his saddle,
Armed with his coiled up lasso, plied his bow
And strung it, called on God who giveth good,
Sent up his battle-cry, and smote the rocks

Until they flashed again. The lion-ape
Was in a pool. It wallowed and came forth,
For when the monster's fell was soaked no shaft
Availed against it. That grim monster came
To gulp Bahrám Chúbína down. That hero
Shot and the body of the lion-ape
Had fight enough. He shot again and smote
The monster on the head; the blood poured down
Like water o'er its breast. He marked the strength
And onset of the monster, shot again,
Transfixed its claw, then loosed his lasso, leapt
Upon that lofty mountain-top and speared
The creature's loins; the flints were dyed with blood.
Then reaching for his scimitar he clave
C. 1959 The monster's form in twain, cut off its head,
And flung it down contemptuously, descended,
Came to the Khán, rejoicing, and proclaimed
What had befallen the ape. The Khán and queen
Set forward to the wood and made all haste
To reach the mountain-top while acclamation,
Such that thou wouldst have said: "The earth is rent"
Rose from the warriors of Chín. They praised
Bahrám Chúbína and showered gold and jewels
Abundantly upon him while the chief
Of Chín embraced him and bestowed on him
Thenceforth the style of king, and having reached
The palace chose a trusty messenger,
And sent a hundred purses full of drachms,
With slaves and robes, and bade a scribe attend.
They wrote a patent out for Chín on silk.
The Khán at that time gave Bahrám Chúbína
His daughter to secure his staying there.
As was their custom they made ready robes
Of honour, many crowns and belts. The Khán
Said to Bahrám Chúbína: "These bestow

On such Íránians as are worthy of them."
Bahrám Chúbína took to feast and chase,
Untroubled by the passing on of time;
The noblest of the cavaliers of Chín
Were his petitioners, and all Chín said:—
"We are thy slaves and only live for thee,"
While he mid feast and largess passed his days,
And all folk too united in his praise.

§ 35

How Khusrau Parwíz heard of the Case of Bahrám Chúbína and wrote a Letter to the Khán, and how he replied

Thus matters fared till tidings reached Írán,
Reached the great monarch of the brave: "A king-
ship
And treasure greater than thine own are now
Bahrám Chúbína's and untoiled for!"
Vexed
And troubled by solicitude, his heart
Wrung by the doings of Bahrám Chúbína,
He held consult with his own magnates, spake,
Discussing all expedients, and at night
Called for a scribe and made an arrow-head
His pen-point. To the Khán of Chín he wrote
A letter, and thou wouldst have said: "He made
His sword the pen."
He first praised God, "the One,
The Guide to good, who setteth up on high
Sun, moon, and Saturn, who enthroneth kings,
Who pricketh sinners and increaseth Grace. C. 1
By ignorance, by knowledge, by uprightness,

And by perversity, by harm and loss,
'Tis owned that He is One and hath no comrade,
No peer, no mate. Whoever seeketh good
Shall find it but so may not he whose hands
Are steeped in ill, and he that maketh choice
Of God's way must forgo ingratitude."

He then said thus: "Bahrám Chúbína (may
He ne'er in this world see his wishes won!)
Was an ungrateful servant to the Sháh,
Ignoring both his master and his God.
He was of small account, unfamed and weak,
Till my sire took him up when season served;
But when the monarch of the world thus raised him
He only did according to his nature:
His conduct is well known to great and small.
The mighty and the wise rejected him,
But thou didst welcome him when he arrived,
And take him by the hand as one well born—
A thing incredible to upright folk,
And not approved by me. Thou hast forgotten
Perchance his conduct when thou went'st in fear
Because of him. He lashed thee many times
Upon the head—a thing that none commend.[1]
Thou shouldest not make barren thine own fame,
And barter thy tranquillity to him.
When they deliver this let thine advice,
Now dark, consider well if thou wilt profit
By sending us that slave, his feet in fetters;
Else I dispatch an army from Írán,
And for Túrán turn daylight into gloom."

Now when the letter reached the Khán, and he
Had heard the intention of Khusrau Parwíz,
He told the envoy: "When thou com'st to court
To-morrow morning ask for the reply."

The envoy came in haste; he had not slept

[1] See p. 144.

All night. He waited till he saw the Torch
Resplendent of the sun, then made all haste
To have an audience of the Khán who sent
For scribe with pen and ink and silk of Chín,
And wrote in answer: "To the Maker be
Such praise as magnates give from me, a slave,"
Proceeding thus: "Thy letter I have read,
And set the messenger before me. Speak
Thou unto slaves expressions such as thine.
It fitteth not thine ancient family
To disallow the greatness of the great,
Or not to make the lowly know his place.
Mine are the whole of Chín and of Túrán, C. 19
And the Haitálian crown. I ne'er broke faith;
Suggest it not. To break my pledge when I
Have ta'en Bahrám Chúbína by the hand
Will make men call me base-born. I fear none
Save holy God, but as for thee if greatness
Increase with thee so also should thy wisdom."
He set his seal thereto and told the envoy:—
"Companion with the wind."
Within a month
The envoy reached the Sháh who when he read
The letter writhed and was in fear of fortune.
He called the Íránians, told the Khán's reply,
And showed the letter, and the Great, when they
Had read it, mused. He gat from them this answer:—
"O glory of the throne and crown of kings!
Weigh these things well; consult some ancient sage;
Let not this letter make thee rash; turn not
The torch of former Grace to gloom; select
Some old Íránian sage, wise, eloquent,
A warrior and a scribe, and let him go
Hence to the Khán to speak and hear his views,
Inform him what Bahrám Chúbína was
At first and, after, to what ends he used

His leadership, and having ordered all
Was fain to make a bondslave of his lord.
If this be not accomplished in one month
Then let the envoy stay a year forwhy
'Twill not be easy to disparage him
Because he is the Khán's own son-in-law.
The envoy must be very plausible,
And none must gather what his purpose is."
Thereafter brave Bahrám Chúbína, hearing
That some one from Írán had brought the Khán
A letter, went to him forthwith and said :—
" My gracious lord ! I hear yon recreant knave
Is plying thee with letters. Choose from Chín
A gallant host and occupy Írán.
My scimitar shall conquer it and Rúm ;
I will salute thee monarch of those lands,
And there the watchmen of the night shall have
Thy name upon their lips. I will behead
Inglorious Khusrau Parwíz, and may
No top or toe be left him ! I took service
That I might root out the Sásánians."
C. 1692 The Khán, on hearing, pondered and his heart
Was like a wood with thoughts. He summoned all
The elders—eloquent, learned, heedful men—
Told them Bahrám Chúbína's scheme, revealed
What had been secretly proposed and gat
This answer from the men of lore, alike
From those of his own kin and alien :—
" 'Tis no light task, but hard, to consummate
The measure of the lineage of Sásán ;
Yet if Bahrám Chúbína shall march forth,
And show the wise the way, he in Írán
Will find full many a friend since he will have
The Khán to back and help him, and thy fortune
Soon will achieve the work. We ought to listen
To what he saith."

Bahrám Chúbína's heart
Revived when this he heard ; he laughed and changed
In bearing. All the warriors agreed
That they must choose two young men who were fit
To have command, inured to toil and soldiers.
There was in Chín a noble named Chínwí,
And one Zhangwí—a chief. The Khán sent, summoned,
And made those men of war his paymasters.
He bade them both : " Be circumspect in fight,
And ever look up to Bahřám Chúbína
Alike in times of joyance and of wrath,
Secure the fords of the Jíhún and send it
In dust up to the sky."
He gave to them
A valiant host—all chiefs and warrior-lions.
Drums sounded at Bahrám Chúbína's portal,
And Sol's face changed to ebony with dust.
From Chín toward Írán he took his way
Upon Sapandármad at break of day.

§ 36

How Khusrau Parwíz sent Kharrád, Son of Barzín, to the Khán and how he schemed to slay Bahrám Chúbína

Now when the great king heard : " The wolf hath come
Outside the wood, and bold Bahrám Chúbína
Hath brought a host that robbeth heaven of lustre,"
He said thus to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
" Go to the Khán upon this business.
Thou art acquainted best both with Írán
And with Túrán, and with their divers tongues."

He oped his treasury and brought forth such jewels,
Such scimitars and golden belts, as made
1963 Kharrád astound and secretly invoke
The name of God. With these he left for Chín,
Crossed the Jíhún and took unwonted paths,
Neared the Sháh's palace, looked around and chose
One to announce: "An envoy from the Sháh
Hath come to court."
The Khán, on hearing this,
Prepared his throne and bade admit the envoy
Who, as he drew anear, made eloquent
His tongue and did obeisance, saying: "Thy slave
Will frame his tongue to speak at thy command."
The Khán replied: "A sweet tongue maketh young
The heart of eld. Speak words of profit; they
Are pith when spoken but, unspoken, peel."
Thereat Kharrád recalled old tales and first
Praised the Creator, who controlleth fortune,
The Almighty and the Lord of fate, who made
"Sky, earth, and time, high heaven and the world,
Who hath all power of right while we are slaves,
And tell his righteous acts. To one He giveth
The crown and lofty throne, another one
He maketh vile, afflicted, and cast down,
Not that He loveth this and hateth that,
But why He only knoweth. We, both great
And small, are born but to return to dust,
And have perforce resigned to death our bodies.
Begin we with pre-eminent Jamshíd,
Or with the glorious world-lord Tahmúras,
And thus pass on to Kai Kubád and all
The Great that we remember—Kai Khusrau,
The famous Rustam and by that same token
Continue till we reach Asfandiyár.
Their share of this world was the charnel-house;
They have drunk bane instead of antidote.

Our present Sháh is of thy kin; he joyeth
And sorroweth as thou dost wax and wane.
His great-grandsire upon the mother's side,
When glorious Sháhs held sway, was Khán of Chín.
Now in these latter days our covenant
Hath been renewed and everything is changed.
May He that giveth victory bless thee,
And be thine earth compact of heads of kings."
He spake. The Khán gave ear and answered him:—
"O trafficker in lore! if in Írán
Be one like thee he knoweth well the sky!"
The Khán assigned him lodging in the palace,
And seat anear the throne, then bade him bring
The gifts and give all to the treasurer.
The Khán said: "Mayst thou lack not worldly wealth. C. 1‹
If thou wilt take a present of me speak
That I too may accept what thou hast brought,
But if not thou art brighter than a gift—
The crown of chiefs in knowledge."
They prepared
For him a pleasant dwelling-place and draped it
With stuff of every kind. At board and chase,
At feast and drinking-bout this favourite
Was with the Khán, sought an occasion, found him
One day at leisure and made bold to say:—
"Bahrám Chúbína is a miscreant,
Worse than malicious Áhriman, and selleth
Men veteran for what it were not worth
A mite to mention. King Hurmuzd was first
To bring him forward, raising him by favour
Above the sun. Not one knew e'en his name,
And yet his will hath everywhere prevailed!
Although he doth thee many a kindly office,
Yet will he break faith with thee in the end
As with the Sháhs he did, regarding neither

The Sháh nor God. If to the Sháh thou wilt
Dispatch him thou wilt raise up to the moon
The Íránian monarch's head. Thenceforth Írán
And all Chín are thine own and thou mayst dwell
Where'er thou wilt."
The Khán was stunned to hear
Such talk, regarded him with louring eyes,
And said to him: "Speak not such words as these,
For thou wilt blacken our regard for thee.
I am no miscreant and treaty-breaker
Because the shroud of such must be the dust."
Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing that,
Knew that his novelty was out of date,[1]
And made reply: "O thou of royal race!
Why dost thou think to speak such words? The Sháh
Is better than Bahrám Chúbína is
For thee because of old relationship."
The Khán rejoined: "I will make plain my purpose:
If Cæsar broke his covenant by making
Agreement with Khusrau Parwíz shall I
Do likewise and act treacherously against
The brave Bahrám Chúbína? I possess
A thousand slaves such as Khusrau and come
Of an illustrious race. The king of Rúm
Did not oppress thy Sháh but gave him treasure
Land and a host. Since brave Bahrám Chúbína,
Whose gests are written in the chronicles,
Is my supporter and my son-in-law
How can I draw back from my covenant?"
Again Kharrád was foiled and took to guile.
1965 He thought: "The Khán is not concerned for us,
Because Bahrám Chúbína hath suggested
Írán to him. My words are willow's fruit."
In black despair about the Khán he turned,
He had no choice, toward the queen and sought

[1] The remainder of this page in C. should perhaps be omitted.

Among her suite one that could cheer his soul.
He found a steward and was privy with him,
Recounted what Khusrau Parwíz had said,
And made that wretch's heart rejoice, then added :—
" Speak for me to the queen that I may be
Her scribe."
The crafty steward answered him :—
" That will not serve because Bahrám Chúbína
Is now her son-in-law ; she is his brains
And skin. Thou art a scribe ; contrive some scheme ;
Moreover let not thy design get wind."
Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing this,
Discerned no top or bottom to his cares.
There was an agéd Turkman, named Kulún,
Whom other Turkmans scorned. He dressed in sheep-skin,
And lived withal on millet.[1] Makátúra
Was of his kindred, so he railed against
Bahrám Chúbína, ever cherishing
Revenge at heart and cursing him.[2] Kharrád
Sent to invite Kulún to his famed mansion,
Gave him dínárs and drachms, clothes, much to eat,
Invited him to feasts and seated him
Among the chiefs. Khárrád, exceeding wise
And patient-hearted, clever and expert,
Mused much, consulting on one hand the steward
About the queen of Chín but held his peace
When, day or night, he visited the Khán.
The agéd steward spake thus to Kharrád :—
" A man like thee, a noble and a scribe,
If he had skill and was of fame in leechcraft,
Would be a crown upon my lady's head,
And all the more so as her daughter aileth."
Kharrád replied : " I have that knowledge too,

[1] On millet bread—a sign of poverty. *Cf.* p. 337.
[2] Two couplets omitted.

And, as thou say'st, will take the case in hand."
The steward hastened to the queen and said :—
" A learned leech hath arrived."
C. 1966 " Live and enjoy,"
She answered. " Scratch not thou thy head but bring him."
He went and told Kharrád, son of Barzín :—
" Preserve thy secret, go announce thyself,
And act the cheerful leech."
That schemer went
Before the queen and found the patient's liver
Disordered. He prescribed pomegranate-juice,
And therewithal a herb that flourisheth
Beside a stream ; folk call it chicory.
He sought to stay the aching of her head.
Within a week, for God so ordered it,
The girl grew like the world-enlightening moon.
The queen brought from her treasury dínárs,
A purseful, and five gold-embroidered robes,
And said : " Take this unworthy recompense,
And ask what more thou wilt."
He said : " Keep these,
And I will ask my guerdon when I please."[1]

§ 37

How Bahrám Chúbína was slain by Kulún as Kharrád, Son of Barzín, had planned

Bahrám Chúbína, for his part, arrayed
His army like a pheasant's wing and marched
To Marv. Then one came to the Khán to say :—
" Let none pass to Írán from Turkistán

[1] There is no break here in the original.

Or Chín to tell Khusrau Parwíz about us,
And make a gift to him of our designs."
The Khán proclaimed: "If one go to Írán
Without our seal him will I cleave asunder,
And money shall not buy him off, by God!"
Kharrád, son of Barzín, abode two months,
Intent on his close schemes. Then in concern
He called Kulún, gave him the seat of honour
One day and said to him: "None is exempt
From secret sorrow in this world. Thou oft
Hast begged for millet, barley-bread, and sheepskins
From all in Chín, but now thy food is bread
And lamb, and thou art richly clad withal.
Contrast thy present with thy past estate,
Past malisons with present benisons.
Thine years have reached a hundred or at least
Are great in sum. I have a dread emprise
For thee whereby thou mayest gain a throne,
Or darksome dust. I will obtain for thee
An impress from the signet of the Khán;
Then speed as though thou wouldst roll up the earth.
Thou must get access to Bahrám Chúbína,
And bide thy time at Marv. Don thy black sheepskin,
Provide a knife, and go. Note heedfully
The twentieth[1] of the month and on that day
Approach this man world-famous for he holdeth
That day ill-omened as I have observed
For many a year. He will admit not then C. 19(
The public and wear but brocade of Rúm.
Say: 'From the daughter of the Khán I bring
The mighty chief a message.' Keep thy knife
Unsheathed within thy sleeve till he shall bid thee
Approach alone and as thou dost say thus:—
'The noble lady said: "When thou dost tell

[1] "The day Bahrám" in the original.

The secret in his ear hide it from others." '
When he shall say: 'What is the secret? Tell me,'
Approach him quickly, slit his navel, rise,
And seek to flee. All those that hear his cry
Will hurry from the chieftain to the stalls;
This one will go for steeds and that for treasure,
And thou wilt suffer not for slaying him.
If they slay thee . . . well thou hast seen the world,
And hast approved its weal and woe. Besides
Thou wilt have had revenge and done what use
Enjoineth,[1] but indeed none will concern
Himself about thee at that time to harm thee,
While if thou scapest slaying thou hast bought
The world and paid for it, the conquering Sháh
Will give to thee a city and withal
A share in this world."[2]

To that sage Kulún
Made answer: "Need I any further guide?
Good sooth! although I am a hundred I
Fain would get somewhat so I have no choice.
Be both my body and my soul thy ransom,
Such is the covenant I make with thee."

Kharrád, son of Barzín, on hearing that,
Sped to the queen and said: "The time hath come
For me to ask my boon, O gracious lady!
And I will tell it. Certain of my folk
Across the river are in bonds. Be pleased
To set mine own feet free. Procure for me
An impress of the Khán's seal and this know
That by so doing thou wilt give me life."

She said: "He is asleep and drunk: I might
Put clay upon the signet on his hand."

She asked Kharrád, son of Barzín, for seal-clay,
Went to that drunken sleeper's couch forthwith
From her apartments, presently impressed

[1] *Cf.* p. 335. [2] In C. the new section begins here.

The clay upon the signet, came, and gave it
To her petitioner. That scribe gave thanks
Therefor, then went and passed it to the elder.
Kulún received that seal, sped pheasant-like,[1] C. 1968
And came to Marv, unmarked. He tarried there
Until the twentieth of the month—the day
That was unlucky for Bahrám Chúbína,[2]
Who was at home attended by one slave,
With apples, quinces, and pomegranates placed
Before him. All alone Kulún approached
The gate and said thus to the porter: "Sir!
I bring word from the daughter of the Khán,
And I am neither warrior nor Persian.
That pious lady hath entrusted me
With secrets, which for her sake must be kept,
For this great monarch. She is ailing too,
And is with child. Tell him that I may give
My message to the crowned and famous chief."
The noble chamberlain made haste, went in,
Came to the entrance of the warrior's chamber,
And said: "A scurvy-looking messenger,
Clad in a sheep-skin, hath arrived and saith:—
'I carry from the daughter of the Khán
A message to thy potent lord.'"
Replied
Bahrám Chúbína: "Say to him: 'Display
Thy visage also at the chamber-door.'"
Kulún drew near and from the doorway showed
His head. On seeing an old man weak and wretched
Bahrám Chúbína said to him: "If thou
Hast letters give them up."
Kulún rejoined:—
"I have a message only and will speak not
With others by."
Bahrám Chúbína said:—

[1] *Cf.* Vol. VII. p. 88 *note*. [2] *Cf.* p. 337.

"Approach without more mystery and tell it
Within mine ear."
Kulún drew near. The knife
Was up his sleeve. His villainy grew plain.
He feigned to whisper and then struck. A cry
Rose from the room. Now when Bahrám Chúbína
Called out the people ran to him. He said:—
"Arrest the fellow. Ask who prompted him."
Then all within the palace came and dragged
That hoary-headed man off by the feet,
The servants in their fury smiting him
With palms and fists. He took the buffetings,
And opened not his lips from noon till midnight,
Then when he had been broken, hand and foot,
They flung him down within the palace-court,
And gathered in their sorrow and dismay
About Bahrám Chúbína. He still bled,
And groaned. His cheeks were lapis-lazuli.
His sister too had come to him forthwith.
She tore her hair, laid on her lap his head,
1969 Then wailed and cried right bitterly: "Brave horseman!
The lion used to flee the woods before thee!
Who hath removed this Column of the world?
Who hath o'erthrown this mighty Elephant?
Woe for the cavalier of chieftain-mould,
World-conqueror, undaunted, lion-queller!
Thou didst not serve the Sháh, and no God-server
Was he that smote thine elephantine form.
Alas! who tore this tall, exalted Mountain
Out of the pleasant waters by the roots?
Who hath plucked up so flourishing a Cypress?
Who cast this crown of greatness basely down?
Who filled the ocean suddenly with dust?
Who hurled this moving Mountain to the abyss?
Now alien, friendless, helpless, and alone

We live despised in other men's domains.
I said to him: 'O captain of the host!
Uproot thou not the sprout of loyalty,
For if a daughter only had been left
Sprung from Sásán she would assume the crown,
The whole face of the land would be her slave,
Her blest crown touch the sky.' Thou wouldst not hear
My profitable words but now repentest
Thy deeds and bear'st a guilty soul to God.
Ill is on our great house; we are the sheep;
Our foemen are like wolves."
The wounded man,
On hearing what she said and seeing all
Her heart and prudent counsellings, her cheeks
Rent by her nails, her hair plucked out, her heart
And eyes all blood, her face all dust, though faint
And suffering loosed his tongue and answered thus:—
"My noble sister! nothing ever matched
Thy counsel yet the measure of my days
Is full. I acted not on thine advice;
A dív-like guide led me in everything.
No prince was more exalted than Jamshíd,
Through whom the world was full of fear and hope,
Yet erred he at the bidding of the dívs
So that he made the world black for himself.
'Twas just the same with watchful Kai Káús,
Heaven's favourite whose steps were fortunate.
The loathly Dív's incitements ruined him;
The evils that befel him thou hast heard:
He mounted heavenward to look upon
The circling sky and course of sun and moon,
But fell into the deep beyond Sarí,
Headforemost.[1] In like manner hath the Dív
Caused me to err and docked my hand from good.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 102 *seq.*

'Thine is the royal diadem,' he said,
'From Aries to Pisces all is thine.'
I do repent mine evil deeds. God's pardon
C. 1970 Were gracious to me. Thus was destiny
Writ o'er my head; why should I mourn the past?
The water riseth o'er me; grief and joy
Are both as wind to me: 'twas written thus;
What was to be hath been; none can abate,
Or greaten ills. Thy counsels are mine heirlooms,
Thy sayings are mine earrings. Right and wrong
Are over; call not fruitless words to mind,
But turn to God and place your confidence
Where fortune smileth. He is friend enough
In troubles; tell none of your grief and joy.
My destined portion of the world is mine,
The end is come and now I must depart."
Then to Yalán-sína he said: "I leave
The whole host, throne, the kingship and the state,
To thee. Do thou take heed of my good sister:
Thou wilt not need another counsellor.
Part not asunder. May disunion
Ne'er come between you twain. Abide not long
Within this hostile territory. I
Came hither and am weary of the place.
Go and present you to Khusrau Parwíz,
Speak and hear him.[1] If he shall pardon you
Hail not another as your sun and moon.
Take many greetings from me to Gurdwí,
And tell him what hath chanced.[2] Make me my charnel
Within Írán, and wreck my palace here.
Much trouble have I suffered through the Khán,
And have not found him gracious for one day.
It was no guerdon for my toils to have
A dív dispatched to slay me, yet in truth,

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] Two couplets omitted.

If he shall hear of this, he will not know
What he should think. None save Íránians
Conceived this plan, and had the Dív for guide."
He called a scribe and wrote, as there was need,
This letter to the Khán: "Bahrám Chúbína
Hath passed away in failure, shame, and woe.
Be good to those I leave and keep them safe
From toil and trouble caused by enemies,
For I have never wronged thee but ensued
Whate'er was wise and right."
He gave his sister
Much good advice, embraced her darling head,
And laid his mouth against her ear, his eyes C. 197
Suffused with blood, and he gave up the ghost.
All wept him bitterly and lived in sorrow.
His sister in her pain bewailed him sorely,
And kept recalling all her brother's words:
Her heart was riven by her grief for him.
She had a narrow silver coffin made,
She wrapped brocade around that warrior-form,
With raiment of fine linen neath his vest,
And covered him with camphor, face and all.
The process of this Wayside Inn is so!
Toil not, thou knowest that thou needs must go.
Quaff not thou grief but wine by day and night
With lips all laughter and with heart-delight.

§ 38

How the Khán had Tidings of Bahrám Chúbína's Death and how he destroyed the House and Family of Kulún

When tidings came about Bahrám Chúbína,
And what his gory had entailed on him,

And when his letter too arrived, and when
The messenger had told his tale, the Khán
Was grieved at heart, his eyes were filled with blood,
His cheeks became like lapis-lazuli.
Amazed he called his veteran counsellors,
And told the fate of brave Bahrám Chúbína
While every one that heard it wept for woe.
All Chín bewailed right bitterly and burned,
Without a fire, for anguish. Then the Khán
Investigated all to ascertain
The author of the crime and, when he found
That 'twas Kharrád who planned that wicked deed,
Exclaimed: "How did that dog escape when he
Had turned such fire as this on us?"
Kulún
Had two sons living in Túrán as well
As divers friends and kinsmen. When the Khán
Had learned the truth he burned Kulún's house down,
And all about it, flinging on the flames
His sons and giving all their goods to spoil.
Then when the queen's turn came he had her haled
Forth from the curtains by her hair, seized all
Her goods, and heeded not her misery.
He sent swift dromedaries everywhere:
Kharrád, son of Barzín, came not to hand.
The Khán grieved long, arraying all his slaves
Throughout the land of Chín in mourning weeds,
For he had loved Bahrám Chúbína's deeds.

§ 39

How Khusrau Parwíz had Tidings of the Slaying of Bahrám Chúbína and honoured Kharrád, Son of Barzín

Now when Kharrád, son of Barzín, approached C. 197
Khusrau Parwíz and told what he had done,
And seen and heard, the Sháh's heart joyed for he
Was quit of that opponent worshipful.
He showered many drachms, robes, and much else
Upon the poor. They wrote to every king
And chief a letter in the ancient tongue
To tell what God almighty, the All-just,
Had brought to pass and how He had sent up
Dust from that foe. The Sháh too wrote a letter
In royal wise to Cæsar. For a se'nnight
They held festivities and called for harp
And wine in every quarter of the city.
The Sháh sent offerings to the fanes of Fire,
And robes of honour to the Great. He told
Kharrád, son of Barzín: "Thou hast deserved
To have the crown and throne," and filled his mouth
With royal gems; the treasurer poured dínárs,
Some hundred thousand, out before his feet
On such wise that they grew as high as he.
The Sháh said: "Whoso turneth from the way[1]
Shall have his day bedimmed although he be
In battle like the brave Bahrám Chúbína
From whom an ancient Turk hath raised the dust."
The chiefs all blessed Khusrau Parwíz and said:—
"Without thee never be the crown and signet,
And if, in spite of all thy loving-kindness,
A man would have thy face lack radiancy
Then let him as Bahrám Chúbína be."

[1] Reading with P.

§ 40

How the Khán sent his Brother to Gurdya, the Sister of Bahrám Chúbína, with a Letter touching her Brother's Death and asking her in Marriage as his Queen, and her Answer

Now when the Khán's heart was relieved and Chín
Was all like clay with gore he said one day :—
" Weak men, weak deeds ! but I was well content
And gladdened through Bahrám Chúbína's prowess.
Now why have I allowed the hero's kin
To bide in so much weakness and contempt ?
C. 1973 I shall be blamed by all that hear thereof,
And in the future none will trust mine oath.
I have not soothed his little son's distress
Or have concerned me for his kin although
He was related to me through my daughter,
And heart and soul compact of love and wisdom."
He bade his brother come and spake at large :—
" E'en as a pheasant flieth in a garden
Betake thyself to Marv, look on the kin
Of brave Bahrám Chúbína, greet them well,
And say : ' By God and by the throne of greatness
I had no knowledge of this villainy.
I too am stricken to the heart and wrapped
In grief while I shall live, and in revenge
Have bathed the surface of the land in gore.
The cities curse, but bless Bahrám Chúbína.
Although I should take vengeance for this hurt,
And bring the heaven down, one in a hundred
Would not avenge so famed a hero's blood ;
But no one, as all wise men know, can 'scape
From God's decree. This was assigned to him,
And all through the perverse Dív's sorcery.
I hold to my first pledge and will keep faith.'

Convey a separate letter to Gurdya :—
'O holy lady of unsullied skirt!
Thou art all uprightness and kindliness,
Of lofty nature, far from all defect.
Long have I mused upon thy state, while wisdom
Hath been in secret session with my heart,
And have found no lord fitter than myself
For thee, so grace my curtains by thy counsel;
Thee will I hold as mine own soul and body,
And do mine utmost to keep faith with thee.
Then all in this state shall be thine to bid,
And I will pledge my heart to do thy will.
Now gather all thy friends, discuss the matter
Before the wise and see what seemeth best
To thy bright mind when thou hast wisely weighed.
Let wisdom rule thy words and then inform me.'"
That atheling, his brother, heard and like
A turtle-dove from cypress sped to Marv,
And to Bahrám Chúbína's kindred bare
The letter and good will, told what the Khán
Had said and how he passioned to avenge
The slain, then added: "Sages and archmages
Approven well and vigilant of heart!
Herein may much good tidings come to you,
And may the almighty Judge befriend the dead.
This sudden death—no trifle—was a thing C. 19;
That none expected."
Then he gave the sister,
But privily, the letter and the message
Sent by the Khán. He spake of their connexion,
Her counsel and fair words, of past and present,
And of the purity and piety
Of women that both counsel and console.
The young man spake, the lady of the skirt
Unsullied heard him but made choice of silence.
Thereafter, when she had perused the letter,

And all the words of the imperious Khán,
She made her wisdom and her knowledge mates,
Thought out her answer and informed the brother :—
I have perused this letter and held session
With wisdom. Just what kings, experienced folk,
And potentates would do the Khán hath done.
Oh ! may our eyes be bright upon the man
That seeketh thus to avenge us ! May the world
Ne'er lack the Khán, and may the crown of greatness
Rejoice in him. May care ne'er wound his heart,
And may he ne'er despair. We sat in counsel.
I read thy letter over, every whit,
And all the men of wisdom and of might
Agree to entertain this wish of thine.
Howbeit all my family are now
In sorrow and the subject is ill-timed.
When mourning for so great a chief is over
The Khán's commandment shall not be transgressed.
I purpose not to go back to Írán.
Naught can be better for a virtuous dame
Than to be married, but if I shall come
In haste what will the wise king say of me ?
If in the midst of grief I aim at joy
I shall not act with virtue or respect ;
The wise will say that I lack modesty,
The Khán himself will think me indiscreet.
When four months of this mourning have elapsed
I will dispatch a horseman to the king.
Meanwhile hear will I what I ought to hear—
All that my counsellors may have to urge—
And state it in a letter to the king
When mine adviser goeth unto him.
As for the present, fare rejoicing hence,
And tell the Khán the message that I send."
She gave the envoy many gifts, and he,
A man experienced, left Marv joyfully.

§ 41

How Gurdya consulted her Nobles and fled from Marv

Then at her leisure that young, prudent dame C. 1975
Consulted with her counsellors and said :—
" A new thing, one that ne'er will stale with me,
Hath chanced : the Khán, that ruler of the world,
In flattering terms hath asked for me in marriage.
He hath no fault ; he is a king, great, brave,
And master of the armies of Túrán.
None dared to name me while my Lion lived.
For twelve years after I had lost my sire
The brave Bahrám Chúbína took in charge
Mine orphanhood and raged when any one
Demanded me in marriage. Now the Khán
Is not a person of small consequence,
And he hath both ability and power.
Howbeit when he striveth to make kinship
Between the Turks and the Íránians
From that bond and connexion time will see
Both travail and affliction in the end.
Look what it was that Siyáwush received
Except sun-burning from Afrásiyáb !
That youth unmatched by other mother's son
Gave from the first his head up to the wind.
What did that chieftain's son too do but send
The dust up from Írán and from Túrán ?
Contrive that unknown to the Turks we may
Convey this story to Írán forthwith.
I have dispatched a letter to Gurdwí,
For I had apprehensions on this score,
That he might ope my matter to the Sháh,
And tell my toil and care. God helping me,
He will both hear and grant my fair appeal."

They said: "Thou art for life our youthful lady
In Chín and in Írán. An iron mountain
Could not displace thee, and thou guidest heroes
To manliness. Thou art more shrewd than sages,
More full of counsel than wise ministers.
We are thy subjects all; 'tis thine to bid,
And thine to judge and deal with this request."
On hearing this she called the muster-roll,
And opened offices to pay the troops,
Went forth, inspected every one of them,
And chose eleven hundred and three score,
Each one of whom would face ten cavaliers
In fight. She furnished drachms and then returning
To her abode harangued her warlike powers:—
C. 1976 "He that hath ever seen a stirrup-strap
Is not perturbed because of ups and downs.
He feareth not a murderous multitude
E'en if the clouds shall shower heads on him;
He will not turn from me when I retreat;
He will not be afraid when foemen charge.
Fare we toward Írán, fare we toward
The monarch of the brave. Here in Túrán
We are but strangers, destitute and friendless,
Weak as we are and abject mid the great.
Withdraw we then when darkness hath set in,
And when our foemen's heads are dull with sleep.
Let not your hearts be straitened on the way
If any troops of Chín encounter us,
Because the chieftains with their massive maces
Will follow us past doubt, but let us each
Take his own life in hand and, if they come,
Give and get blows withal; but all of you
That disapprove of this! abide ye here."
They shouted: "We are lieges and obey."
This understood, they rose and made them ready
For war with Chín. Ízid Gashasp, the chief,

And Yalán-sína mounted with the troops,
Who all said : " Better perish with renown
Than live and let the men of Chín prevail."
She crossed the desert to the caravans ;
She had the camels passed in front of her,
And chose three thousand to transport her baggage.
At night like some illustrious cavalier
She mounted, mace in hand ; her charger's mail
Was splendid, and she wore a breastplate, sword,
And battle-helm, then led both night and day,
Swift as the wind, her host upon its way.

§ 42

How the Khán received Tidings of the Flight of Gurdya and how he sent Tuwurg[1] *with an Army after her, and how Gurdya slew Tuwurg*

A number of deserters from her force
Arrived to seek protection from the Khán.
His brother came and said : " O famous chief,
And lover of the fray ! some valiant troops
Have made toward Irán, and many others
Have sought for my protection. Realm and host
Will laugh for ever at thy court's disgrace."
The chieftain's cheek, when he had heard the words,
Grew white with anger, and he answered : " Haste, C. 1977
And lead an army forth. Observe what road
Those troops have taken. When thou reachest them
Act not injuriously but first of all
Make use of honied words, for of them none
Hath any knowledge of our usages ;
Their fear perchance hath turned us into foes.
Speak with all unction and entreat them well ;

[1] Reading with P.

Encourage them by loving-kindliness;
But if they offer armed resistance play
The man and let there by no dallying;
Make one tomb for the whole of them at Marv
So that the earth may be like pheasant's plumes."
He went forth with six thousand valiant horsemen,
Picked Turks, and on the fourth day overtook
The Íránians, but that lion-hearted dame
Was not concerned beholding them. She left
The army, visited as swift as wind
The cameleers, disposed the baggage-train
Behind the lines, and then surveyed the field.
She donned her brother's armour and bestrode
A fiery steed. The hosts were ranked. Each man
Took his own life in hand. Tuwurg came forth
Before his troops (the Khán was wont to call him
"Old Wolf") and said to the Íránians:—
"Is not the virtuous dame in this great host?"
For Gurdya was arrayed in heavy mail,
And had her waist girt like a warrior's,
So that the valiant billman knew her not,
But spurring on his steed and coming near
Said to her: "Midst this army where shall I
Seek for the sister of the murdered Sháh,
For I have many things to say to her,
Respecting both the present and the past?"
She answered: "Here am I prepared to charge
A ravening lion."
When he heard [illegible] voice
Of her that rode a lusty lion-steed
He was amazed and said: "The Khán of Chín
Of all the kingdom made a choice of thee
To keep him mindful of Bahrám Chúbína,
The Lion and the chosen cavalier.
He said: 'I will requite the favour done
If only thou wilt listen to my words.'

He said to me: 'Haste unto her and say:—
'If what I spake was not acceptable
Know that my words were not imperative,
And that I have renounced what I proposed.
If is not well for thee to quit our coasts:
Attempt it not although thou wilt not wed.'
Join words together unto this effect,
And if she will not take advice use bonds
For her and all that have supported her.
This is too much!'"[1]

She answered: "Let us quit C. 1978
The field and troops, and I will answer thee
Advisedly on all points."

He approached
That famed and valiant dame who, seeing him
Alone, displayed to him her face beneath
Her sable casque, and said: "Thou hast beheld
"Bahrám Chúbína's horsemanship and courage
With admiration: his full sister I.
His day is done so I now will essay thee.
I long to fight with thee. If thou shalt find
That I am worthy of a husband say so.
Good sooth! thou mayst approve me as thy spouse!"

She spake, then spurred her steed. Ízid Gashasp
Rode close behind her. With her spear she struck
The girdle of Tuwurg and pierced his mail.
He tumbled headlong, and the sand beneath
Ran blood. With chosen warriors Yalán-sína
Charged and discomfited the host of Chín,
Slew, overthrew, and wounded many a man,
Pursued the foe two leagues and left few mounted.
The whole plain was a-stream with blood that day,
This man was headless, that head-downward lay.

[1] "Arrange les affairs de cette manière, et si un conseil *du Khakan* ne te suffit pas, fais un traité. Quiconque croit le Khakan capable de faire ce que *tu crains*, dépasse ce qu'il est permis de dire." Mohl.

§ 43

How Gurdya wrote to Gurdwí

Victorious she drew toward Írán,
She drew toward the monarch of the brave,
But halted for a short time at Ámwí
With questionings increasing in her heart.
She wrote thence to her brother, telling him
In sorrow all that occurred, and said :—
" What time the brave Bahrám Chúbína died,
All care and grief fraternal, to us both
He proffered much good counsel. May we never
Distress his spirit ! Furthermore he said :—
' Inform the exalted monarch of the counsels
That thou hast heard from me.' A mighty host,
All men of name and warriors, pursued us,
But I have so entreated them in fight
That never more will they see fight or feast.
With me are many famous chiefs, and harm
Must not be theirs. Till my good star convey
A hoped response I pause upon the way."

§ 44

How Khusrau Parwíz slew Bandwí

c. 1979 From that time forth the Sháh sat undisturbed,
Since brave Bahrám Chúbína was no more,
And found no chieftain hostile and disposed
To counter him in fight. One day he thus
Addressed his upright minister : " How long
Shall I conceal my thoughts ? Shall my sire's slayer
For ever be about me as a kinsman ?

Now that I have the power and feel aggrieved
What should result ? "
They spread the board and quaffed,
And put Bandwí in fetters that same day.
The Sháh thereafter bade his minister :—
' Cut off his hands and feet ; he will not then
Gird up his loins to shed the blood of kings."
They lopped him and he died forthwith, resigning
His blood-stained life up to Khusrau Parwíz.
The Sháh then sent a man to Khurásán
With strict injunctions : " Hold thy tongue and go
Hence to the marchlord's court. Bid Gustaham :—
' When thou hast read my letter come forthwith.' "
The envoy reached in Khurásán the court
Of one at ease and gave the Sháh's behest,
That youthful Sháh who poured out blood with zest.

§ 45

How Gustaham rebelled against Khusrau Parwíz and took Gurdya to Wife

When Gustaham heard this he summoned all
His scattered troops, set forth upon the march,
And passing by Sarí and by Ámul
Came to Gurgán—the country of the Great—
Heard that the Sháh had grown severe and slain
Bandwí, his brother, unexpectedly,
Whereat he gnawed his hands, gat from his steed,
Rent all his raiment as a paladin,
And wailing poured the dust upon his head,
Perceiving that the world-lord would avenge
Hurmuzd on him. He turned back sorrowing,
And, thou hadst said : " Companioning the wind."

Collecting all his scattered troops he marched
Toward the forest of Nárwan and, when
He reached the mountains of Ámul, drew up
His army in that forest, thence made raids,
And thus began a system of revenge.
C. 1980 He found a living for all workless men,
And where he heard that royal troops were camped
Descended on them and destroyed them all.
Now when Gurdwí arrived he told the Sháh
All that his sister with her warriors
Had done against the marchlords of the Khán,
And how she made their dust go up at Marv,
While Gustaham, on his side, was informed
That brave Bahrám Chúbína's days were done,
And that Gurdya with many troops had fled
That fierce chief,[1] that a host had followed her
To take revenge, and how she had entreated
Those famous men of Chín. He called to horse,
And from that forest led his troops like wind
To meet her. When Gurdya was ware she went
Forth with her chiefs and nobles. Gustaham,
On seeing them, rode out before his troops.
He met Gurdya and was o'ercome by pain
And much remorse about Bahrám Chúbína,
Spake also of his sorrow for Bandwí,
And wiped blood from his eyelids with his sleeve.
He lighted weeping from his steed at sight
Of Yalán-sína and Ízid Gashasp,[2]
And said: "The Sháh hath slain Bandwí; his day
Is over and thou wouldst have said: 'The Sháh
Was not his sister's son. Bandwí bled not
For him who used to pour his very soul
Out at Bandwí's feet and lamented him
When absent!' Now upon the earliest chance
The Sháh, true to the instincts of his race,

[1] The Khán. [2] Reading with P.

Hath severed from Bandwí both hands and feet!
So now what hope can ye have in the Sháh,
For never came fruit from the willow's bough?
He will entreat your kindred even worse,
And make meat in the city cheap enough.
E'en at a distance he will rage to see,
And plan new vengeance on, Yalán-sína,
Thou being Bahrám Chúbína's general,
And having power through him. Let each that knoweth
The Sháh be ware or better cut his throat!
If ye will stay with us we will consult
On all things great and small."
The hearers took
His counsel; they all shunned destruction's path.
He spake in earnest to Gurdya, recounting
Bahrám Chúbína's acts. She was o'ercome
By what he said, and felt that he was right.
All joined him and his clouded counsels cleared.
"Doth not," thus said he to Yalán-sína, C. 198
"This lady talk of marriage and desire
Its honours?"
He replied: "Wait till I speak,
And by long converse ascertain her will."
He said to her: "O lady! I have seen thee
Act as adviser. Thou didst well to flee
The Khán, preferring wisely thine own race.
What sayest thou to the Sháh's maternal uncle,
The valiant and the wealthy Gustaham,
The captain and the leader of a host?"
She said: "A spouse that cometh from Írán
Ne'er will despoil my kindred."
So Yalán-sína
Gave her to Gustaham—a gallant hero
Of royal lineage—who tended her
Like a fresh apple, for he saw in this

His exaltation nothing of a fall.
The armies sent forth by Khusrau Parwíz
Found their old fortune altogether changed,
And Gustaham, on seeing a host o'erthrown,
Would spare the troops and take them for his own.

§ 46

How Khusrau Parwíz took Counsel with Gurdwí concerning Gustaham and how Gurdya, prompted by Gurdwí, slew him

Time passed; the Sháh's soul grieved at Gustaham.
One day he said in anger to Gurdwí:—
"So Gustaham hath got Gurdya to wife,
And those great companies resort, methinketh,
To him by her advice. A spy of mine
Hath come back from Ámul and all is clear."
He spake thus till it darkened, and the eyes
Of warriors failed, then while the slaves brought lights
And wine they sent all strangers from the hall,
And holding conclave with Gurdwí the Sháh
Discussed affairs and said: "I have dispatched
Great forces to Ámul to take revenge,
And all have come back wounded and in bonds,[1]
Have come back full of sorrow and dismay.
There is one plan—a trifle when compared
With crown and throne. Although Bahrám Chúbína
Erred yet Gurdya was ever on our side,
And I have got a scheme, but keep it close.
A letter must be written to Gurdya,
Like wine-streams in the garth of Paradise,
To say: 'Thou hast been friendly and hast helped me

[1] *i.e.* in a state of disability.

In all things everywhere. Much time hath passed
While my heart's secret was not on my tongue,
But now the time for speaking hath arrived C. 19
Because Gurdwí is as myself to me.[1]
Look out for some expedient to abate
This foul affliction and put Gustaham
Beneath the stones; then both my heart and home
Are thine. This done, thy troops and partizans
Shall find protection with me everywhere,
Be nowhere treated with contempt, and I
Will give a province unto whom thou wilt
That they may act as rulers, and do thou
Come to the golden palace of my wives,
And thou shalt put an end to my revenge.
Thus will I pledge myself with many oaths,
And add to these yet more assurances.' "

Gurdwí replied: " May the king live for ever,
And be as Venus in the Sign of Virgo.
Thou know'st that I regard my children's lives,
My fruitful lands and all my family,
However precious I account them all,
As worthless when contrasted with thy head.
I will send one to her on this affair
To give her light thereon. I shall require
A letter, written by the Sháh and sealed
With his own signet, like a shining moon.
This will I send my sister by my wife,
And thus put off all our antagonists,
For this is woman's work and specially
For one that is discreet. In mine opinion
Thy words should reach my sister, and the matter
Soon end as thou wouldst wish. The plan is perfect."

Khusrau Parwíz, on hearing this, rejoiced,
And thought his cares wind, asked his treasurer

[1] *i.e.* " I may speak now that thy brother is mine own dearest friend and so there is safe communication."

For paper, chose words redolent of musk,
And wrote a letter like a garden full
Of roses like the checks of the beloved,
Replete with pledges, oaths, and promises,
And manifold advice and flattery.
Whenas the ink of the inscription dried
They sealed the letter with a seal of musk.
Gurdwí wrote counsel too, and much besides,
Reciting first Bahrám Chúbína's deeds
Disgracing all his family and land,
And adding: "God forgive him! May his wrangling
Cause no remorse in him! Those void of wisdom
Heed not the consequences of their acts.
Well, he hath gone and we shall follow him,
Confiding in the justice of our God.
My wife, on coming, will enlighten thee.
C. 1983 Swerve not from what she saith or thou wilt make
Thy fortune's visage wan."
He put the letter
Writ by the Sháh inside his own and wrapped
Them both in painted silk. The wary wife
Took them and heard those peremptory words.
She hasted for the forest of Narwán—
A woman sent as envoy to a woman.
Thereat Gurdya became like jocund Spring
With cheeks all grace and colour and perfume.
They talked at large about Bahrám Chúbína,
And wept. Then privily Gurdwí's wife gave
Gurdya the letter and made plain the path.
That lion-woman saw the Sháh's dispatch
And, thou hadst said, looked down upon the moon.
She laughed and said: "None with five friends would think
This matter difficult."
She called her five,
And stationed them by Gustaham's bed-chamber.

She read to them the letter of the Sháh,
But kept it from the chiefs in general.
When she had said her say she quickly made
A compact with them and shook hands thereon.
At night she put the lights out and at once
Pressed with her hands upon her husband's mouth;
Some of the five too came to give her aid,
Came to the couch of that illustrious one.
She struggled greatly with the drunken man,
And silenced him at last. The general
Died in the darkness and bequeathed both night
And shining day to others. There arose
Within the city shouts and cries for help,
In every quarter tempest rose and fire,
And when the dauntless lady heard the din
She clothed her in a Rúman coat of mail.
That night she called the Íránians, spake at large
About the murdered man, showed the Sháh's letter,
And so emboldened them. They blessed the event,
And showered jewels on the document.

§ 47

How Gurdya wrote to Khusrau Parwíz and how he summoned and married her

That dauntless lady called for pen and inkstand,
And sat at ease among her counsellors.
She wrote a letter to the Sháh concerning
His friends and foes, first praised those that eschew
Revenge, then said: "The bidding of the Sháh C. 1984
Hath been obeyed as loyal hearts would wish,
And through the fortune of the valiant world-lord
That great host hath dispersed. What further orders

Hast thou to give ? What further wilt thou hang
On thy slave's earring ? "
When the letter reached
Khusrau Parwíz he joyed in her the more.
The mighty Lion sought a messenger,
High-starred, an honest man and shrewd of soul,
And wrote a letter like the Artang of Chín,[1]
With many blessings in it, summoning
The noble lady to the court, and in it
Called her the Diadem upon the moon.
The envoy came dust-swift to her and told
All that the Sháh had said. The lion-lady
Became like radiant roses in the Spring-tide
By reason of that letter, called and paid
Her troops, and loaded up when it was day.
As she approached the city of the Sháh
An army met her ; when she reached the court
The Sháh received her, and she found him kind.
Thereafter she produced great offerings,
As did the chieftains in her company,
Exhibited the goods and all the wealth,
Then gave them to the royal treasurer—
Dínárs and kingly jewels past compute,
Gold-woven brocade, crowns, girdles, golden thrones,
And golden shields. Khusrau-Parwíz beheld
That noble Cypress-tree with cheeks like Spring,
And pheasant's gait, with countenance like day,
And locks like night, while pearls, thou wouldst have said,
Rained from her lips. He sent her to his bower,
Gave her precedence there, sent to her brother—
His own resourceful minister—to ask her
In marriage, took and held her dear as life,
While robes of honour, coin, and much beside
He showered upon the comrades of his bride.

[1] Arzhang in the original. See Vol. II. p. 19 *note*.

§ 48

How Gurdya showed her Accomplishment before Khusrau Parwíz

Two se'nnights passed away. "By sun and moon,
By throne and casque," he said to her, "narrate
Thy battle with the soldiers of the Khán,
And gird thy loins as thou wast girded then."
"O Sháh!" she thus made answer, "live for ever,
And be souls nourished by the sight of thee.
Command thy men to bring a charger here, C. 198
A saddle and choice lasso and a bow,
A spear and helmet and a warrior's mail,
Besides a quiver filled with poplar arrows."
The Sháh then bade the servitors: "Prepare
A place within the pleasance."
Heedfully
Those slaves from Rúm and Turkistán attended.
Twelve hundred Beauties of Khusrau Parwíz
(Thou wouldst have said: "The garden hath not room,")
Arrived preceded by sunlike Shírín
In height a silver column as she walked.
Gurdya approached the Sháh and bade a slave
Bring coat of mail and Rúman casque. She quitted
Her seat and came forth with her loins girt up
And spear in hand.[1] That all-accomplished dame
Drew nigh a black steed by the Sháh's command,
Set on the ground the butt-end of her spear,
And vaulted to the saddle swift as wind.
She chose her field of action in the pleasance,
Wheeled her about on all sides right and left,
And pierced the dark clouds with her battle-cries.

[1] Couplet omitted.

She told the Sháh: "What time I fought Tuwurg
I was an angry Wolf as I am now."
Shírín said: "Wilt thou arm thy foes, O king,
For she is thinking of her brother's death,
And will, I fear, consign thee to the wind?
Thou wearest but a robe upon the throne
Of gold, and she can reach thee any time!"
He laughed and answered: "Then provoke her not."
The moon-faced lady wheeled amid the dust.
She was a heroine in love and war,
And said: "Would that a foeman of the Sháh's
Were here before me on the battlefield.
I would unhorse him as I did Tuwurg
Here in the Great King's presence."
He was all
Astound, she had such stature, thews, and limbs.
He said to her: "Thou wilt not have to rail
At fortune. Let me see if thou art quelled
By wine or unaffected."
Then she took—
That lady-paladin—a goblet filled
With royal wine, which Áhriman himself
Would have declined, and in the sight of all
Quaffed to the Sháh and drained it at a draught;
She knocked the dust out of that golden stream!
The Sháh in wonder said: "O warrior-moon!
1986 I have about the world four generals,
Who have it in command to guard my life.
Each hath twelve thousand men—Íránians
And valiant cavaliers. I have withal
Within my golden bower and room of gems
Twelve thousand slaves, all pure, with torques and earrings.
Henceforth thou art their overseer for thou
Dost toil and care for what is thine. I wish

To hear no word of them from any one,
Or young or old, save thee."
Gurdya rejoiced
On hearing this; the slanders of her foes
Had harmed her not. She swept earth with her face,
And called down blessings on her sovereign's Grace.

§ 49

How Khusrau Parwíz sent an ill-disposed Marchlord to Rai and how he oppressed the Folk there

A long time passed; meanwhile the monarch's star
Sought only the ascendant, but one night,
As he was drinking wine among his sages,
His magnates and experienced officers,
There was a cup in use among the guests,
Graved with the name Bahrám.[1] The Sháh bade throw
The cup away whereat they all began
To curse Bahrám, the cup, and him that wrought it.
Thus said the Sháh: "Now let the elephants
Of war tread down the fields and fells of Rai,
Expel the folk and turn it to a waste."
The noble minister addressed him thus:—
"O thou memorial of mighty kings!
Consider that the state of Rai is large,
Not one for elephants to trample on,
For God and all good folk would disapprove."
The king replied: "I want one ill-disposed
And of low birth to act as marchlord there,
One who is coarse of speech and ignorant."

[1] The cup had belonged to, or the name on it suggested, Bahrám Chúbína.

"Do thou, O king!" the minister rejoined,
"Charácterize the wretch, and I will seek,
And bring him, otherwise we have no guide."
Khusrau Parwíz replied: "I want a gabbler,
Ill-starred, red-haired, foul and with nose askew,
With sallow face, malicious, squat, and soured,
C. 1987 A coward, vile and gloomy, vengeful, lying,
Green-eyed and squinting, with projecting teeth,
And humped like wolf in gait."
The archimages
Were all amazed that he should speak of such,
And all made search about the world, amidst
The cities, and among the great and small.
One day a man brought one such to the Sháh,[1]
Who said: "Tell thine ill deeds in fitting terms."
The man replied: "I cease not to do ill,
I have no wisdom and I say one thing
And do another, and snub all that greet me.
My stock is lies; I never help the right;
I break my pledge and fling nobility,
Both root and stem, to earth."
Khusrau Parwíz
Made answer: "May thine evil star ne'er change."
They gave him Rai by patent, so the wretch
Grew great by turpitude. They gave to him
Troops that had been dismissed. He left the court,
Famed for depravity. The miscreant,
When he arrived at Rai, put off all fear
Of God, and bade the gutters of the roofs
Be torn away: this gave him much delight,
And afterward he had all cats destroyed,
Which gave great umbrage to the householders.
Where'er he went he took with him a guide,
While in the front of them a herald walked,
Proclaiming: "If I see a gutter left,

[1] Two couplets omitted.

Or cat within a house, I will set fire
To house and field, and stone the inmates' heads."
He would turn out a place to find one drachm,
And vex its owner. All the people left
Their homes in terror and gave up their lands.
There were no gutters when the rain came down,
No watchman in the city. Through the foul
And ill-conditioned miscreant that came
From court to Rai that city was laid waste.
The sun beat down upon the people's heads,
The place was full of pain and wretchedness,
And not a soul regarded their distress.

§ 50

How Gurdya made Sport before Khusrau Parwíz and how he gave Rai to her

Thus was it till the month of Farwardín, C. 1988
And rose-leaves decked the surface of the earth,
Until the clouds' tears grew as large as hail,
And tulips filled the valleys and the plains,
Till all the dales were dappled like a pard,
And earth was coloured like brocade of Rúm.
The chieftains came to sport within the garths,
And to the uplands flocked all sheep and deer.
Khusrau perceived the garden's open gates,
The water-birds disporting on its streams,
And bade the trumpets sound. They carried thither
Jars of perfumes, sat down upon the grass,
Called out for wine and decked their souls with joy.
A man from Rai approached Gurdwí and told
All that had happened. He was grieved at heart,
And sought in his concern a remedy.
He told his sister: "Thou must tell the Sháh.

See if thou canst devise a scheme to make
His heart indifferent in this regard."
Anon Gurdya produced a kitten, clad
As 'twere a child, upon a courser trapped
With gold and jewels. In the kitten's ears
Were earrings and its claws were tulip-hued,
Its eyes were pitch-like, languishing like those
Of folk bemused, its cheeks were like the Spring.
It rode about the garden like a child
With saddle-flaps of gold. The Sháh laughed out,
And laughter took possession of the court.
"What," said he to Gurdya, "is thy desire,
My gracious lady?"
That resourceful dame
At once did reverence. "Exalted Sháh!"
She said, "grant Rai to me, be wise again,
Release the hearts of woeful folk from grief,
Recall that wretched mannikin from Rai,
And term him miscreant and malefactor,
For he doth ban the cats and wreck all gutters!"
Khusrau Parwíz laughed out at his wife's words,
And said: "Thou saucy shatterer of hosts!
I give to thee the city and the lands.
Send thither presently some upright man,
C. 1989 And call back that malignant one from Rai,
Like Áhriman, that loathly infidel."
The lady's fortune waxed continually
Beneath that royal and illustrious Tree.

§ 51

How Khusrau Parwíz portioned out his Realm

Thereafter when the Sháh's hand was extended,
When all folk wished him well, when other kings

Were subject to him, and his other lieges
Had been enriched, he chose out of Írán
Four times twelve thousand warlike cavaliers,
Brave and experienced, oped the ancient hoards
Filled by Pírúz and glorious Kubád,
Partitioned out the world in four and made
Appointments to the governments. He sent
Twelve thousand out of those illustrious men,
Shrewd cavaliers, deft wielders of the sword,
Toward the Rúman marches to safe-guard
That populous and glorious coast that troops
From Rúm might not attack Írán and lay
The country waste or any one encroach,
But be content with his own rank and fortune.
He chose moreover of the men of name
Out of Írán twelve thousand warlike horsemen
That they might march forth to Zábulistán
(They left a rose-garth for a gloomy land)[1]
And said to them: "If any one shall turn
Out of the way, not keeping his own place,
Restore him to the path with courteousness,
But in worse cases use the chain and pit.
Send spies about to keep you well apprised;
Ye will have need of outposts day and night,
And sleep not in your tents without a guard."
Out of the host he called twelve thousand others,
All magnates valorous and fond of fight,
And having given to them much advice
Dispatched them to the route of the Aláns,
And charged them with the gate-way of the West[2]
So that no enemy might pass thereby.
He bade the chiefs: "Be watchful and God guard you."
He chose and sent twelve thousand warriors more,
Such as were fit, to Khurásán, exhorting,

[1] "Ce pays *à terre* noire." Mohl. [2] Darband. See Vol. i. p. 16.

And greatly charging: "From Haitál to Chín
Let none set foot upon our land save those,
Devoted and attached to me, that are
Admitted with my knowledge and command.
C. 1990 In all the provinces I have full hoards
Available to all. When ye have need
Ask and live happy, prudent and secure."
He oped his treasuries' doors and seeing drachms
With the inscription of Hurmuzd he wept,
And gave them to the poor with further gifts
When they were clothed. He cut the heads off all
The adherents of Bandwí and intimates
Of foul-mouthed Gustaham who had rejoiced
O'er his sire's murder. Having made an end
Of cursing and revenge he wisely took
A new departure, portioning in four
The night and day, which make revolving time.
At one of these four seasons an archmage
Of goodly speech attended to inform
The Sháh about the host and world's affairs,
Who, if he noticed anything amiss
Among the people or the warriors,
Would ply forthwith the skirt of justice, learn
The facts, and find a way. Another time
Was given up to song and minstrelsy,
And quiet, careless session with his lords
As mighty men should do. The third was set
Apart for prayer and praising God, the fourth
For study of the starry sky above,
Its character, its nature, and its host.
The readers of the stars then stood before him
Because they were his guides to understanding;
But during half of this night-period
He sat among the Idols of Taráz.
He also made division of each month
In four parts that life might be pleasurable:

One for the riding-ground, for archery,
And polo with some noble to record;
Or for the chase among the hills and plains
To keep himself in health, and when he left
The chase by day or night the affluent
Would decorate his route. The second part
Was given up to chess and nard and tales
Of battle, while the third was for the sages,
The scribes and story-tellers, who in turn
Narrated to him stories of the past,
While in the fourth the Sháh received the envoys
Of other potentates and wrote his answers
To those exalted chiefs. With robes of honour C. 1991
The envoys, gratified and satisfied,
Would set forth from the court and journey home.
On that day too for all the provinces
He used to write out patents and bestow them
On all the chiefs. When the New Year began
At Farwardín, and sunshine in men's hearts
Relumed the Faith, he laid a treasure by,
Unknown to all his subjects, secretly.

§ 52

How Shírwí, the Son of Khusrau Parwíz, was born of Maryam with bad Auspices and how Khusrau Parwíz informed Cæsar

When he had reigned five years he had no peer,
And in the sixth year Cæsar's daughter bare him
An infant like the moon. 'Twas not the custom
To give the call to prayers[1] in infants' ears
If delicately nurtured. Fathers spake

[1] *i.e.* to proclaim loudly.

One name into their ears—a private one[1]—
The other name was publicly announced.
The Sháh in private called his son Kubád,
But publicly Shírwí of glorious race.
When of that night of birth there had elapsed
Three watches the astrologers approached
Khusrau Parwíz who asked: "What have all those
Who read the stars observed, what will result,
And what is this young world-lord's horoscope?"
They said: "Thou canst not scape the sky's decree.
The earth will be in turmoil through this child;
His army will not bless him. He withal
Will quit God's path. What need we further say?"
The upshot of their travail and those words
Unseemly grieved the Sháh's heart, and he said
Thus to the sages: "Take a better view.
Be careful that ye speak no word thereof
Before the Íránian chiefs."
He took good heed
Of that ill horoscope and laid it up
When he had sealed it with his royal signet.
The matter filled him with concern; he gave
No audience for a se'nnight and refrained
From chase and wine. None saw him for a space.
The chieftains all resorted to the archmage,
And held discourse at large to ascertain
What had befallen the illustrious Sháh,
And why he gave not audience to his lieges.
C. 1992 The high priest sought the Sháh, on hearing this,
And told the army's words. He answered thus:—
"Fate troubleth me, and I am all concern
About the process of the turning sky
Through what the astrologers have said."

[1] As a precaution against evil influences. Sometimes children were left un-named for a similar reason. *Cf.* Vol. i. pp. 8, 177, 179 and CMN, p. 36 *seq.*

He bade
The treasurer : " Bring forth the painted silk
With script therein."
The treasurer produced,
The archmage scanned heart-straitened, and was mute,
But in the end said : " God is all in all,
For He surpasseth all men's understanding.
Now if the blindly turning sky presenteth
An altered aspect to the questioner
How can concernment make it turn from ill ?
Why then should any sage suggest such things ?
May naught but joy be thine. Heed not their talk.
We reap as heaven soweth and perforce
Must trust thereto. While heaven itself shall last
At whiles will love and justice and at whiles
Strife and revenge prevail. From it the body
Hath gain and loss. The understanding soul
Is not afraid. The Maker be thy stay
And comforter, and fortune's head be laid
Upon thy lap."
Thereat Khusrau Parwíz
Smiled and then gave his mind to other things.
He called a trusty scribe, instructed him
At large, and bade him write to Cæsar thus :—
" Put on a crown fit for a king to wear,
For in the night Maryam hath borne a son,
Whose like thou ne'er hast seen. He needs must be
Both wise and fortunate, and through his virtues
Both worthy of the throne and bountiful.
So, as I do myself, live happily,
For joy and high estate pertain to thee."

§ 53

How Cæsar wrote a Letter to Khusrau Parwíz, sent Gifts, and asked for the Cross of Christ

Now Cæsar, when the letter reached him, saw
The superscription of Khusrau Parwíz,
And bade to blow the trumpet at his gate;
The realm resounded. They adorned the wastes
And ways in honour of Shírwí the son
Of Sháh Khusrau Parwíz; the voice of minstrels
Rose from the state of Rúm from end to end.
Folk went with many Crosses to the court,
The scent of roses and sweet perfumes rose.
Thus for seven days they joyed with harp and wine
C. 1993 O'er prince Shírwí while Cæsar on the eighth
Bade drivers with their caravans attend.
He loaded up with drachms a hundred camels,
And fifty with dínárs by way of largess,
Two hundred with gold-woven brocade of Rúm,
Thou wouldst have said: "The fabric is all gold,"
With forty golden tables made with feet
Of coral, fitting for the use of kings,
With gold and silver effigies of beasts
With gems for eyes,[1] with robes of beaver-skins,
With silk from Chín, and with a golden laver
Adorned with emeralds. He sent Maryam
A peacock made of gold, and many gems.
He sent as tribute also forty million
Dínárs of Rúm with forty watchful Rúmans
To guard it led by Khánagí—a man
Unmatched in wisdom. Thus with camelcers
Ten caravans went laden with dínárs.
When tidings reached the conquering Sháh: "An envoy

[1] *Cf.* Vol. vii. p. 36.

From Cæsar draweth nigh," he bade Farrukh,
A loyal marchlord, ruler of Nímrúz,
High-born, a warrior, and the army's Lustre,
To mount. With him went horsemen of the Sháh
With golden helms. When Khánagí descried
Those troops afar he boldly rode ahead
Until they reached the Sháh and that famed court.
On seeing his fair face and splendid throne
All louted to the ground and homaged him.
Then Khánagí, his face in dust, exclaimed :—
" O lord of justice, holy man ! may God,
The All-conquering, bless thee, mayst thou ever be
The Sháh and glad."
The chiefs arose and made
Room for him near the Sháh to whom he said :—
" Whose wisdom is like thine ? Thou art more bright
Than Sol in heaven, more lasting than the soul
Of eloquence. May this world never lack
A king like thee, and may time bear him fruit.
May none behold the day whereon thy will
Is frustrate ; be thy name writ on the sun.
May this world never lack thy head and crown,
This land thy host. From Cæsar salutation,
From us praise to this famous king of earth.
May all be dark to one that joyeth not, C. 1994
In his alliance. We have come from Rúm
With gifts and tribute to this famous land,
Come with philosophers withal lest any
Should feel aggrieved at us. Let him accept
From Cæsar goods and tribute and moreover
His blessing."
Smiled the Sháh upon that man
Of worship and they set for him a seat.
Khusrau Parwíz sent to the treasury
The gifts and said to him : " There needed not
Such pains ;" then to Kharrád, son of Barzín :—

" Read out this letter to the company."
The scribe, an eloquent and heedful man,
Scanned the address and said : " 'Tis ' to the great,
Exalt Khusrau Parwíz, that man of God,
The watchful ruler of a lovely land,
Whose crown and wisdom are God's gifts to him,
The world-lord and the son of Sháh Hurmuzd,
The glory of the crown and throne, from Cæsar,
The father of the mother of the prince
Of lion-name,[1] and may his fame and power
Endure. Be his height, Grace, and victory,
And may his days be all a New Year's Day.
May he rule o'er Írán and o'er Túrán,
In sovereignty without competitor,
For ever glad in heart and bright in soul,
For ever old in wit and young in fortune.
The noble monarchy of Gaiúmart,
The offspring of Húshang and Tahmúras,
Sire after sire, son after son, God grant
The stock ne'er fail. May holy God bless these,
The Mighty both in kingship and in Faith.
No horseman and no Spring is like to thee,
Like thee there is no picture in the halls ;
Thou hast all manliness and uprightness,
And may thy spirit look not on defeat.
In all Írán, Túrán, and Hindústán
From Turkistán to Rúm, the sorcerers' land,
God hath giv'n thee high birth with purity :
No holy mother e'er bare such a son.
When Farídún gave to Íraj Írán,
And took supremacy from Rúm and Chín,[2]
He from the first acclaimed Íraj and purged
His heart from guile and gloom. Thou hast no want,

[1] Shírwí (Sherwí) from " sher," a lion.
[2] Rúm and Chín (Túrán) were the portions of Salm and Túr, the elder brothers of Íraj. See Vol. 1. p. 189.

Thy fortune prospereth. and thou wouldst say
That God bestoweth majesty and charm
And manhood upon thee and robbeth others
Of their renown for manliness. As patrons
Of virtue, noble, bountiful, no member
Of their race e'er saw trouble. Tax and tribute
They laid on foes, and their ill-wishers bare,
As oxen do, their burdens. Since the days
Of Núshírwán (may wisdom make him young C. 199
For evermore !), whose peer hath never been,
And ne'er will be, as Sháh—the prudent king
By whom was reared a bulwark from the deep,[1]
So that they freed the whole wood of Nárwan
From Turkmans and the folk reposed, so freed
A vast expanse from enemies amid
The benisons of lords and underlings,
While Arabs, Indians, and Iránians
Girt up their loins before him—from the sea
Of Chín up to the land of the Khazars,
And from Armenia to the Eastern[2] gate,
The nobles of Haitál, Chách, Turkistán,
And Samarkand, although possessed of crowns,
Of Grace and splendour, all have been your lieges
Admittedly because the Sháhs were sprung
From Farídún and others had no right.
By this affinity that I have now
Contracted with thee, and increased thereby
My greatness by my wisdom, I rejoice
As those athirst, or herbs sun-parched, at water.
Let the shrewd world-lord make me glorious,
And answer me this day. I ask the king
To grant a wish of mine. It is a matter
Of no account to him. Among thy treasures
There is the Cross of Christ : observe and ye
Will find it so. It hath been there for long.

[1] See Vol. vii. p. 239. [2] From Cæsar's point of view.

Now let the Sháh restore it and so doing
Confer a favour on us great and small;
Then all the world will bless him, saying thus:—
'Let time and earth without him be no more.'
'Twill be a favour to me; I will pray
All day and three fourths of the night for him.
Let him accept the tribute, toll, and gifts
Sent by me to his folk, and in return
I will accept the Cross by way of thanks.
Ne'er may the wicked look upon thy face!
Our feasts and ritual will prove glorious,
Our Faith become resplendent in the world,
As will our holy day, our Sunday, God
Will everywhere be worshipped, and the sad
Will kiss the Cross and burn thereto much incense.
That time will be delightful to my heart,
For ye will purge your hearts of all the vengeance
That hath come down to us from Farídún,
And privily possessed both Salm and Túr;
Our realm will rest from forays and all feuds.
Our wives and children have been carried off,
In every way our hearts have been distressed,
C. 1996 But our affinity hath calmed the world,
And all insensate passions are appeased.
May the Creator bless thee and thy land."
The Sháh heard Cæsar's letter to the end
With secret joy; the days of mighty kings
Had been restored in him. He gave great praise
To Khánagí and said: "Be thou no more
A stranger."
They made ready for that worthy,
That man both shrewd and brave, as dwelling-place
Two halls delightsome, and provided him
With all things needful. Khánagí first viewed
The appointed dwelling, then rejoined the Sháh,
And companied that worshipper of God

At feast and entertainment, wine and chase.
On this wise with the Sháh a month they spent
In all good fellowship and much content.

§ 54

How Khusrau Parwíz answered Cæsar's Letter and sent Gifts

Khusrau Parwíz wrote when the month had passed
A letter couched in wise and happy terms,
Beginning thus: "The blessings of the Great
Be on the man who keepeth pure within,
Who seeth God's work both in good and ill,
And feareth none beside but praiseth Him—
The Master of the sun—who thus sustaineth
The heavenly sphere: and first, thy praises of me,
As instanced in thy letter, I acknowledge,
And I am gratified that they proceed
From sages eminent. I have received
Thy splendid[1] treasure sent and only wish
That thou hadst less concerned thyself. Since God,
The holy Ruler of the world, hath raised
Thy realm o'er Spica, so as to outprize
Hind and Sakláb, Chín and Khazar, what manhood,
What knowledge, virtue, and what Faith are thine,
And with God's blessing! When I was in trouble
Thou didst assist me and remove my griefs
Most wisely. Now I am more gratified
In thine affinity and virtuous daughter
Than any other chief in child, in land,
And virtuous kin. The other chiefs all turned
Their backs on me and passed me by as vile,

[1] Reading with B

But thou didst take the place of sire to me,
C. 1997 And more. I recognise that thou hast been
A father noble and benevolent.
Next, what thou sayest of the holy Faith.
About your Sundays, fastings, and thanksgivings,
The scribe hath read to me. The words are both
Apt and acceptable, but still I shame not
For mine old Faith—Húshang's—than which the world
Hath seen naught better, teaching as it doth
All justice, goodness, reverence, and love,
With observation of the stars of heaven.
Sure am I that God is and ever strive
To follow justice. We do not allow
That God hath any partner, son, and consort.
He is and ever will be manifest,
Not comprehended by our thoughts but still
To me the warrant of His own existence.
Now as for these old tales recalled by thee
About the Cross of Christ: a well based Faith
Hath reason for its guide. Concerning those
Who, as thou say'st, are sad because their Prophet
Was crucified yet call Him 'Son of God,'
And say that on the Cross He laughed, if He
Was son He hath but gone back to his Father;
Be not concerned about some rotten wood.
If foolish utterances proceed from Cæsar
His letter will be laughed at by the old.
The Cross of Jesus, which Ardshír the Sháh
Put in his treasury, is not worth the pains,
And if I send it from Írán to Rúm
The land will laugh at me, the archimages
Think that I have turned Christian and a priest
Upon Maryam's account! Demand of me
Whatever else thou wilt: the way is open.
I look with admiration on thy gifts,

For which thou hast encountered so much toil,
And have bestowed them on Shírwí that so
I might inaugurate his treasury.
I am concerned about Írán and Rúm,
My thoughts all night are like a wood, I fear
That when Shírwí is grown mishap will come
Upon both lands. Beginning with great Salm,
Prolonged by that old vengeful Wolf Sikandar,
What with new feuds and old, the whole affair
Will be revived. In all things that thy daughter
Hath said to me know that she hath restored
Thy crown to youth. She is a Christian still,
And heedeth not my words. She is at ease
And joyful, triumphing in this young Tree
Of royalty. The World-lord help thee ever;
May fortune's head be always on thy lap."
They sealed the letter with the royal signet, C 195
Kharrád, son of Barzín, took charge thereof,
And then they oped the doors of treasure-hoards
Collected by the Sháh for many a day,
And in the first place eight score money-bags,
For coins which Persians call "paidáwasís,"[1]
They filled till they were hard as stones with jewels,
Then sealed them tightly. Every bag was worth,
According to the reckoning on the roll,
One hundred thousand drachms. There were besides
Of pieces of brocade from Chín one hundred
And forty thousand, some of cloth of gold
With jewelled patterns, and five hundred pearls
Of purest water and like water-drops,
With eight score jewels like pomegranate-seeds,
Such as a skilful jeweller would prize,
While of the native produce of each land,
Of Hindústán and Chín, Barbar and Misr,
And raiment from Shustar—all that the chiefs

[1] See Vol. vii. p. 95 *note*.

Esteem—he sent three hundred camel-loads
To noble Cæsar. He gave Khánagí
A grander robe of honour than he gave
To strangers or his kin, with garments, steeds,
Thrones, trappings, and all kinds of noted stuffs.
In this way too he made up camel-loads,
Ten out of them consisting of dínárs
To give to the philosophers of Rúm.
The embassy went on its way rejoicing,
While all the mighty men called down upon
That prowest king of earth their benison.

THE STORY OF KHUSRAU PARWÍZ AND SHÍRÍN

§ 55

The Prelude

Now will I tell again old histories
About Shírín and Sháh Khusrau Parwíz.
The book containing them is antiquate,
But that same story bring I up to date
To serve as a memorial of the Great.
Six times ten thousand couplets there will be,
Well ordered, banishers of misery.
For thrice a thousand couplets one may look
In vain as yet in any Persian book,
And if one were to cancel each false strain
In sooth five hundred barely would remain.
That one—a bounteous king and of such worth
And lustre mid the monarchs of the earth—
Should disregard these histories is due
To slanderers and mine ill fortune too.

They envied this my work and with the king
They have prevailed to spoil my marketing;
But when the royal potentate shall read C. 199
My pleasant histories with all good heed
I shall be gladdened by his treasures here,
And may no ill from foe approach him near.
My book may then recall me to his mind,
The seed of mine endeavours fruitage find.
Be his the crown and throne while time shall run,
And may his destiny outshine the sun.
A rustic minstrel wise and old once said:—
"To know is that which giveth man most aid;
The tale of grief and joy he needs must tell,
Taste all the bitter and the salt as well,
For youths though knowing and of noble birth
Can only by experience compass worth."[1]

§ 56

How Khusrau Parwíz loved Shírín, how they parted, how he met her again while hunting and sent her to his Bower[2]

Khusrau Parwíz like other paladins,
While yet his father lived, was young and bold,
And had for mate Shírín who was to him
As his bright eyes. He cared for none beside
Among the fair and daughters of the night,[3]
But parted from her for a while when he
Came to be king and had to roam the world
Unrestingly, for all his work was then
To fight Bahrám Chúbína while the Fair

[1] There is no break in the original here.
[2] Part of this heading is not in the original.
[3] "les filles des grands." Mohl.

Wept day and night o'er his defect in love.[1]
It was so that one day he willed to hunt,
And all things were prepared as in the times
Of former Sháhs. They took three hundred steeds,
Caparisoned with gold, for that famed King,
While of his loyal servitors there fared
Afoot a thousand and eight score, and carried
Two-headed darts. A thousand and two score
Bare scimitars and wore brocade above
Their coats of mail. Seven hundred falconers
Came next with royal falcons, sparrow-hawks,
And gos-hawks, while behind them mounted men—
Three hundred keepers of the cheetahs—fared,
And pards and lions chained three score and ten,
All harnessed with brocade of Chín, all trained,
And furnished with gold muzzles. For the deer-hunt
There were eight hundred hounds with golden leashes.
Behind them came, to harp on hunting-days,
C. 2000 Two thousand minstrels all on camel-back,
And crowned with gold. Five hundred camels went
Ahead, and 'twas their special task to bear
The seats, pavilions, and tent-enclosures,
The tents and shielings for the quadrupeds.
There were two hundred slaves to kindle censers,
And to burn aloe-wood and ambergris
Therein. Before the Sháh two hundred youths
Of those attending on him went with posies
Of saffron and narcissus that the scent
Might meet him from all quarters as he came,
Preceded by a hundred water-bearers
To sprinkle all the road, and thou hadst said :—
" They pour rose-water over ambergris "
Lest any sudden blast might scatter dust
Upon that Sháh of glorious lineage.
Three hundred youthful princes rode with him,

[1] The section in the original ends here.

Arrayed in yellow, red, and violet.
The king of kings had with him Káwa's standard,
Wore crown and earrings, royal cloth of gold,
A golden girdle, armlets, and a torque,
And jewelled buttons.
Now Shírín, on hearing :—
" The host, preceded by the mighty Sháh,
Hath come," put on a yellow vest musk-scented,
And made her visage like pomegranate-blooms.
She wore a red robe of brocade from Rúm
With patterns jewelled on a ground of gold,
And placed upon her head a royal crown
Set with the jewels of a paladin.
She left her jocund hall, went on the roof,
And in her day of youth showed naught of joy,
But waited till Khusrau Parwíz arrived,
Then let the tear-drops fall upon her cheeks.
At sight of him she rose, showed all her height,
And spake to him with sweetness of the past.
The twin Narcissi bathed the Cercis-bloom,
The first all languishment, the last all health.
All tears[1] and beauty, eagerly she cried
Thus in the olden tongue : " O Sháh ! Great Lion !
O framed to be leader of the host !
O blesséd hero, lion-conqueror !
Where is that love of thine ? Where are the tears
Of blood once stanched by looking on Shírín ?
Where all those days which once we turned to nights,
Tears in our hearts and eyes, smiles on our lips ?
Where are our loves, our troth, our bonds, our oaths ? "
E'en as she spake she shed blood-drops of gall
Upon her guise of lapis-lazuli,[2]
And when he heard and looked and saw Shírín C. 2001
He wept for her, his face hued like the sun.
He sent a led horse all betrapped with gold,

[1] Or " sheen." [2] " sur son visage en deuil." Mohl.

And forty honest eunuchs, men of Rúm,
To bear her to his golden bower, his house
Begemmed, then went to hunt with hawks and cheetahs.
When he had had enough of hill and plain
He went back to the city joyfully.
They decked it and the roads because the Sháh
Was coming from the chase; the trumpet-calls,
And sounds of singing, ravelled all the air,
And thus the royal Fruit of that tall Bough[1]
Passed through the city to his lofty home,
While from his bower Shírín came forth and kissed
His feet and hands and head. At that time spake
The Sháh to the high priest: "Indulge no thoughts
Save good concerning us, bestow on me
This fair-cheeked lady as my lawful wife,
And publish the glad tidings to the world."
So he espoused her in the ancient way
With all the rites and sanctions of his day.

§ 57

How the Nobles heard that Shírín had come to the Bower of Khusrau Parwíz and how they advised him and were satisfied with his Answer

Now when these tidings of Khusrau Parwíz
Came to the nobles and the host: "Shírín
Is in the Sháh's bower and the old affair
Hath been revived," the city was aggrieved,
And full of care, distress, and malisons.
For three days none approached him. On the fourth,
When the world's Lustre shone, he sent and called

[1] The Sásánian race. "Lorsque cet homme à la stature royale et aux membres puissants." Mohl.

The chiefs and set them on the nobles' seats.
He said to them: "For days I have not seen you,
And grieve thereat. I am concerned for fear
Of your concernment and solicitous
About your dealings."
Thus he spake but none
Replied; they simply held their tongues, but those
Aggrieved and angry looked at the high priest,
Who seeing this rose to his feet and thus
Addressed Khusrau Parwíz: "O righteous judge!
Thou hast in youth's day come to be the king,
Hast seen from fortune much of good and ill,
And heard how in the world no stint thereof C. 200
Ariseth from the deeds of those in power;
How when a noble race hath been defiled
Defiled too are the mighty sprung therefrom.
Know this, that never hath a noble son
Laid hands upon his father's life[1] unless
His mother had befouled the seed and smirched
Her offspring. Thus Zahhák, the Arab, slew
His sire and brought ill on Jamshíd's head, thus
Sikandar, who poured out Dárá's blood, brought
So great a fire of feud upon ourselves
Although his father called Dárá his brother,
While Failakús was wont to call him son.[2]
When sire is pure and mother virtueless
Know that no holy son will come to birth.
None seeketh for uprightness in perverseness
If he is fain to fill his sleeves with right.
Our hearts are sad because a potent dív
Is now the great king's mate, for had there been
No other woman in Írán e'en then
How could Khusrau Parwíz thus honour her?
If but Shírín were absent from his bower

[1] Blood in the original.
[2] In this and the preceding line the pronouns refer to Sikandar.

His face would be resplendent everywhere.
Thine ancestors, those wise and upright men,
Ne'er would have thought of this."
When he had spoken
At great length, and the king of kings returned
No answer, he said thus: "At dawn to-morrow
We will assemble here and haply have
The Sháh's reply; our talk was long to-day."
Next day they rose at dawn and went to offer
Their service to the Sháh, and some one said:—
"It is not right to speak such words," another:—
"The words were wisdom's mates," a third: "He will
Reply to-day, and what he saith should make
For happiness."
The archimages all
Set forward and with stately steps approached
The Sháh. The magnates took their seats and then
A man came with a bowl all furbished bright
As Sol and passed before the chiefs in turn.
Now warm blood had been poured therein. He set
It gently by the Sháh. All turned away
Their faces and the assembly was all talk.
Khusrau Parwíz looked on them and they quaked.
He said to the Íránians: "Whose blood
Is this and wherefore is it set before me?"
"'Tis noisome blood," the archimage replied,
"And so polluteth him that seeth it."
When he had spoken thus men took the bowl,
2003 Passed it from hand to hand, cleansed it of blood,
And scoured it out with water and with sand.
Then when that noisome bowl had been made bright
And clean, the washer filled it full of wine,
And sprinkled it with musk and with rose-water.
The bowl shone out sun-bright. Khusrau Parwíz
Said to the archmage: "Verily the bowl
Appeareth otherwise!"

The archmage said :—
" Live ever more ! Good hath appeared from ill.
Thy bidding hath turned Hell to Paradise,
And from ill-doing good is manifest."
" Shírín," Khusrau Parwíz said, " to this city
Was e'en as this disgustful bowl of bane,
But in my bower she is a bowl of wine,
And savoureth as we. She first obtained
Her ill repute through me ; she did not court
The friendship of the Great."
All blessed him, saying :—
" May earth ne'er lack thy crown and throne. They grow
In goodness whom thou makest good, and mighty
Are those whom thou hast made so in the world,
For to be Sháh, archmage, and chief is thine,
And have withal on earth the Grace divine."

§ 58

How Shírín murdered Maryam and how Khusrau Parwíz put Shírwí in Bonds

Thenceforth the greatness of the Sháh increased,
And what had been a moon became a sun.
His days were spent with Cæsar's daughter ; she
Was chief within his bower. Because of her
Shírín was sore, her cheeks were ever wan
With envy till at last she gave her bane,
And Cæsar's lovely daughter ceased to be.
None wotted of the trick because Shírín
Kept her own counsel, and Khusrau Parwíz
Gave her the gilded chamber when Maryam
Had been deceased one year.

Now when Shírwí
Was sixteen years of age, and in his stature
O'ertopped the men of thirty, his sire brought
The erudite to educate the prince,
While by command an archimage maintained
A kindly watch upon him day and night.
It happened that the archimage one morn
Went to his patron's and returning found
Shírwí as usual occupied in sport,
Saw that he had in front of him Kalíla
And Dimna[1] but that the fierce youth was holding
In his left hand a wolf's claw cut and dried,
And in his right a buffalo's horn, and these
He beat together as the humour took him.
Such actions, pastime, and behaviour
Vexed the archmage's heart who boded ill
From that wolf's claw, the buffalo's horn, and manners
Of that rude youth, and was in great concern
At what might happen through that ill-disposed
And luckless prince in times to come for he
Had seen the horoscope and made inquiries
Of minister and treasurer. He sought
The high-priest and reported thus to him :—
" This youth is wholly given up to play."
The high-priest went at once and told the Sháh,
Who kept a careful eye upon his son,
On whose account his ruddy cheeks grew pale
In trouble for the future of the world.
His heart was full of pain, his liver ached
At what the readers of the stars had told him.
He said : " I wait the Lord of Heaven's will."
When twenty-three years of the reign had passed,
And when Shírwí had gotten stalwart limbs,
The Great King was displeased because the child
Was lusty grown but not as he desired.

[1] See Vol. vii. pp. 382, 423.

The monarch's mind, which else had been all smiles,
Was pained thereat, and he confined the youth
To his own palace with a foster-brother,
Disgraced on his account, and all that were
Attached to him or went to him for counsel:
There were above three thousand more or less.
Their palaces, connected each with each,
Were as a whole the prison of Shírwí.
They decked, draped, carpeted, and furnished them
With provand and the means of giving largess,
With male and female slaves, with wine and minstrels.
The place was all dínárs. The inmates passed
Their time in song and feast while forty men
Kept guard.

And now as episodes recite
Tales told by men who thought and spake aright.

§ 59

How Khusrau Parwíz made the Throne of Tákdís

Of that throne which thou knowest as Tákdís,
And which Khusrau Parwíz set up within
The hippodrome, the origin occurred
Beneath Zahhák—that loathly infidel—
For when heroic Farídún came forth,
And from the Arabs carried off the style
Of kingship, on Mount Damáwand there dwelt
A man who was distinguished by the Sháh.
His name was Jahn, son of Barzín, a power C. 200
Within the realm, and for that Sháh renowned
He made a throne and studded it with gems,
So that Sháh Farídún rejoiced o'er him
When that grand throne was finished, and bestowed
Drachms thirty thousand with a golden crown,
And pair of earrings on him, and had written

On his behalf a patent for Sarí,
And for Ámul. The coast-lands thus assigned
Resembled Paradise.[1] When Farídún
Bestowed Írán upon Íraj—the youngest
Of his illustrious sons—he gave withal
Three things—this very throne, the ox-head mace
To serve as his memorial in the world,
And thirdly what the just Sháh used to term
" The Seven Founts "—a jewel. When Íraj
Departed these were left and Minúchihr
Had joy thereof. Each wearer of the crown
Made some addition to that throne, and when
It came to Kai Khusrau, the fortunate,
He added greatly to its height. It passed
In due succession to Luhrásp and so
On to Gushtásp who, when he saw it, cried :—
" The work of mighty men must not be hidden,"
And to Jámásp that man of worship said :—
What canst thou add to this achievement ? Scan
It everywhere and see what supplement
Thereto will win us praises after death."
Jámásp beheld the throne and saw therein
A key wherewith to open wisdom's door.
Upon it he inscribed the heavenly host,
Which hold the secrets of futurity,
And there portrayed by order of the Sháh
The planet-forms from Saturn to the moon.
The throne thus reached the era of Sikandar,
Each Sháh that looked upon it adding somewhat—
Gold, silver, ivory, and ebony—
Until through ignorance at one fell swoop
Sikandar broke it up ; howbeit the nobles
Concealed and handed down full many a shard.
Thus was it till Ardshír began his reign,
And then the name e'en had grown obsolete.

[1] *Cf.* Vol. ii. p. 27.

He found no traces and so made another,
Not as he would, and had small joy therein.
He died and left it as thereafter did
Those that succeeded. When Khusrau Parwíz
Sat on the throne and all the chiefs were loyal
They spake about that other royal throne, C. 2006
And its past history. Thus said the Sháh :—
" Ye chiefs ! I ask a favour of my lieges
So that I may remake that throne renowned
To keep my name in mind. I need the plan
Drawn by Jámásp—the favourite of the sky—
The one adopted by Gushtásp, the Sháh,
Assisted by Jámásp's advice and skill."
An archimagus reproduced the plan
Whereat the exalt Khusrau Parwíz was glad,
And, this obtained, made haste to reconstruct
With joy the throne, brought forth that of Ardshír,
And gathered all the craftsmen of Írán.
So in the days of that victorious Sháh
They reconstructed that resplendent throne.
The artificers came out of Rúm and Chín,
Makrán, Baghdád, and from Írán itself.
Of craftsmen there were one and sixty score,
Intent upon the fashioning thereof,
And each had thirty workers under him—
Men out of Rúm, Párs, and Baghdád. The Sháh
Commanded all to labour earnestly
To have the throne completed in two years,
And when it was set up high fortune shone.
The height thereof was five score royal cubits[1]
If thou wilt add thereto three score and ten;
The breadth six score for 'twas less broad than high.
A different carpet was laid down each morning
Throughout the month,[2] and seven score thousand plaques

[1] A royal cubit=a fathom. [2] Couplet omitted.

Of gold with patterns fashioned of turquoise
Were set upon the throne, while every nail
And clamp were solid silver; each of them
Weighed sixty-six miskáls. When Sol displayed
Its lamp in Aries the desert lay
Behind the throne which fronted garden-wards,
But when Sol raged in Leo then the back
Was turned toward it;[1] in the month of Tír—
The time for fruit and festival—the throne
Stood fronting toward the garden and the fruits
To catch their scents; in Winter, in the days
Of wind and wet, none felt them seated thus;
The top was all shut in right royally
With beaver-skins and sables. A thousand balls
Withal of gold and silver glowed like brands[2]
Upon the fire, each five and twenty score
Miskáls in weight and coral-hued with heat.
C. 2007 One half was in the fire, the other half
Was turned towards the noble warriors.
The host of heaven, planets, Zodiac,
The bright moon in whatever Sign soe'er,
And all the bodies, fixed or wandering,
Were visible to the astronomer,
Who saw what portion of dark night had passed,
And how much sky had moved athwart the earth.
Among these tables some were made of gold,
And what a wealth of jewels was therein!
Not e'en an expert could compute their tale.
The cheapest ran to some three score dínárs
And ten; seven hundred would not purchase some,
So strike an average. Full many a ruby
Was there whose value none could estimate:
They lit the night like Venus in the sky.
Upon the throne-steps were three rows of seats

[1] The sun.
[2] "Les valets de garde-robe faisaient chauffer au feu," etc. Mohl.

Enriched with gems. From one row to the next
There were four steps of gold inlaid with jewels.
One row, whose ornaments were shaped like heads
Of rams, took thence its name; the next above
Was known as "Lapis-lazuli" as higher
Than wind or dust-clouds, while the third was all
Turquoise, and every one that saw it burned
With longing. Rural chiefs and underlings
Sat on the Rams' Heads' row while cavaliers—
Men un-affeared upon the day of battle—
Sat on the cirque of lapis-lazuli.
The turquoise seat was for the minister
That was engaged in governing the realm,
And he that sat there must be wise and loyal.
A fabric was spread out of cloth of gold
Two score and seventeen cubits long, its fringe
All strung with jewels held by golden threads.
A map of heaven was inscribed thereon
Where Saturn, Mars, Sol, Jupiter,[1] and Venus,
With Mercury and shining Luna, showed
The fortunes of the Sháh; there too appeared
The Seven Climes, and peers of Párs and Rúm;[2]
The seven and forty Sháhs,[3] their faces, thrones,
And crowns, were shown, those of the kings of kings,
Of woven gold. The fabric was unique.
A man of Chín, unrivalled in such work,
Had given seven years to weaving it.
One New Year at Urmuzd of Farwardín
He came before the monarch of Írán, C. 2008
And brought that royal carpet to the Sháh:
The nobles let him pass. He laid it down
On New Year's Day. The Sháh's joy was complete.

[1] Reading with P. [2] *Id*
[3] Khusrau Parwíz himself was only the forty-third Sháh. Sháh, however, may be used here in a more general sense so as to embrace Siyáwush, Asfandiyár, and others. Mohl has "quarante-huit."

That carpet gave an opportunity
For mirth : they called for wine and minstrelsy.

§ 60

The Story of Sarkash and Bárbad, the Minstrel, and Khusrau Parwíz

There was a minstrel who was named Sarkash—
An expert—who acclaimed the king of kings
With all felicitations on the harp,
While nobles showered jewels over him,
And hailed him as the Grace of majesty,
What while the Sháh grew greater year by year.
Now in the nine and twentieth of his kingship,
When none fared ill at court, Bárbad heard tell
Thereof, for all folk said to him : " The world-lord
Affecteth minstrelsy in private life,
And thou, if thou wert introduced to him,
Wouldst overtop Sarkash."
Thereat the man
Became ambitious and though well to do
Departed to the Sháh's court from his province,
And noted all the minstrels there. Sarkash,
On hearing him perform, was vexed at heart,
And, all confounded at such minstrelsy,
Approached the audience-chamberlain, bestowed
A present on him of dínárs and drachms,
And said : " There is a minstrel at the gate,
Who is my better both in years and skill.
He must not come before Khusrau Parwíz
For I am waxing old and he is young."
The keeper of the door, on hearing this,
Refused the new musician audience,
And so Bárbad, whenever he approached,

Found his employment and his profit nil.
When he despaired of being heard he sought
The royal pleasance with his harp. The gardener,
A man by name Mardwí, revived his hopes,
Because at the New Year the Sháh was wont
To hold a two weeks' feast within that pleasance.
Bárbad approached Mardwí forthwith, became
Friends that same day and said: "Thou wouldest say
That we are soul and body. I desire
A boon—the merest trifle. When the world-lord
Shall come to revel hither give to me
The means of seeing him, myself unseen."[1]
Mardwí replied: "I will; my love for thee C. 2009
Shall oust reflection."
When the Sháh took order
For visiting the garth the gardener's heart
Was like a shining lamp. He went and told
Bárbad: "The Sháh is coming to the pleasance."
Bárbad dressed all in green and took his harp,
Prepared to sing of glory and of war,
And went to where the Sháh would be who had
Each Spring a fresh spot for his festival.
There was a verdant cypress full[2] of leaf,
Whose branches, like the battle of Pashan,
Extended far and wide. With harp on breast
The minstrel climbed it and abode until
The king came from his palace to the pleasance:
The gardener had the spot in readiness.
There came a fay-faced reveller with wine
While in the monarch's hand there was a cup;
The world-lord took the liquor from the youth;
Its crimson made the crystal disappear.
Now when the sun turned sallow, but abode

[1] Couplet omitted.
[2] Gashan. Firdausí might have used this adjective as a rhyme-word in his alleged competition with the three poets (see Vol. iii. p. 15) but preferred the more erudite Pashan.

Until night turned to lapis-lazuli,
The minstrel in that cypress took his harp,
And sang a royal ditty. In that tree
He sang a lay so charming that the Sháh,
That man of wakeful fortune, was amazed.
The melody which that sweet voice gave forth
Was that which now thou callest Dádáfríd.[1]
The company were in astonishment,
And everyone had his own view thereon.
The playing made Sarkash like one insane;
He recognised the source, but held his peace,
And thought: "None but Bárbad can play like this,
Or knoweth thus the song of paladins."
The Sháh gave orders to his lords: "Search all
The pleasance."
They searched long and came again,
While shrewd Sarkash observed: "No marvel 'tis,
So fortune-favoured is the Sháh, that rose
And cypress-tree should serve him as musicians.
For ever may his head and crown endure."
Then the cup-bearer brought another cup,
And as the king received it from the youth,
So fair of face, the minstrel preluded
In other fashion and forthwith began
A different song—that called Paikar-i-Gurd,[2]
A name suggested by the words. The minstrel
Sang and the Sháh gave ear, drank to the voice,
And bade: "Produce this man and all within
The garden."
So they searched the garden through,
And carried lights beneath the trees, but saw
C. 2010 Naught but the willows and the cypresses,
And pheasants pacing underneath the rose.

[1] "The Source of Justice."
[2] "The Battle of the Brave." This and the preceding are musical terms.

The king of kings called for another cup,
And raised his head to hear the voice. Again
There came the singing to another tune
Upon the harp—the tune called Sabz dar sabz,[1]
A melody employed in magic arts.
On hearing it Khusrau Parwíz arose,
And that adorner of the garth demanded
A cup of wine that held a man.[2] He drank
The sparkling wine off at a draught and cried :—
" An angel this, all musk and ambergris,
For if he were a dív he would not sing,
Or know to play the harp ![3] Find out the player.
Search all the garden and the flower-beds
To left and right, for I will fill his mouth
And lap with gems, and he shall be chief minstrel."
Now when the singer heard the monarch's voice,
And speech so kind and welcome, he descended
The branches of the straight-stemmed cypress, fared
Glad and triumphant, came and laid his face
Upon the dust. Khusrau Parwíz said : " Speak.
What man art thou ? "
" O Sháh ! a slave am I,"
He answered, " and live only by thy voice."
He told all that had happened from the first,
And who had been his friend. The king rejoiced,
Like roses in the Spring-tide to behold him,
Then spake thus to Sarkash : " Unskilful one,
Like colocynth while he is sugar-like !
Why didst thou bar his access to me thus ?
Thy harp is banished from this company."
Then while Bárbad sang on the monarch quaffed,
And drained the jewelled cup until his head

[1] " Green on green," anticipating Marvell's " green thought in a green shade " Also a musical term.

[2] See Vol. i. p. 290 *note*.

[3] In the earlier parts of the Sháhnáma dívs sometimes are represented as being accomplished. See Vol. i. p 127, Vol. ii. p 31.

Inclined to sleep, whereat with watered pearls
He filled the singer's mouth. Bárbad became
Chief minstrel and renowned among the great.
The epoch of Bárbad hath past and gone :
May ill be never thy companion,
For since the day will pass alike of chief,
And underling, why should the sage eat grief ?
Full many have gone—both chief and underling—
And I from slumber wish no wakening.
When six and sixty years have passed of life
It is not good for one to be at strife.
When I have ended these my famous lays
The country-side will echo with my praise.
Thenceforth for me not death but life shall last,
For I have flung the seed of words broad-cast,
And all of Faith, of counsel, and sound lore
Will sing my praise when I shall be no more.

§ 61

How Khusrau Parwíz built the Palace[1] *of Madá'in*

C. 2011 I will retell the tale of Madá'in,
Tell of the palace of Khusrau Parwíz.
A Persian shrewd of heart, o'er whom had passed
Years four times thirty, said : Khusrau Parwíz
Sent men to Rúm, Hind, Chín, and other lands
Inhabited, and from all climes there came
Three thousand famed artificers, of whom
He chose two hundred—masters of their craft,
Who knew the use of bricks and mortar well—
Out of Írán, Ahwáz, and from the Rúmans.
Of these he next chose thirty and from them

[1] City in text.

Two Rúmans and one Persian, from which three
They chose a Rúman matchless in the world.
That expert came before Khusrau Parwíz,
And held discourse of plan and elevation.
That Rúman worshipful, that scientist
Surpassed in speech the Persian. Said the Sháh :—
" Accept this contract at my hands and heed
These mine instructions : I require a building
Such that although my sons and race shall dwell
Therein for many a year it will not fall
To ruin through the rain or snow or sun."
The expert undertook the Sháh's commission,
And said : " For this thing I am competent."
Ten royal cubits deep he excavated,
(A royal cubit is five common ones)[1]
And laid foundations made of stone and mortar
To form a solid basis. When the walls
Belonging to the palace had been reared
He came before the master of the world,
And said : " Let now the Sháh appoint a man,
Exceeding wise and well advanced in years,
And send out to the works this man approved
Together with some trusty archimages."
The Sháh appointed men as he was asked,
Who went and made inspection of the walls.
The artist brought silk which the company
Turned to a slender cord by twisting it.
Then from the wall-top of the royal palace
He measured to the level of the ground,
And after measuring the twisted cord
In presence of the Sháh's commissioners
He took it to the royal treasury,
And having sealed it gave it to the keeper ;
Then going to the court said to the Sháh :—
" The palace-walls have risen to the moon,

[1] Reading with P. and T.

But though the Sháh bade : ' Haste ! ' I will not urge
The work for forty days but let it settle.
The Sháh selected me, and when the time
Is ripe the palace-wall shall be as Saturn.
Let not the Sháh's wrath aggravate my toils."
Khusrau Parwíz replied : " Why askest thou
Such a delay from me, thou malcontent ?
Thou must not stop the work but shalt not want
For gold or silver."
By the Sháh's command
They gave the artist thirty thousand drachms
Lest he should take it ill. That honest workman
Knew that experts would blame him when he built
The palace hastily and, if it fell,
That he himself would lose his livelihood.
That night he disappeared ; none saw him more.
Khusrau Parwíz when told : " Farghán hath fled,"
Poured out upon the speaker all his wrath,
And said : " How could a dullard give himself
Such airs before me ? "
Then he bade : " Survey
The work and put in prison all the Rúmans."
He said moreover : " Bring artificers,
And gather mortar, stones, and massive bricks."
Albeit those that viewed the walls took flight
Both from the Sháh and realm, and he was forced
To leave the work alone and turned his thoughts
Upon Ahwáz if haply he might find
An architect that such an enterprise
Might not continue headless very long.
He sought for one for three years but they found
None of surpassing worth, and people still
Talked much about the former architect,
Who in the fourth year reappeared. A man
Of prudence and of Grace divine informed
Khusrau Parwíz and presently the Rúman

Himself came swift as dust.
" Thou criminal ! "
The Sháh said, " say what disability
Was in the work to make thee lose both wealth
And Paradise ? "
The Rúman said : " If now
The king will send me with a trusty man
I will explain to him about my doings,
And pardon will ensue on explanation."
The Sháh dispatched them and they left the palace,
The noble artist and king's confidant.
The clever Rúman took the measuring-line,
And with the Sháh's own representative
Tried the wall's height and found that it had sunk
Seven cubits. Then they carried to the Sháh
The line. The expert's comrade made report.
The Rúman then spake thus : " If I had carried C. 2013
The buildings to their height no wall, O Sháh !
No vaulting and no work had stood, and I
Could not have stayed at court."
Khusrau Parwíz
Saw that he spake, as all should do, the truth,
Freed those in prison, whether ill-disposed
Or innocent, and gave the architect
Ten purses of dínárs and to the imprisoned
Full many a gift. Thus much time passed away.
The Sháh was eager for the work's completion,
And after seven years it was achieved,
And was approved by wise Khusrau Parwíz,
Who gave the architect much honour, land,
Dínárs and drachms and praise. All went to view
That palace, and the Sháh was wont to spend
His New Year there. None ever saw a structure
Like that or heard from famous architects
Of such. A ring of gold cast for the purpose
Hung from the ceiling of the cupola,

And from the ring a chain of ruddy gold
With jewelled links. Whene'er the king of kings
Ascended to his throne of ivory
They used to hang the crown upon this chain,
And when he took his seat on New Year's Day
The nearest were the favoured archimages,
The next below the chiefs, the mighty men,
And commissaries, lower down the merchants
And other traders, lower still the poor,
And those that laboured for their daily bread,
And, lowest, many maimed in hand or foot,
Or cast down mangled at the palace-gate.
Then from the hall would proclamation come
That used to stir all hearts: "All ye that are
The subjects of the monarch of the world!
Be not heart-darkened and dispirited.
The cares of all that look up to this height
Shall end, but look beyond the royal throne,
And take ye all the lieges in account."
Then no one, whether innocent or not,
Was still retained in bondage by the Sháh,
Who used to clothe his prisoners withal
From head to foot and give to them dínárs
And gifts of all kinds, while all mendicants
Within the city that received no share
On New Year's Day he seated at his gate,
And flung drachms to them from the treasury.
Ill-doers used to fear him, drowsiheads
Grew vigilant while proclamation issued,
Whenas the time for leaving had arrived:—
C. 2014 "Famed, high-born chiefs! why seek so for addition?
Your first concern should be your health and safety.
Consider what ye do and ne'er distress
The diffident, reflect then act, and heed
The sayings of the wise. Regard inferiors,
For those of luckless lives demand our tears.

A man may slumber at my very throne
Unharmed by me if he shall keep the path,
But those that clutch at others' goods, on all
That do such things our anger shall befall."

§ 62

Discourse on the Splendour and Greatness of Khusrau Parwíz

The greatness of the Sháh I next display,
And give new freshness to a bygone day,
Such majesty that mid the small and great
There is no memory of equal state.
Well may the reader of the roll of kings
Shake from his skirts all transitory things,
And well may I too say a word for I
Am well assured of sages' sympathy.
Be not at home in this world for its bane
Is greater than its antidote ; refrain
From greed and strife ; make not life's stage to be
Thy home, 'tis but a wayside inn for thee.
Fare on. Thou agest and the young anon
Arrive ; this cometh, that one passeth on :
Awhile they strut or batten and are gone,
For lion's head and elephant's both must,
The signal given, come alike to dust.
When thou hast heard from me the wondrous tale
About Khusrau Parwíz keep it in mind.
He had such puissance and eminence,
Such majesty, such Grace, such throne and crown,
That, though thou ask of experts, thou wilt hear
Of no one greater. From Túráṇ and Hind,
From Chín and Rúm and every peopled clime

They brought him tribute night and day alike—
Boy-slaves and girl-slaves out of every court,
And pearls and gems. His treasures and dínárs
Were infinite; there was no king like him.
The wingéd eagle, royal falcon, hawk,
Pard, lion, and stream-haunting crocodile
Submitted to him willingly: his mind
C. 2015 Was bright as Sol. The first of all his treasures,
Amassed from Chín, Bulghár, from Rúm, and Rús,
Was called "'Arús";[1] the next of watered pearls,
And in an edifice a bowshot high,
Was named "Khazrá"[2] by chiefs and Arab sages;
The next was known as "Bár"[3] and lord and liege
Have never looked upon its like; the next
Was great Shádward[4] which minstrels celebrate;
The next was that which men called "Bád Áwar";[5]
They strove to estimate it but they failed.
The next whereof thou hearest speak thou callest
"Díba-i-Khusrauí,"[6] and next the famed
Hoard of Afrásiyáb; none hath possessed
Its like by sea or land; another hoard
Was that entitled "Súkhta"[7] and its lustre
Illumed the realm. Sarkash was of his minstrels;
So was Bárbad; that market never failed
Khusrau Parwíz, and in his golden bower
There were twelve thousand girls like jocund Spring.
He had twelve hundred elephants of war;
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth hath not room for them."
The war-steeds in the stables of the king
Were six and forty thousand, while of camels
Red-haired[8] there were ten thousand, and none then

[1] The Bride. [2] The Green. [3] Perhaps "The Spring . . . (of Khusrau)" *Cf* NT, p 355, *note*.
[4] The Throne.
[5] Windfall, *i e* composed of jetsam *Cf*. ZT, II 305
[6] Brocade of Khusrau. [7] Weighed [8] The best sort

Possessed one like to them. Twelve thousand more
Were beasts of burden, sixty-six were swift
For litter-bearing; none had seen or heard
Of such from white-haired veterans. Of troopers
There were a thousand thousand—men of Rúm,
Of Chín and Turkistán. He had withal
Shabdíz, the charger that ne'er failed in fight,
While in his women's bower there was Shírín
To add her lustre to his Rosary.
Since he was ruined by a servitor
Be not solicitous in quest for more,
But rather choose a life exempt from care
If thou wouldst have just praises for thy share,
For good and evil pass away with death,
And time is counting up our every breath.
What though thou gainest as thy portion here
Throne, crown, and treasury, though thy career
Be ever so laborious, yet at last
Thy lot among the bricks and dust is cast,
So sow but seed of good. Khusrau Parwíz
Should furnish thee with ample instances:
When thou shalt read the roll 'twill startle thee.
The famous throne, the seat of sovereignty,
Might and the diadem of empiry,
Were not sufficient for him but he must
Raise from Írán and from Túrán the dust!

§ 63

How Khusrau Parwíz turned from Justice, how the Chiefs revolted, and how Guráz called in Cæsar

The Sháh, who had been just, became unjust, C. 201
Joyed in the injustice of his underlings,

Robbed all men of their goods and stirred up strife
'Twixt man and man. That which had been a blessing
Turned to a curse because the Ram grew like
A tyrannous Wolf. He undertook new toils,
His one desire was to increase his hoards,
Until the folk, who lacked both bread and water,
And had not e'en their bodies for their own,
Betook them to the country of the foe;
The oppressed although unwilling left the land.
There was a worthless man by name Guráz,
Through whom the Sháh enjoyed both ease and pleasure.
He kept a constant surveillance o'er Rúm,
And was dív-headed, tyrannous, accursed.
Now when the once just Sháh became unjust
This man was first to turn against Írán.
Another was the favourite, Farrukhzád;
None could approach Khusrau Parwíz unless
Through him, and as the king of kings drew near
His end this man too grew corrupt. He came,
This offspring of Ázar Makán, a man
Of louring face and gruff with underlings,
And grew confederate with old Guráz
Till province after province was involved.
Guráz, who was the general, wrote to Cæsar,
And stirred him up to mischief, saying thus:—
"Arise and seize Írán. I will be first
In aiding thee."
Then Cæsar mustered troops
For battle, beat the tymbals, paid his host,
And marched like wind toward the Íránian coast.

§ 64

How Cæsar withdrew through an Expedient of Khusrau Parwíz and how the Chiefs released Shírwí from Bonds

The king, on hearing, took this grave case lightly.
He recognised the practice of Guráz
In prompting warlike Cæsar and recalled him, C 2017
But he excused himself and disregarded
The royal letter, for the villain feared
Khusrau Parwíz, the court, and all the chiefs.
The king of kings sat with the Great and all
That were the men of leading in Írán.
He plunged his heart in thought and sought at large
Among all manner of expedients,
And when a bright thought came to him he wrote
Thus to Guráz: "I quite approve thy conduct,
And have commended thee before the lords.
This artifice surpasseth all, for thou
Hast caused the fall of Cæsar. When they bring thee
This letter set thy sharpest wits to work,
Wait till I make a move, then move thyself
That Cæsar being placed between our hosts
May have his purpose foiled. We will convey him,
And all his Rúmans, captives to Írán."
Then from his court he chose one of resource,
Informed and eloquent, as there was need,
And said: "Convey this letter secretly,
As if thou wert a spy, but so contrive
That Rúmans may observe thee on the road,
Interrogate and carry thee to Cæsar,
Or else before the captain of the host.
He will inquire: 'Whence art thou? Speak.'
Reply:—
'A subject and in straits. I have been facing

Toil and the longsome road to bear Guráz
A letter.' Have this bound to thy right hand,
And if he take it from thee it is well."
The courier went forth from Khusrau Parwíz,
And made the letter fast to his right arm.
A scout descried him as he drew anear,
And carried him to Cæsar with his head
All dust, with wan cheeks, and with livid lips.
Then Cæsar asked: "Where is Khusrau Parwíz?
Thou must declare the truth."
The embarrassed liege,
O'erwhelmed with fear, replied with favour changed.
Said Cæsar: "Search this wretch malevolent,
Ill-purposed and ill-faced."
Shrewd, skilful men
Searched him and took the letter from his arm,
Then sought a learned chieftain of that march,
One who could read aright the ancient tongue.
Now when that scribe had read the letter over
The monarch's countenance became like pitch,
And thus he said in private to his troops:—
"Guráz intended to destroy us all!
C. 2018 The king of kings with countless elephants
And treasure, and three hundred thousand men,
Was minded to involve me in his net:
God grant his heart and policy be darkened!"
He dropped his purpose and withdrew his host.
Guráz, informed that Cæsar had returned
To Rúm, grew pale and sorrowful. He chose
A horseman from his troops and wrote this letter
With sighs and loud complainings: "Why is Cæsar
Displeased with me? Say wherefore hast thou quitted
Írán and made me shift thus for myself?
The king of kings, informed of what I did,
In pain and vengeance is estranged from me."

When Cæsar was aware of this and saw
That letter he selected from his host
A noble and dispatched him to Guráz
In haste to say: "Hath God so furnished thee
That thou shouldst desolate my crown and throne,
And burn my troops with fire? Thy former letter,
Thou miscreant! came but to consign to wind
My treasure, and the purpose was to give me
Up to Khusrau Parwíz. May good estate
And greatness ne'er be thine! Thou shouldst have known
That while they see a Sháh of royal race
The Íránians will desire no alien,
None born of Cæsar, none however wise."
Guráz protested unto Cæsar much,
But failed to gain an acccess to his ear.
Khusrau Parwíz then chose as messenger
A Persian who was learned and eloquent,
And sent him with this letter to Guráz:—
"Thou worthless villain, worker for the Dív!
These many times I summon thee to Court,
But thou art far from loyalty and right.
Now all the army that thou hast with thee,
For many years thy fortune's fosterers,
Are backing Cæsar both in heart and will,
And privily are not as they appear.
Dispatch to me the disaffected rebels."
When this arrived the wary chieftain mused.
He chose twelve thousand valiant cavaliers,
And thus addressed them: "Be ye one in heart,
And heed ye not what any one may say.
Abide awhile on this side of the stream,
And hurry not at all upon the march.
If ye are one in tongue and confidence
Ye may uproot a mountain."

Young and old

Advanced as far as Khurra-i-Ardshír,[1]
Advanced until they reached the river-bank,
Expectant of the bidding of the king,
Who, hearing, was not anxious to behold them,
But ordered Farrukhzád to go and say :—
"Till now ye have been loyal ; wherefore then
Allowed ye Cæsar to invade us thus ?
Who hath transgressed the way of God and quitted
The path of duty and of loyalty ? "
The faces of the soldiers at that message,
Sent by Khusrau Parwíz, grew dark with fear.
None dared to speak but tarried pained and pale.
The messenger was with Guráz at heart,
But kept his secret both from wind and dust.
He then approached the leaders privily,
And threw some light upon their darkened minds.
" Fear not," he said, " ye chieftains ! for the Sháh
Hath not detected you in open fault.
Be of one heart and tongue, and say to him :—
' What disaffected person is with us ?
And if there be one cloak is over all ;
We stand by one another lustily.' "
The chiefs all heard him, understood, rose up,
And framed their answer on the lines proposed.
Then Farrukhzád returned like flying dust,
And told the Sháh their words, who said : " Go back,
And say : ' Which of you seeketh his own hurt ?
The man that hath been duped by luckless Cæsar
With gifts of treasures, weapons, crowns, and thrones,
That man is guilty in respect to us—
A traitor to this crown and majesty.
Dispatch ye to my court without delay
All that are disaffected in this wise,
Else all of you that have transgressed shall see

[1] Khurra-i-Ardshír was a district in Párs. Bih-Ardshír (Seleucia) must be meant.

The gibbet and the dungeon.' "

Farrukhzád
Went with these words, and in the soldiers' hearts
Old grievances revived. None dared to speak,
But kept a mournful silence. Thereupon
Spake Farrukhzád and in unseemly words :—
"In all this young and valiant host I see
None inefficient; why then fear the Sháh,
Whose troops are scattered through the world ? I note
At court no great man to illuminate
His star and moon. Despise my words and fear not
My threats, but curse me and the exalted Sháh." C. 202
The hearers knew : "The fortune of the king
Hath aged," and framed their lips for malisons,
While Farrukhzád went to Khusrau Parwíz,
And said : "The troops all stand by one another,
And if thou sendest me again I fear
For mine own life."

Khusrau Parwíz perceived :—
"This knave will cause both blood and tears to flow,"
But fearful of his brother[1] answered not,
And hid the truth; for Rustam had revolted
Where he was stationed with ten thousand swordsmen,
And holding Farrukhzád disloyal too
Caused his own soldiers to revolt withal,
While Farrukhzád was ware too that the Sháh
Knew him as author of the host's default;
So when that malcontent had left the presence
He dared not to return but kept without,
And tampered there with all the folk, for ever
Attempting to pervert them, man by man,
From their obedience to the Sháh. He told
Them all and they agreed : "Another Sháh

[1] Rustam, the brother of Farrukhzád not of Khusrau Parwíz as given in the Genealogical Table of the Sásánians in Vol. vi. p. 3.

Should sit upon the throne for this hath lost
The Grace, the royal usages, and fortune."
There was with Farrukhzád an ancient man,
Skilled in affairs, who said: "The Sháh imputeth
The army's fault to thee. Thou must produce
A new king soon because our fertile land
Is growing waste, its tumult as destructive
As was Pírán. We needs must ascertain
Which of the Sháh's sons hath most modesty,
And will cause least dispute. He must be seated
Upon the throne as Sháh and o'er his crown
Dínárs be showered. Then we shall fare anew;
We have drunk bitter and we shall drink sweet,
For since Shírwí,[1] the shrewd and eldest-born,
Is now in prison we shall need no other."
They all agreed thereto. But few elapsed
Of days and nights before Tukhár's host raised
The dust and slighted all the Sháh's affairs.
Then Farrukhzád went out to meet Tukhár
With many troops. They met and much talk passed
In public and in private. Farrukhzád,
Moreover, loosed his tongue and told the ills
2021 Wrought by Khusrau Parwíz. He said: "The host
By valour and by counsel will restore
The sovereignty."
The general replied:—
"I am not one for words but when I come
To battle with my troops I make things strait
For this world's warriors. This king when young
Was loved by chief and paladin, and since
The days of such an one as he grow dark
I would that none should look on crown and throne.
The fatal time was when he grew unjust,
And joyed in the injustice of his slaves."
When Farrukhzád heard this[2] he chose Tukhár,

[1] *Cf.* p. 193. [2] Reading with P.

And said to him: "Now go we to the prison,
To those unfortunates, and boldly bear
Shírwí, the brave, the atheling, away.
The captain of the host, whose brain and skin
Thou wilt take sooner, watcheth o'er his prison,
And with six thousand proven cavaliers
Is keeper of those wretched prisoners."
Tukhár thus answered: "We have overlooked
This matter of the captain of the host,
For if the fortune of Khusrau Parwíz
Revive there will not be a paladin
Left in Írán, and what with gibbet, bonds,
And dungeon, none will 'scape calamity."
He spake and urged his charger, speeding like
Ázargashasp, and led his powers to battle.
The captain of the host encountered him
Forthwith. Those famous troops were overthrown.
The captain of the host himself was slain
In fight, the forces of the king were scattered,
The day was one of gloom and all was lost.
By that expedient and in war-array
Tukhár made entry of that narrow prison,
And called exalt Shírwí. The prince replied
Forthwith, well knowing why that chief had come.
His heart throbbed, laughing after care, when he
Beheld that cheerful face, but still he wept,
And asked: "Where is Khusrau Parwíz? Is't thine
To free me?"
Said Tukhár: "As thou'rt a man
Be not perverse, for if thou wilt consent not,
And lettest go this opportunity,
One in sixteen may fail us, but thou hast
Still fifteen brothers left and each deserving
To be the king of kings: the throne of greatness
Would joy in them."

Shírwí remained in tears
And consternation. Should he quit the prison ?
V. 2022 Now Farrukhzád meanwhile was at the gates,
And suffered none to pass to tell the Sháh,
But acted as sole chamberlain. When Sol
Grew wan of face, and all the lords had gone
To seek repose, he bade the watch or them
That were its officers to fare to court—
That place of happiness and royal ease—
And said : " Your cry to-night must not be that
Of yesternight : all watchmen every watch
Must in their cries employ the name ' Kubád.' "
They made reply : " We will ; we will forget
Khusrau Parwíz."
So when the night resumed
Its pitch-like robe from city and bázár
Arose the cry : " For ever live Kubád,
The scion of the great, and may his name
Be promulgate in all the provinces."
The night was dark ; the monarch of the world
Slept but Shírín beside him was perturbed,
On hearing what the watchman said, and grieved.
Her heart beat fast with care. Roused by her voice
The Sháh took dudgeon, but she cried : " O sire !
What shall we do ? How shall we act herein ? "
He said : " O moon-face ! why dost chatter so
When I am sleeping ? "
She replied : " Give ear,
And listen to the watch."
He heard ; his cheeks
Became like flowers of fenugreek ; he said : —
" What time three watches of the night have passed
Consult the astrologers for when this knave
Was born I named him privily Kubád,

But I have spoken of ḥim as Shírwí,
And kept his other name concealed. In public
Shírwí hath always been his name, so why
Is this vile fellow calling him Kubád ?
We must depart while it is night toward Chín,
Máchín or else Makrán, and I will ask
Faghfúr for troops, and make our way to them
By some device."
But as his star was dark
In heaven so on earth his words were wild :
His scheme of night-departure came to naught.
He took a hard case easily and told
Shírín : " The time hath come ; our foes prevent
Our schemes."
She answered him : " For ever live :
Far from thee ever be the evil eye.
Plan in thy wisdom something for thyself :
Ne'er may the foeman have of thee his will.
As soon as it is light that ruseful one C. 202
Will turn toward the palace past all doubt."
He called for armour from the treasury—
Two Indian scimitars and Rúman casque,
A quiver, arrows, and a golden shield—
And for a valiant slave who loved the fight.
He went forth to the garden in the dark,
What time the crow awakeneth, hung up
His golden buckler on a bough where none
Was like to pass and with a heavy sword
Beneath his knee sat on the flowery sward.

§ 65

How Khusrau Parwíz was taken and how Shírwí sent him to Taisafún

When Sol shot down its rays the enemy—
That doer of dív's work—approached the palace,
And went about it, but that splendid seat
Was void of Sháh. They gave to spoil his treasures,
None recking of his travail, and then all
Withdrew in tears and wroth at fortune's doings.

What of yon swiftly turning sky say we,
Which never resteth from its instancy ?
It giveth unto one the royal crown,
Another to the fishes in the sea.

One man hath head and feet and shoulders bare,
No peace, no food, no shelter anywhere ;
It giveth to another drink of milk
And honey ; furs, brocade, and silks to wear !

Dust and the darkness of the grave await
Them both. To be unborn would best abate
The sage's cares for never to have been
Is better than to be for small and great.

Now for fresh toil upon Khusrau Parwíz
To give reciters novel histories.
The Sháh bode in that mead, a lofty tree
O'ershadowing him. When half the longsome day
Had passed he hungered. Now within the pleasance
There was a man employed who did not know
The king by sight. The Sun-faced bade his slave :—
" Cut off a cantle from this costly belt."
That cantle had on it five studs of gold
Enriched with jewelry. The king then spake
Thus to the gardener : " These studs will prove
C. 2024 Of use to-day. Go thou to the bázár,

Buy meat and bread, and shun frequented paths."
Those jewels would have cost a purchaser
Some thirty thousand drachms. Immediately
The gardener sought a baker and asked bread
In change for that gold cantle but the baker
Said: "I have not its worth and cannot pass it."
The two conveyed it to a jeweller,
And said: "Price this according to thy knowledge."
The expert, when he looked upon the studs,
Said: "Who will dare to buy, for this should be
Within the treasury of Khusrau Parwíz,
Who hath a hundred new like this each year?
Whom didst thou steal these jewels from, or didst
Thou cut them off a slave who was asleep?"
The three men went to Farrukhzád and took
The jewels, gold and all, and he on seeing
Ran to the new-made king and showed the gems,
And cantle severed from the golden girdle.
Shírwí said to the gardener: "If thou
Show'st not to me the owner of these jewels
I will behead thee and thy kith and kin
Forthwith."
"O Sháh!" he answered, "in the garden
There is a man in armour, bow in hand,
In height a cypress and with cheeks like Spring,
In all points like a king; he brighteneth
The garden everywhere, and in his mail
Is like the shining sun. His golden shield
Is hanging from a bough. Before him standeth
A slave with loins girt up who cut for him
This jewelled cantle, handed it to me,
And told me: 'Hence away and from the market
Buy bread and relish.' Swift as wind I left him
But now."
Shírwí knew: "'Tis Khusrau Parwíz,
His features are the age's cynosure,"

And sent three hundred horsemen from the court,
Like rushing wind, down to the river-bank.
Khusrau Parwîz, perceiving them afar,
Grew pale and drew his scimitar, but when
They saw the king of kings they all returned
In tears. They went to Farrukhzád and said :—
" We are but slaves ; he is Khusrau Parwíz—
A Sháh to whom the evil day is new.
None either in the garden or the fray
Would dare breathe cold on him."
Then Farrukhzád
Went to the Sháh with troops from court, advanced
Alone and spake at large. Khusrau Parwíz
Gave ear to him. He said : " If now the Sháh
Will grant me audience, and will excuse
My conduct, I will come and tell the truth
To him but otherwise will hie me home."
Khusrau Parwíz made answer : " Say thy say,
For thou art neither friend nor enemy."
Then said that fluent speaker : " View the matter
More wisely and assume that thou hast slain
A thousand warriors, yet thou wilt get
Thy fill of fight at last while all Írán
Is hostile to thee, leagued both heart and body
In opposition. Wait the will of heaven :
Perchance these conflicts may result in love."
" Yea," said Khusrau Parwíz, " 'tis well. What I
Dread are the vile who may approach and treat me
With all indignities if so they will."
While he was speaking thus to Farrukhzád
His heart was troubled at his agéd fortune
Because astrologers had said to him,
And he had been astonied at their words :—
" Thy death will come to thee between two heights,
And by a slave's hand in a lonely spot.
One height will be of gold and one of silver,

And thou with broken heart wilt sit between.
Thy heaven will be golden, thine earth iron,
And fortune will be full of enmity."
He said: "So now this armour is mine earth,
My golden shield my heaven, and the heights
Are my two treasuries within the garden,
Which used to make my heart shine like a lamp.
In sooth my days are coming to an end:
Where is my star that used to light the world?
Where are the satisfaction and the peace
Of me who had my name inscribed on crowns?"
They brought an elephant for him. His soul
Was dark with woe. He mounted, and the troops
Led him away while in the ancient tongue
He cried: "O treasure! if thou art my foe
Be not a friend to these mine enemies,
For I am in the hands of Áhriman
To-day. Thou aid'st me not in my distress:
Conceal thyself and show thyself to none."
Kubád gave orders to his minister:—
"Remind him not of any evil deed,
But bid them carry him to Taisafún
Away from court with his own counsellor.
There let him bide in peace for many a day
And harmed by none. Let trusty Galínús
Be made his keeper with a thousand horsemen."
When thus the sky revolved above his head
His reign had lasted eight and thirty years.
It was the day of Dai of month Ázar, C. 2c
A time for fires and wine and roasted fowls,
When from Khusrau Parwíz the Grace of kingship
Withdrew and he was crownless like a slave.
Kubád acceded and put on the crown,
And sat in peace rejoicing on the throne.
The Íránian troops did homage to the Sháh,
Who gave one year's pay from the treasury,

And lived but seven months so call him naught,
Or call him Sháh, just as it pleaseth thee.
Such is this tyrant Hostel's wont! Thou must
Look not upon it with an eye of trust.
Of all things cultivate a generous mood,
And let thy thoughts be ever bent on good.
When thou shalt say: "The world hath granted me
My wish" then mark! that wish will prove to thee
A bond and snare. If so thou canst abstain
From thought of ill and list this sage's strain.
Here will thy soul from every fault be freed
When thou dost rightly both in word and deed.

XLIV

KUBÁD (COMMONLY CALLED SHÍRWÍ)

HE REIGNED SEVEN MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Kubád on his accession sends two chiefs to accuse of misgovernment the fallen and imprisoned Sháh, Khusrau Parwíz, who justifies himself at great length. His fall is made the subject of a lament by Bárbad, the minstrel, who afterwards mutilates himself. The chiefs, noticing symptoms of remorse in Kubád, insist upon the death of Khusrau Parwíz who is killed with all his other sons. Kubád falls in love with, and wishes to marry, Shírín, who poisons herself rather than consent, and Kubád himself is poisoned soon afterwards.

NOTE

The days of the reign of Kubád (Kobad II., Feb.-Sept., A.D. 628) were few and evil. Tradition already had prepared the ground for this in the unfavourable account given of his early years.[1] The murder of his father was followed by that of all his brothers, and by the tragic death of Shírín, while in addition to all these horrors a frightful pestilence broke out in his reign and the great mortality that ensued still further weakened the resources of an already almost exhausted country and helped to pave the way for the successful Arab invasion of a few years later on. Kubád is represented in the poem as a loutish, uneducated youth,[2] but even if his abilities had been great it is difficult to see how he could have extricated himself from the coil in which

[1] See Vol. viii., p. 390 [2] *Id.*

he found himself involved without mishap to himself or others. He owed his release from prison and perhaps his life to the very conspirators that subsequently demanded of him for their own security the death of his father. To have refused would have been fatal to himself, while in all probability his father and his brothers, with the exception of one who would have been made Sháh, would have perished all the same. It is inconceivable that the conspirators would have run the risk to themselves of restoring Khusrau Parwíz, with his black record of ingratitude as instanced by his treatment of Bandwí and Gustaham,[1] to his former position as ruler. With the exception of his infatuation for Shírín, which hardly can be regarded as historical, Kubád throughout his short reign was the victim of circumstances.

§§ 1 and 2. Kharrád, son of Barzín, was one of the most trusted ministers of Khusrau Parwíz and planned the assassination of Bahrám Chúbína.[2] According to Tabarí he fell at the battle of Dhú Kár.[3]

As the epoch of the Sásánian Dynasty draws to an end through scenes of deepening tragedy the legitimist leanings of the tradition seem to become more and more pronounced and we have an instance here. It is hardly to be supposed, historically speaking, that formal charges of misgovernment were drawn up against, and as formally answered by, Khusrau Parwíz, but rather that someone, desirous of vindicating that Sháh's memory and conversant with the circumstances of the time, soon after his death drew up the charges and the replies thereto. Versions of them are given in both the Arabic and Persian Tabarí and elsewhere. Four of the charges are found in both the Tabarís as well as in the Sháhnáma.[4] They are :—

1. The murder by Khusrau Parwíz of his father Hurmuzd.
2. The illegitimate accumulation of treasure as a result of the financial oppression of the people.
3. The harsh treatment of the royal princes.
4. The refusal to restore the True Cross.

To these the Arabic Tabarí adds :—

1. The general ill-treatment of all prisoners.
2. Enforced recruiting for the royal Haram even of women already married.

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[1] See Vol. viii., p. 354 *seq.* [2] *Id.* p. 331 *seq.* [3] *Id.* p. 190.
[4] NT, 363 *seq.* ZT, ii., 334 *seq.*

3. The keeping of the troops for a long period absent from home.

The Persian Tabarí adds :—

1. The imprisonment of the troops defeated by the Arabs at Dhú Kár and by Heraclius.
2. The exactions of arrears of tribute for the previous twenty or thirty years.
3. The attempt to slay the youthful Yazdagird (afterwards the last Sásánian Sháh).
4. The deposition of Nu'mán, prince of Híra.[1]
5. The mutilation and subsequent execution of Mardánsháh.[2]

In the Arabic Tabarí eight charges are made against Khusrau Parwíz two of which—those relating to the royal Haram and the refusal to restore the "True Cross"—are left unanswered.

In the Persian Tabarí eleven charges are formulated to each of which in the same order an answer is made. Some of the charges, however, must be regarded as later additions while that relating to Nu'mán is not likely to have suggested itself to a Persian and must come from an Arab source. In the Sháhnáma there are eight charges, all of which are more or less answered, but not in the same order as they are preferred, but in the following :—1, 6, 7, 8, 2, 5, 3, 4. Thus Khusrau Parwíz replies to the most serious accusations—those of offences against persons—first. The Sháhnáma agrees most closely with the Arabic Tabarí, supplies the missing answer with regard to the "True Cross," but does not deal with the *gravamen* of the royal Haram question, as that particular charge is not one of those mentioned in the poem.

Galínúsh subsequently served in the war against the Arabs, fought at the Battle of the Bridge, and was perhaps slain at Kádisiya.[3]

§ 5. Indignant legitimate tradition is naturally very wroth with Mihr Hurmuzd, the murderer of Khusrau Parwíz, whom it describes as the lowest of the low and vilest of the vile. According to Tabarí, however, Mihr Hurmuzd was the son of Mardánsháh, the governor of Nímrúz and one of the most obedient and faithful of Khusrau Parwíz' officials. In the Persian Tabarí's version of the Romance of Bahrám

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[1] See Vol. viii., p. 190. [2] See p. 6.
[3] NT, p. 365 *note*. RM, Pt. II., vol. iii., pp. 95, 116.

Chúbína that hero's brother, Yalán-sína in the Sháhnáma, is called Mardánsháh. Yalán-sína is always represented as being one of Bahrám Chúbína's most loyal adherents just as the other brother, Gurdwí, was a firm supporter of Khusrau Parwíz, while their sister Gurdya held an intermediate position, faithful to Bahrám Chúbína, but opposing his kingly ambition in every way in her power. Later on when married to Gustaham, the maternal uncle of Khusrau Parwíz, she agreed, on condition that she should become the Sháh's wife and that a full amnesty should be given to all her adherents, to murder her husband and did so. There would be nothing strange therefore in Mardánsháh, if identical with Yalán-sína, becoming reconciled to, and receiving high office from, Khusrau Parwíz. He would serve one master as faithfully as he served the other. In the circumstances the strange thing would have been for the treacherous Sháh not to have taken the first convenient occasion against him. According to the story the Sháh, two years before his deposition, consulted the astrologers who informed him that his death would come from Nímrúz. He therefore began to suspect and summoned Mardánsháh, but finding no pretext for putting him to death, as he was perfectly loyal and withal an aged man, determined merely to cut off his right hand and make him a large present of money as compensation. The sentence was carried out. Mardánsháh regarded such a mutilation as worse than death and, when shortly afterwards the Sháh was good enough to send and express his regret for what had occurred, asked the Sháh to grant him a boon. The Sháh swore to do so, on which Mardánsháh requested that his head should be struck off in order to wipe out the disgrace put upon him. The Sháh, bound by his oath, felt himself obliged to consent and the execution took place accordingly. The Shah wished to make Mardánsháh's son governor of Nímrúz, but he refused and withdrew from the army.[1] He joined the conspiracy against Khusrau Parwíz[2] and by avenging his father on the Sháh justified the prediction of the astrologers.

The account given by Theophanes of the last days of the Sháh is different. As a general rule it is not prudent to put faith in stories of what occurred in Oriental palaces or prisons, but owing to the special circumstances of the case his information may be good in this instance, as it appears to be

[1] NT, p. 379. ZT, ii., 330. [2] See Vol. viii., p. 196.

based on letters written by Heraclius. After the capture of Khusrau Parwíz by the conspirators, he was bound and confined in the "House of Darkness," which he had himself built as a stronghold for his treasures. Here he was sparingly fed on bread and water for, said Shírwí: "Let him eat the gold that he has vainly amassed, and for whose sake he has starved many, and made the world itself a desert." Shírwí also sent satraps to revile and spit upon him, had his son Mardásas, whom he had wished to crown, slain before his eyes, and all his other sons as well, sent his enemies to beat and spit upon him, and, after five days of such treatment, had him put to death with arrows. Shírwí then wrote to Heraclius to announce the death of the detested Khusrau Parwíz, arranged terms of peace, released all the captives, and restored the "True Cross."[1] With regard to these latter statements of Theophanes it should be observed that peace was not concluded, and the "True Cross" restored, till after the death of Shírwí.[2]

According to Tabarí Kubád had Mihr Hurmuzd put to death.[3]

§ 6. The association of Khusrau Parwíz and Shírín began, it would seem,[4] before his accession to the throne, and he reigned for thirty-eight years. If Shírwí really wished to marry Shírín it must have been for political motives and because she had been so much in his father's confidence and might furnish useful information. For a son to marry his father's wives was, according to Persian ideas, quite the correct procedure in the circumstances.

Kubád is said to have been bitterly reproached by his two sisters, Púrándukht and Ázarmdukht, for his share in the deaths of his father and brothers, and to have suffered much from sickness and remorse. He died at Dastagird, but from what cause is uncertain.[5] The plague was very virulent at the time. Poison was often made to account for what was really due to disease.

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[1] CTC, i., 502. [2] NT, p. 392 and *note*. [3] *Id.* p. 382.
[4] See vol. viii., p. 383. [5] NT, p. 384 and *notes*.

§ 1

How Shírwí ascended the Throne, announced his Will, and sent Chiefs to his Father with Counsel and Excuses

Now when Shírwí sat on the goodly throne,
And donned the royal crown so much desired,
The leaders of the Íránians each drew near
To proffer him the homage due to kings,
Exclaiming: "Worshipful and honoured Sháh!
Know, God gave thee the crown, and now thou sittest
Securely on the throne of ivory,
And may thy sons and scions have the world."
Kubád replied: "Be ever conquering
And happy. Never will we practise ill.
How good is justice with benevolence!
The world will we keep peaceful and cut off
The works of Áhriman by every right,
Ancestral precedent that greateneth
The Glory of our Faith. I will dispatch
A message to my sire and tell him all.
He is in evil odour in the world
Through his ill deeds: let him excuse his faults
To God and turn to custom and the way.
C. 2027 If he shall heed me he will not resent
My conduct. Then will I devote myself
To state-affairs and strive to compass justice
Both publicly and privily, do good
Where good is due, and break no poor man's heart.
I need two honest men of goodly speech,
Whose memories are charged with ancient lore."

He asked the assembly: "Whom shall I employ?
Who is most shrewd and honest in Írán?"
The warriors all suggested by their looks
Two men of lore if they should give consent.
Kubád perceived whom the Íránians
Agreed to choose: one of them was Ashtád,
The other was Kharrád, son of Barzín,
The old—two sages eloquent and heedful.
Kubád addressed them thus: "O ye wise men,
Ye chiefs experienced and veteran!
Deem not the conduct of the world too toilsome,
Because the Great by travail compass treasure.
It is for you now to approach the Sháh;
Perchance through you he may conform himself.
Appeal to him by instance new or old
As there is need."
With tears unwillingly
Those sages made them ready. When Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, and when Ashtád, who had
Gashasp for sire, had mounted on their steeds,
As bidden, Kubád said: "Now with right good will
'Tis yours to take the road to Taisafún,[1]
To carry to my glorious sire a message,
And bear it all in mind from first to last.
Say: 'Twas no fault of ours nor did the Íránians
Cause this, but having left the way of Faith
Thou hast thyself incurred God's chastisement,
For, first, no son legitimate will shed
His sire's blood though impure or give assent
Thereto and fill the hearts of upright folk
With pain. Again, thy treasures fill the world,
And thine exactions reach all provinces,
While, thirdly, many horsemen brave and famed
Within Írán who gladdened there have left
Son, country, and their own pure kith and kin,

[1] Couplet omitted.

Have parted, this to Chín and that to Rúm,
And now are scattered o'er each march and land.
Again, when Cæsar, who had done and borne
So much for thee, had given thee a host
And daughter too with treasure and much else,
Desired of thee the Cross of Christ for Rúm,
So that his land might be revived thereby,
C. 2028 How did the Cross of Jesus profit so
Thy treasures when complaisance on thy part
Would have made Cæsar glad ? But thou didst not
Restore it, hadst not wit enough for that,
Or one to guide thee to humanity.
Again, thy greed was such that wisdom's eye
Was all obscured in thee, and thou didst seize
The chattels of the poor whose curses brought
Ill on thy head. Thou slewest thy mother's brothers,[1]
Two loyal men who gave thy throne a lustre.
Moreover thou hadst sixteen sons whose days
And nights were passed in prison while no chief
Could sleep secure from thee but hid in fear.[2]
Know, that which hath befall'n thee is from God ;
Reflect on thy foul deeds. As for myself,
I am but as the instrument in all
This wrong, am but the heading of the tale.
By God, 'twas not my fault, no aim of mine
To wreck the Sháh's throne ! Now for all seek grace,
And say so to these chieftains of Írán ;
Turn from ill deeds to God—the Guide to good—
Who may abate the woes that thou hast brought
Upon thyself.' "

On hearing this the twain
Departed with their hearts all seared and sore
Till, sorrowful and weeping, they arrived
At Taisafún and in that city sought

[1] Bandwí and Gustaham.
[2] This sentence comes at the end of the speech in the text.

The palace of Márúsipand for there
The exalted king resided. Galínúsh
Sat at the palace-gate: thou wouldst have said:—
"Earth is convulsed before him!" He was armed
In helm and breastplate, all the Arab steeds
Wore bards, and all his soldiers were drawn up,
Equipped, and sword in hand. He grasped a mace
Of steel, his heart all fire and storm. Now when
Kharrád, son of Barzín, and when Ashtád,
Son of Gashasp, those sages twain, dismounted,
He rose forthwith, rejoiced to look on them,
And gave them place befitting, hailing them
As famous chiefs. The eloquent Kharrád
First laved his tongue in valour and then said
To Galínúsh: "Kubád the glorious
Hath donned in peace the Kaian crown. Írán,
Túrán and Rúm have tidings that Shírwí[1]
Is seated on the throne of king of kings.
Why this cuirass and helm and massive mace?
Who is thine enemy?"

Said Galínúsh:—

"O veteran! may all thy doings prosper.
Thou art concerned about my tender frame C. 2029
Because I am in iron garniture.
I bless thee for thy kindness; thou deservest
That I shall sprinkle jewels over thee.
Thy words are naught but good, and may the sun
Be thine associate in the world. Declare
Why thou hast come, then look for my reply."

He thus gave answer: "Glorious Kubád
Commissioned me to bear Khusrau Parwíz
A message and if now thou wilt ask audience[2]
I will deliver what the world-lord said—

[1] That being the name by which he had been generally known, his real name (Kubád) having been kept secret. See Vol. viii., pp. 371, 416.

[2] Reading with P.

That monarch of the flock."

Said Galínúsh :—

"Who can remember words so well as thou,
O worshipful? Yet nathless Sháh Kubád
Gave me full many a counsel touching this,
And charged me, saying: 'Let none have by day
Or night an audience of Khusrau Parwíz
Unless thou hearest what the messenger
Hath got to say in Persian new or old.'"

Ashtád said: "I hold not my message secret,
O fortunate! It is: 'The sword is fruiting,
And nuzzling princes' heads.' In this regard
Now ask for audience of Khusrau Parwíz
That we may tell the message of the Sháh."

This hearing Galínúsh arose, made fast
His mail, went to the Sháh with folded arms,
As servants should, and said thus: "Live for ever,
O Sháh! May evil never vex thy heart.
There cometh by Ashtád and by Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, a message from the Sháh
From court."

Khusrau Parwíz laughed out and said :—

"Speak wiser words for if he be the king
Then what am I, and why am I within
This narrow prison, and why need'st thou ask
That I shall grant an audience unto any,
Be their words false or true?"

So Galínúsh
Returned to those two warriors, reported
The answer of the paladin, and said :—
"Now go with folded arms, declare your message,
And hearken his reply."

Those sages twain
Of honest speech inswathed their visages
In sashes brought from Chín and, when they saw
The Sháh, did reverence and waited long

What while he sat upon a lofty throne
Adorned with effigies of sheep and wolves,
Impleached with gold and gems, with under him
A couch of yellow broidery. He leaned
On cushions hued like lapis-lazuli,
Held a fine quince and drowsed there all amort.
When he beheld those chiefs supreme in wisdom C. 2030
He roused himself and secretly invoked
God's help. He laid that fine quince on the cushions
That he might welcome those two wayfarers.[1]
The quince slipped from the cushions, rolled unbruised
Upon the couch and thence from throne to floor.
Ashtád ran, took it up, wiped off the dust,
And laid the quince upon his head. The world-lord
Turned from Ashtád that he might neither see
Nor scent the quince. They set it on the throne,
And stood themselves. The matter of the quince[2]
Perturbed Khusrau Parwíz who boded ill,
Looked up to heaven, and said: "O truthful Judge!
Who can establish one whom Thou o'erthrowest,
Who join what Thou hast broken? When bright fortune
Departeth from a race it bringeth sorrow
Because the day of joy is passed away."
Then to Ashtád: "Now for thine ambassage
From mine unnatural child of ill repute,
And from that handful of conspirators,
My hateful and black-hearted enemies.
Malignant fools are they and in their folly
Most wretched. Fortune will desert our race;
None will rejoice again; the crown and throne
Will pass to those unfit; this royal Tree
Will be destroyed; the Base will be exalted;
The spirits of the Great grow sorrowful.

[1] 'ces deux esclaves.' Mohl.
[2] Reading with P.

The majesty will bide not with our sons,
Or with our kindred or posterity;
Their friends all be their chiefest enemies,
Revilers and destroyers of the race.
This quince hath made the secret evident;
The throne of king of kings will bear no fruit.
Now tell to me the words that thou hast heard:
I count his less than water in the stream."

Then those two men released their tongues to speak,
And told all that Kubád, his son, had said,
Not keeping e'en a whisper back from him.
The king of kings, when he had heard the message,
Writhed with distress and heaved a deep, cold sigh.
Then said he to those chiefs: "Hear my response,
And bear it to the young prince, every word.
Say: 'Quit thine own misdeeds ere blaming others'.
What thou hast uttered are they words of thine?
A murrain on the prompter![1] Speak not so
C. 2031 As to rejoice thy foe with thy fool's talk,
And let him learn that thou hast not the wisdom
To furnish speech with knowledge from thy brains.
If thy trust is in words that profit not
Thou mak'st default in soul and wisdom too.
He that shall call thee wicked, then acknowledge
Thee to be world-lord, should not sit before thee.
And order matters whether great or small.
Think not in future of such messages
Or thou wilt cause thy foemen to rejoice.
My state hath been appointed me by God;
My hopes are set upon the other world,
And thou by these thy charges which are lies
Wilt gain no glory in the nobles' eyes.'"

[1] Reading with P. and T.

§ 2

How Khusrau Parwíz answered Shírwí

" Now will I make full answer that thou mayst
Repeat my words in public. They will serve
As my memorial when I am gone—
A truthful statement of my case—and thou
Wilt know, when I reveal my grief and travail,
That all my treasures were derived from toil.
Thou speakest in the first place of Hurmuzd,
His anger with me, and those bygone days :
My father's wrath against us was aroused
By slanderer's words and thus confusion came.
When I had learned what occupied his thoughts
I left Írán by night, avoiding roads.
He sought my death by poison ; I perceived
No antidote but flight and so I fled,
And was not taken in the net of bale.
I heard that ill had come upon the Sháh,
And quitted Barda'—when the news arrived.
That knave Bahrám Chúbína with his troops
Opposed us on the battlefield. I fled
From him too on the day of fight that I
Might fall not in his clutches. Afterwards
I came a second time and bravely fought,
My troublous fortune passed away and all
The realm that I had lost returned to me.
My contest with him was no brief affair ;
The whole world were spectators of the strife.
By the command of God who multiplieth
His benefits on us, and is the Guide
In good and ill, Írán and Turkistán[1]

[1] Túrán in the text.

Submitted and Bahrám Chúbína's plans
Were foiled. Released from war with him I hasted,
First, to take vengeance for my father's death.
C. 2032 Bandwí and Gustaham, my mother's brothers,
Men that had not a peer in any land,
Had risked their lives for me and were all mine
In love as well as kinship, but there were
My father's death and mine own grief thereat;
I was not sluggish to avenge his blood.
I lopped Bandwí both hand and foot for he
Had made the Sháh's place dark, while Gustaham,
Who disappeared and sought some distant nook,
Was slain all unawares by my command:
Those murderers' lives and aims all came to naught.
Next, as to what thou said'st of thine own case,
Of thine own strait confinement and affairs;
It was to keep my sons from evil deeds
That would recoil upon themselves. Ye were
Not straitly bound in prison, not misprized,
And had no harm to fear. I did not then
Treat you with scorn but held my treasury
At your disposal, acting as the Sháhs
Had done before, not idly or without
A precedent. Chase, minstrelsy, and polo—
All that befitteth chiefs—were yours at will,
With hawks and cheetahs, jewels and dínárs.
Your so called prison was a palace where
Ye lived in joy. I dreaded thee moreover
Through what the readers of the stars had said.
That was the cause of thine imprisonment
That thou mightst do us naught of injury—
The very injury that thou art doing.
I never parted with thy horoscope
Till I had sealed and given it to Shírín.
When I had reigned for six and thirty years,
And thou past doubt amidst such pleasant days

Gav'st all the matter to the wind, although
Much time had passed o'er us, there came to thee
A letter out of Hindústán but not
Without my cognizance. The chief of Rájas
Sent us a letter, jewels, divers stuffs,
An Indian scimitar, white elephant,
And all that I could hope for in the world,
And with the scimitar was gold brocade
With all varieties of gems uncut.
To thee the letter was on painted silk;
So when I saw the Indian script I called
An Indian scribe, a fluent, heedful speaker,
Who when he read the Indian Rája's words
Wept for the letter ran: 'Live joyfully
For thou art worthy both of joy and realm,
And on the day of Dai in month Ázar C. 2033
Thou wilt be king and ruler of the world.
Thy sire will reign for eight and thirty years,
For so the stars ordain. Good times will shine
Upon thee; thou wilt don the crown of greatness.'
These words have been fulfilled to me to-day,
But we should wash not from our hearts affection.
I was aware that fortune had decreed
That when thy throne had gained its brilliancy
Mine only portion would be toil and pain,
And that my bright day would be turned to gloom;
But as I gave, had Faith, made friends, and loved
I did not lour by reason of that letter.
I gave it, having read it, to Shírín,
And pondered much upon it. In her keeping
Are both the letter and the horoscope,
And no one great or small is ware thereof.
If thou wouldst see it make request of her;
Thou haply mayst regard it more or less.
I wot that seeing it thou wilt repent,
And seek to heal the past. For what thou said'st

Of bonds and of imprisonments, and how
We have done others hurt, 'tis this world's way,
And that of former chiefs and kings of kings,
And if thou know'st it not speak with an archmage;
He will enlighten thee thereon and tell thee:—
'' 'Tis ill to keep God's enemy alive.'
Those that were in our prison were mere dívs
Complained of by the righteous. Neither bloodshed
Nor utter harshness ever was our trade.
I shut up criminals and did not hold
Of small account wrongs done by them to others;
But now I hear that thou hast freed these men—
Men worse than dragons—and for this thou art
A sinner guilty both in word and deed
In God's sight. Now that thou art lord be prudent,
And if thou know'st not how consult the wise.
Forgive not those that vex thee though thou hopest
For wealth through them, and what can better bonds
For one in whom thou seest naught but harm?
In talking of my wealth thou hast not shown
Good sense and wisdom. We have never asked
For more than toll and tax. When these were paid
If any were still rich, though men might say
That they were foes and miscreants of the seed
Of Áhriman, we thought of God and passed
Such matters lightly by. From Him I had
The crown and throne, and they have cost me dear.
C. 2034 The Maker of the world, the righteous Judge,
Hath willed this change of fortune. In the world
His will is paramount, so when He would
Our minishment we seek not for addition.
We sought to please our Judge, but by our toils
Have not evaded His apportionment,
And when He asketh me I will tell all.
That Questioner is wiser than thou art,
And one more potent in all good and ill.

The miscreants that stand before thee now
Are not thy friends or kin, and what they say
Of me that also will they say of thee
Before thy foes. They are but slaves of gold
And silver: thou wilt find in them no helper.
They have possessed thy heart and there instilled
Each fault of mine. Such words as these are not
In thy philosophy and will not profit
Those miscreants' minds, but I have uttered them
For my foes' sake that they who read this letter,
Writ in the ancient tongue, may know that lies
Lack lustre even from the mouths of Sháhs.
'Twill be too a memorial in the world,
A consolation to the man of wisdom,
And after our decease whoe'er shall read
These words of ours will learn our policy.
I gathered armies from Bartás and Chín,
And everywhere appointed generals,
Then made attacks upon mine enemies
Till none dared raise his head. When they were scattered
Our treasuries were all filled. The whole land toiled
For us, and from the sea so many gems
Were brought us that the shipmen grew aweary.
Plain, sea, and mountain, all were mine. Now when
The treasury of drachms had been expended
The coffers were refilled with new dínárs,
With precious stones and royal jewelry,
As well as clothes and implements of war,
And when our crown was twenty-six years old
Our treasuries were rich with many gems.
I struck a new die for my drachms and turned
To joy and merriment. That year when I
Had ta'en account I found the total sum
Ten million of dínárs. Paidáwasís,[1]

[1] See Vol. vii., p. 95 *note*.

In Persian reckoning, I spent and squandered.
Each purse contained twelve thousand in dínárs,
And those thus spent were royal, while besides
The tribute and dínárs from Hindústán,
The realm of Rúm and land of sorcerers;
Besides from every province gifts and tribute
From all the sovereigns and potentates;
C. 2035 Besides New Year and Autumn offerings,
The gifts of horses and of fair-faced slaves;
Besides cuirasses, helmets, axes, swords,
Which every one sent to us liberally;
Besides musk, camphor, sables, beaver-skins,
Red weasels' and white wolves', our subjects all
Set suchlike loads upon their beasts and sought
Our court in haste; none was recalcitrant.
Abundant toil of all sorts have we spent
To amass a treasure—one additional
To those known as Khuzrá and as 'Arús,[1]
Reserved by me against an evil day.
We long discussed what name the hoard should have,
And in the end we called it Bád Áwar.[2]
Thus in my six and twentieth year of reign
Heaven till the eight and thirtieth favoured me;
My chieftains were all safe, my foes all quaked,
And now I hear that thou art sovereign—
An evil juncture this for all the world,
Which reft of pleasure must perforce be mute.
Thou wilt make earth calamitous, fulfilled
With suffering and profitless. Moreover,
Those same injurious persons that surround thee,
And are the Light[3] of thy dark nights, will give
Thy throne up to the wind that thou mayst not
Enjoy the world. Were there with thee a sage,
So that thy darkened mind might be illumed,
Thou wouldst not do amiss in giving gifts

[1] See Vol. viii., p. 406. [2] *Id.* [3] Urmuzd in text.

So that thy wealth might reach the poor. My son,
Whose days are few, whose wisdom is but scant!
Solicitude will rob thy soul of joy.
This know, that these our treasures are thy stay;
The opportunity is in thy grasp.
They are the appanage of royalty;
A world that is all moneyless is lost.
A pauper Sháh will be unjust, and he
Whose hand is empty hath no strength or worth.
Without the means of largess he by all
Will be declared a fraud and not a Sháh.
Moreover, if thy riches reach thy foes,
And all the idols come to Brahmans' hands,
The worshippers will turn from God, thy name
And fame be spurned. If thou art treasureless
Thou wilt not have an army, and thy subjects
Will hail thee not as Sháh. The dog is good
At begging bread, but if thou fillest him
He threateneth thy life. Again, thou said'st
About my strategy that I have stationed
The troops along the roads, and blamest me
Through ignorance, not knowing gain from loss.
The answer is that by my toil I gathered C. 2036
My splendid treasures, captured foreign cities,
And shattered all my foes that we might sit
Without vexation, toil, or injury
In peace upon the pleasant throne. I scattered
My horse about the frontier, and (to show
The difference 'twixt the worthless and the worthy)
When thou recall'st the troops from every side
The foe will see the road clear, for Írán
Is like a garden in the jocund Spring,
Whose happy blossoms never fail to flower,
A garden of pomegranate and narcissus,
Of apples and of quince; but when the orchard
Becometh void of men the enemy

Will root up all the marjoram and snap
All branches of pomegranate and of quince.
Írán's walls are its troops and gear of war,
Its thorns all arrows on its battlements,
And if in wantonness thou flingest down
The garden-wall the garden is as waste,
As sea or upland. Cast not down its wall
Or thou wilt break the Íránians' hearts and backs,
For then will raid and ravage, horsemen's shouts,
And all the incidents of war ensue.
Expose not thou our children, wives, and land
To trouble: let but one such year elapse,
And sages will describe thee as a fool.
Now I have heard that thou dost give high place
To men unworthy. Know that Núshírwán,
Son of Kubád,[1] recorded in his Letter
Of Counsel that whoe'er doth give his arms
To foes doth give himself to slaughtering,
Since, when he asketh back those arms for use,
The enemy will fight.[2] As for the message
Of Cæsar, which hath made thee call me heartless,
And self-willed, thou recallest not the facts:
Thy words were prompted by some counsellor.
As for my tyranny and his good faith,
Canst thou discern good faith from tyranny?
Receive mine answer, thou of little wit!
But let me say withal, as is but right,
Thou art the plaintiff and the witness too—
A thing no man of wisdom would allow.
When Cæsar washed off from his face the dust
Of bale he chose me as his son-in-law
For valour's sake. Whoever walketh not
The earth for ill, and hath some share of wisdom
Within him, knoweth that Bahrám Chúbína
Began the feud and that the Íránians

[1] Reading with P. and T. [2] See Vol. viii., p. 27.

Took sides with him. The Rúmans did not triumph
O'er him; the drifting sand can not bind fast
The mountain! But in that fight God vouchsafed
To aid me, and the armies of the world
Were naught to me. The Íránians have heard C. 2037
Of those events, and thou shouldst hear from them.
As for myself, I did whate'er I could,
Upon the day of fight, for Niyátús
With kindness and with magnanimity,
But have not reckoned that day's recompense,
And Farrukhzád will tell thee just the same:
Look not upon the world with boyish eyes.
Gashasp, who was our treasurer, can tell,
And that good archimage, our minister,
That I bestowed upon the Rúman troops
A hundred thousand purses from our treasures.
I gave to Niyátús a thousand nuggets,
With earrings and red gold. Each nugget's weight
Was as a thousand treasury-miskáls
I reckoned. I bestowed on him withal
Fine watered pearls that experts had found flawless,
And every one worth thirty thousand drachms
To jewellers, and five score noble steeds,
Selected from my stables—fifty saddled,
The others very choice, housed in brocade,
Mates for the wind upon the waste. I sent
All these to Cæsar with my thanks withal.
For what thou said'st about the Cross of Christ,
That bit of old wood flung among my treasures—
A matter of no loss or gain to me—
Thou hast been listening to some Christian's talk.
I mused that one like Cæsar, great and mighty,
Surrounded as he is by learnéd men—
Philosophers and potentates and priests—
Should call one that was executed God!
While as for this dry, rotten wood, if this

Mere useless Cross were God 'twould be Urmuzd,
Whose name we give to every month's first day,
And would have vanished from our treasury
As Christ himself departed from the world.
Again for what thou said'st: 'Make thine excuse,
Amend thy conduct and ensue God's path,'
I answer: 'May the two hands of Kubád,
His feet and lips and tongue rot! It was God
Who placed the crown upon my head: I took,
And revelled in the gift. I have returned it
Since He demanded it. What next I wonder?
To Him will I confess, not to a boy
Scarce able to distinguish good and ill.'
All that God doth is welcome unto me
Though I have seen much woe and bitterness.
For eight and thirty years have I been Sháh,
And none among the kings hath been my peer.
He that bestowed this world on me may give
Another but will have no thanks of mine!
C. 2038 I will pronounce a blessing on the realm:—
'May earth be ever teeming with the wise.'
So long as God shall help and succour us
None will dare curse."

Then said he to Kharrád:—

"O Memory of the great ones of the world!
Say to that foolish and impetuous boy:—
'The lustre of our countenance is dimmed:
Farewell to thee for ever. As for me,
May all our converse be henceforth with sages.'
As for yourselves, illustrious messengers,
Ye Persians eloquent and eminent!
To both of you I also bid farewell.
Say nothing but the words that ye have heard.
I give my blessing to the world at large,
Which we have looked on as a passing thing.
All mother-born must die—whome'er thou hast

In mind—Khusrau Parwíz back to Kubád.
So too Húshang, Jamshíd, and Tahmúras—
To all the world the founts of fear and hope—
Whom dív and beast acknowledged, passed and died
When their day ended. Farídún, the blest,
Who banned ill, close or open, from the world,
And stayed Zahhák the Arab's hand from evil,
Scaped not by bravery the clutch of fate.
So was it with Árish whose arrow's flight
Was one farsang ;[1] victorious Káran,
The capturer of cities ; Kai Kubád,
Who having come from Mount Alburz became
Through manhood world-lord over all the folk,
And built himself a world-famed house of crystal,[2]
Adorned with lustrous pearls and gates of gems.[3]
So was it with Káús, that man of might,
Who took the world by skill and policy,
He that adventured toward the sky above,
Unwitting of the processes of time ;
So too with Siyáwush, that lion famed,
Who slew two tigers in his youthful days,[4]
And built Gang-dizh[5] with toil but gat therefrom
No treasure. Where are now Afrásiyáb,
The Turkman king, whose semblance e'en in dream
None seeth ; where Rustam, Zál, Asfandiyár,
Whose fame is their memorial with us ;
Gúdarz and his choice sons, three score and ten,
Those cavaliers upon the riding-ground,
And lions of the fray ; where Kai Khusrau,
The noble lion-man who in the fight
Made lions prisoners ; and Sháh Gushtásp,
The convert to 'The Good Faith,' he by whom

[1] Much further according to the legend. See Vol. v., p. 12.
[2] This is attributed to Kai Káús elsewhere. See Vol. ii., pp. 81, 101.
[3] This line occurs three couplets too low in C.
[4] This is not mentioned elsewhere in the poem.
[5] See Vol. ii., pp. 189, 279.

Grace was renewed; where went renowned Sikandar,
Who overturned the world, and where Jámásp,
Who shone in astrologic lore more brightly
C. 2039 Than Sol or Venus? Where is that famed Sháh,
Bahrám Gúr, matchless in his strength and courage?
No Sháh was like him in munificence;
The turning heaven dared not to touch his head.
Where is that Sháh, my grandsire, bright of soul
Who ruled the world as Kisrá Núshírwán?
Where are the seven and forty world-lords?[1] Gone
Is all their work, gone are the Great and Wise,
The warrior-horsemen and the men of lore,
These passing those in prowess and those these
In years? They all have left this spacious world,
Left palace, hall, and riding-ground. Midst Sháhs,
Though some were older far, I had no peer.
I walked the world for good and ill, and held
The evil day aloof. 'Twas mine to traverse
Full many a ruggéd path and sweep away
Full many a foe. My treasures fill all lands;
Where earth and water are my toil is seen.
When with me too the world shall cease, and all
The nobles' hopes grow dim, with my son also
The throne will not abide, for he will quit it,
And all his fortune end. What time the angel
That taketh souls approacheth I shall say:—
'Take my soul gently.' I will clear my heart
By penitence, and freedom from offence
Shall be my breastplate. Well have men of wisdom,
Good, veteran, learned, declared: 'If wakeful fortune
Decline one must expect fears manifold,
And he whose day of greatness hath gone by

[1] Khusrau Parwíz was only the forty-third Sháh. Perhaps some, who never became Sháhs, such as Siyáwush and Asfandiyár, are included, or it may be that the author of this defence (see p. 4) wrote from his own point of view, not that of the supposed speaker.

Is foolish if he asketh its return.'
This is my message to the world, to mean
And mighty too: ere long the Sháh and all
His famous troops will fall to slaughtering
Each other and fling fire on field and fell;
Then sires will fall by sons and sons by sires;
Our enemies, the people that discoursed
Of evil deeds and chilling words, will pay
The smart when we are gone and not for long
Enjoy the world. Since rule and greatness end
With me what reck if Lion or another
Shall have the sway?"
Ashtád and brave Kharrád,
Son of Barzín, those sages, when they heard
The message of that leader, were heart-pierced,
And smote their heads. Both sorrowed for their words;
They buffeted their faces, rent their robes C. 2040
In grief, and scattered dust upon their heads.
Those ancients fared forth from his presence, weeping,
In anguish, with their hearts all arrow-points.
With furrowed faces and in sore distress
They went before Shírwí and every whit
To that man brainless and incompetent
Detailed the message that the Sháh had sent.

§ 3

How Shírwí grieved for Khusrau Parwíz and how the Chiefs were displeased thereat

Shírwí wept bitterly on hearing this;
His heart quaked for the crown and throne, and when
The company dispersed that had dismayed him

With foul words clamouring for his father's blood,
And burning the youth's heart, he left the throne
Of kingship, clasped with honoured hands his head,
And wept blood on his breast. News of that weeping
And of the lamentation of the king,
Came to the host and all were in dismay.
They met, discussed Khusrau Parwíz, and cried :—
" If he shall sit upon the throne again
He will disgrace the captains of the host."
Whenas the sun rose o'er the darksome hills
The malcontents awoke and went to court.
The Sháh, on hearing of it, took his seat
Upon the throne, and those of high degree,
Akin or alien, approached the presence.
They took their seats with scowls but no one spoke.
The king said : " Gibbeting is the desert
Of him that mourneth not my father's woes.
I call such misbegotten and a knave.
Let none depend on such because that man
Is rottener than a rotten willow-tree."
He gat this answer from the men in fault :—
" Call whosoever saith : ' I serve two Sháhs '
A fool at heart and vile whate'er his rank."
Shírwí rejoined : " For Sháhs no wealth no troops !
For one month we will utter pleasant words,
And give no hint of duress to my sire ;
He may make statements that will gladden us
Because his treasures are in every coast."
C. 2041 On hearing this they rose to seek their homes.
Then Sháh Shírwí gave orders to the cooks :—
" Let nothing be denied Khusrau Parwíz :
Serve up his food upon a golden service,
And let the food itself be rich and grateful."
The servers brought it but he would not eat
The viands that were proffered, hot or cold.
Shírín's hand brought to him all that he ate

Because she sorrowed with him in his grief.
She was his sole good friend and soothed his woes
Both day and night, shared all his hopes and fears,
And quaked for him like willow in the wind.
A month passed and meanwhile Khusrau Parwíz
Was full of pain and anguish night and day,
His faults and crimes recalled to memory,
And little relish of that life had he.

§ 4

How Bárbad lamented Khusrau Parwíz, cut off his own Fingers, and burned his Instruments of Music

Now list the lamentation of Bárbad,[1]
And grow forgetful of the world at large.
On hearing that the Sháh, not by advice
And 'gainst his will, no longer filled the throne,
That " men are seeking how to murder him ;
The soldiers are renouncing fealty,"
Bárbad came from Chahram to Taisafún
With tearful eyes and heart o'ercharged ; he came
To that abode and saw the Sháh whereat
His tulip-cheeks became like fenugreek.
He bode awhile in presence of the Sháh,
Then went with wailing to the audience-hall.
His love flamed in his heart, his heart and soul
Burned in his anguish for Khusrau Parwiz ;
His eyes rained like a cloud in Spring and made
His bosom as the margent of the sea.
He fashioned him a dirge upon the harp,
And to that dirge he sang a mournful plaint.

[1] For the story of Bárbad see Vol. viii., p. 396 *seq.*

With visage wan and heart fulfilled with grief
He thus lamented in the olden tongue :—

" O Sháh ! O noble chieftain ! O Khusrau !
O great ! O strong ! O hero ne'er cast down !
Where are thy mastery and greatness now,
Where all thy Grace, thy fortune, and thy crown ?

" Where that imperial circlet, towering height ?
Where are thine armlets and thine ivory throne?
Where all thy manliness, thy Grace, and might,
Who 'neath thy wings hadst this world for thine own ?

" Oh ! whither are thy dames and minstrels gone,
Gate, audience-hall, and leaders of thy day,
C. 2042 The diadem and Káwa's gonfalon,
And all the blue-steel falchions, where are they ?

" Where are the head, the crown that loved it well—
Mate of the earrings and the throne of gold ?
Where are Shabdíz, his stirrups and his sell—
The steed that 'neath thee ever caracol'd ?

" Where are thy helmet, head, and habergeon
All golden and compacted gem to gem,
Thy cavaliers in gold caparison,
Whose swords made enemies the sheaths for them?

" Where all the camels for thy progresses,
The golden litters and attendance rife,
Led steeds, white elephants, and dromedaries ?
Have one and all grown hopeless of thy life ?

"Where are thy fluent tongue and courteous,
Thy heart, thy purpose, and thine ardent soul?
Why reft of all art thou abandoned thus?
Hast read of such a day in any roll?

"Oh! trust not to this world whose remedy
Is weaker than its bane. 'Twas thy desire
To have a son to aid and succour thee:
Now through the son the gyves are on the sire!

"It is by sons that kings obtain their might,
And are unblemished by time's travailings;
Yet ever as his sons increased in height
Both Grace and vigour failed the king of kings.

"None that shall lend an ear while men recall
The story of Khusrau Parwíz must dare
To trust the world. Account as ruined all
Írán and as the pards' and lions' lair.

"Of the Sásánian race the Sháh was head—
One peerless in the sight of crown and state:
The foeman's wishes are accomplishéd,
And, like Írán, the race is desolate.

"No man possessed a larger host than he,
Yet who had cause for justice to beseech?
The great protector brought the misery,
And now the wolves are making for the breach!

"'O Sháh devoid of shame!' thus tell Shírwí,
'Such conduct is not worthy of this court.
Count not upon thy troops' fidelity
When war is rife on all sides.' God support

"Thy soul, my master! and it is my prayer
That He thy foemen's heads may headlong fling.
By God and by thy life, my king! I swear
By New Year's Day, by sun, and jocund Spring,

"If e'er this hand of mine again shall turn
To harping may no blessing light on me;
Mine instruments of music will I burn
That I may ne'er behold thine enemy."

He cut four fingers off and grasped the stumps
Within his other palm. Returning home
He kindled fire and burned his instruments,
While those about Kubád both day and night
At all that might befall them quaked with fright.

§ 5

How the Chiefs demanded from Shírwí the Death of Khusrau Parwíz and how he was slain by Mihr Hurmuzd

C. 2043 Shírwí, a timid, inexperienced youth,
Found that the throne beneath him was a snare,
While readers of mankind saw that 'twas time
For men of might. Those that had done the ill,
And had produced that coil, went from the hall
Of audience to the presence of Kubád
To mind him of their infamous designs:—
"We said before and now we say again
Thy thoughts are not on government alone.
There are two Sháhs now seated in one room,
One on the throne and one on its degree,

And when relations grow 'twixt sire and son
They will behead the servants one and all.
It may not be, so speak of it no more."
Shírwí was frightened and he played poltroon
Because in their hands he was as a slave.
He answered: "None will bring him to the toils
Except a man whose name is infamous.
Ye must go homeward and advise thereon.
Inquire: 'What man is there that will abate
Our troubles secretly?'"
The Sháh's[1] ill-wishers
Sought for a murderer to murder him
By stealth, but none possessed the pluck or courage
To shed the blood of such a king and hang
A mountain round his own neck. Everywhere
The Sháh's foes sought until they met with one
Blue-eyed, pale-cheeked, his body parched and hairy,
With lips of lapis-lazuli, with feet
All dust, and belly ravenous: the head
Of that ill-doer was bare. None knew his name
Midst high and low. This villain (may he never
See jocund Paradise!) sought Farrukhzád,
And undertook the deed. "This strife is mine,"
He said. "If ye will make it worth my while
This is my quarry."
"Go and do it then
"If thou art able," Farrukhzád replied.
"Moreover open not thy lips herein.
I have a purse full of dínárs for thee,
And I will look upon thee as my son."
He gave the man a dagger keen and bright, C. 2044
And then the murderer set forth in haste.
The miscreant, when he approached the Sháh,
Saw him upon the throne, a slave attending.
Khusrau Parwíz quaked when he saw that man,

[1] Khusrau Parwíz.

And shed tears from his eyelids on his cheeks
Because his heart bare witness that the day
Of heaviness was near. He cried: "O wretch!
What is thy name? Thy mother needs must wail thee."

The man replied: "They call me Mihr Hurmuzd,
A stranger here with neither friend nor mate."

Thus said Khusrau Parwíz: "My time hath come,
And by the hand of an unworthy foe,
Whose face is not a man's, whose love none seeketh."

He bade a boy attending him: "Go fetch,
My little guide! an ewer, water, musk,
And ambergris, with cleaner, fairer robes."

The boy-slave heard, unwitting what was meant,
And so the little servant went away,
And brought a golden ewer to the Sháh
As well as garments and a bowl of water,
Whereon Khusrau Parwíz made haste to go,
Gazed on the sacred twigs and muttered prayers:
It was no time for words or private talk.
The Sháh put on the garments brought, he made
Beneath his breath confession of his faults,
And wrapped a new simarre about his head
In order not to see his murderer's face.
Then Mihr Hurmuzd, the dagger in his hand,
Made fast the door and coming quickly raised
The great king's robe and pierced his liverstead.

Such is the process of this whirling world,
From thee its secret keeping closely furled!
The blameless speaker and the boastful see
That all its doings are but vanity,
For be thou wealthy or in evil case
This Wayside Inn is no abiding-place;
Yet be offenceless and ensue right ways
If thou desirest to receive just praise.

When tidings reached the highways and bázárs:—

"Khusrau Parwíz was slaughtered thus," his foes
Went to the palace-prison of the sad,
Where fifteen of his noble sons were bound,
And slew them there, though innocent, what time
The fortune of the Sháh was overthrown.
Shírwí, the world-lord, dared say naught and hid
His grief though he wept sorely at the news,
And afterwards sent twenty of his guards
To keep his brothers' wives and children safe C. 2045
Now that the Shah had been thus done to death.
So passed that reign and mighty host away,
Its majesty, its manhood, and its sway
Such as no kings of kings possessed before,
Or heard of from the men renowned of yore.
It booteth nothing what the wise man saith
When once his head is in the dragon's breath.
Call this world "crocodile" for it doth gnaw
The prey that it hath taken with its claw.
The work of Sháh Khusrau Parwíz is done;
His famous hoards and throne and host are gone.
To put one's trust in this world is to be
In quest of dates upon a willow-tree.
Why err in such a fashion from the way
Alike by darksome night and shining day?
Whate'er thy gains let them suffice thee still
As thou art fain to save thy soul from ill,
And in thy day of strength hold thyself weak;
For kindly impulses and justice seek,
And be intent on good. For what is thine
To give or spend do as thou dost incline;
All else is pain and toil. How goodlier
Than we are friends whose faithfulness is clear!
Such faithfulness of friends is greatly dear.

§ 6

How Shírwí asked Shírín in Marriage, how Shírín killed herself, and how Shírwí was slain

Since I have ended with Khusrau Parwíz
I speak next of Shírwí and of Shírín.
As soon as three and fifty days had passed
Since that whereon that glorious Sháh was slain
Shírwí dispatched Shírín a messenger
To say: "Thou wicked, potent sorceress,
Learned but in necromancy and black arts!
In all Írán thou art the guiltiest.
By necromancy didst thou gain the Sháh,
And by thy craft thou bringest down the moon.
Quake, guilty one! and come to me. Abide not
Thus in thy palace, joyful and secure."
Shírín raged at his message and abuse
So foul and senseless. Thus she said: "God grant
That parricides possess not Grace or presence.
I will not see the wretch e'en from afar
At funeral or feast."
That mournful dame
Sent for a scribe and had a document
Drawn in the olden tongue, instructing him
Regarding her last wishes and estate.
C. 2046 She kept a little poison in a pyx;
She could not well procure it in the city.
She kept it on her, sewed a winding-sheet
To wrap her form—that cypress of the garden—
And then returned this answer to Shírwí:—
"Exalted Sháh, the wearer of the crown!
Now perish all thy words and perish too
The villain's heart and spirit that hath heard

Of witchcraft save by name and joyed therein.
Had Sháh Khusrau Parwíz been one to cheer
His soul with sorcery there would have been
A sorceress within his bower, and she
Had seen his face.[1] He kept me for his pleasure,
And when the dawn was peeping he was wont
To call me from the golden bower and joy
At sight of me. Shame on thee for such words!
Such knavish talk becometh not a king.
Remember God, the Giver of all good,
And utter not such words in others' hearing."

They brought the answer to the Sháh. Shírwí
Raged 'gainst the guiltless dame[2] and said: "Thou needs
Must come. None is blood-thirstier than thou.
Come and behold my crown's top. If it be
Magnifical then do it reverence."

Shírín, on hearing this, was full of pain;
She writhed; her cheeks grew wan. She thus replied:—
"I will not come to thee save in the presence
Of those wise men that are about thy court,
Men of experience and clerkly skill."

Shírwí dispatched and summoned fifty men
Both wise and old, then sent one to Shírín,
To say: "Arise and come. Enough of talk."

Thereat she robed herself in blue and black,
And drew anear the Sháh, approached apace
The Rosary of Revellers[3]—the spot
Wherein those fluent Persians were—and sat
Behind the great king's curtain as became

[1] Reading with P.

[2] So far as the charge of witchcraft was concerned. Shírín (Vol. viii., p. 389) had murdered Maryam, Kubád's mother.

[3] "elle alla droit à la salle de fête de Schadegân." Mohl or, more strictly, Barbier de Meynard, who completed the translation from §4 to the end of the poem.

The virtuous. He sent to her to say :—
" Two months[1] of mourning for Khusrau Parwíz
Are o'er. Now be my wife that thou mayst take
Thy pleasure and avoid a mean estate.
I will maintain thee as my father did,
And e'en with more respect and tenderness."
Shírín replied : " Let me be righted first,
And then my life shall be at thy dispose.
I will not hesitate in answering
The hest and purpose of thy glorious heart."
Shírwí agreed to that fair dame's request,
C. 2047 Whereat the noble lady raised her voice
Behind the royal curtains, saying : " O Sháh !
Be happy and victorious. Thou said'st
That I was a bad woman and a witch,
Remote from purity and rectitude."
Shírwí replied : " 'Twas so, but generous folk
Do not take dudgeon at mere hastiness."
Shírín addressed the other Persians present
Within the Rosary of Revellers,
And asked : " What have ye seen in me of ill,
Guile, folly, and dark ways ? For many a year
I was the mistress of Írán and helped
The Brave in everything. I ne'er ensued
Aught but the right ; fraud and deceit I banned.
Through my word many were made governors,
And took their portions of the world full oft.
Who hath beheld my shadow in Írán
Away from home ? If any one hath marked
My shadow, crown, and state let such declare
What he hath seen or heard and by his answer
Reveal the truth."
The magnates in attendance
All spake her fair. " In all the world," they said,
" She hath no peer in public and in private."

[1] Reading with P.

Shírín proceeded thus: "Ye lords and chiefs
Both veteran and redoubted! three things make
The worth of women that bedeck the throne
Of greatness: one is modesty and wealth
Wherewith her husband may adorn his house;
The next is bearing blesséd sons, that she
May e'en exceed her spouse in happiness;
The third is having beauty and fine form,
Joined with the love of a sequestered life.
When I was mated to Khusrau Parwíz,
And entered on seclusion, he had come
Weak and dispirited from Rúm to live
Within our land, but after reached such power
As none had heard of or had looked upon.
Moreover I have had four sons by him
To his great joy—Nastúr, Shahryár, Farúd,
And Mardánsháh, blue heaven's coronal.
Jamshíd and Farídún had not such sons;
May my tongue perish if I lie herein!
Their bodies all are now beneath the dust,
Their spirits roaming in pure Paradise."
Unveiling then her lovely countenance,
And musky hair, "There is my face," she added,
"Such as it is. If there be falsehood show it.
My hair was all my hidden excellence,
For none on earth e'er used to look thereon.
What I display is all my sorcery,
Not necromancy, fraud, and evil bent."
None had beheld her hair before, no chief C. 2048
Had heard thereof. The elders were astound,
And their mouths watered. When Shírwí beheld
The visage of Shírín his spirit flew
Unmarked away from him. Her face so dazed him
That love of her filled all his heart. He cried:—
"I want none but thyself. If I have thee
For wife Írán can give me nothing more.

I will not go from thy commands, but limn
My loyalty to thee upon mine eyes."
The lady of the lovely face replied:—
"I still need somewhat of the Íránian king.
I have two wants if thou wilt bid me speak,
And may thy king of kingship last for ever."
Shírwí replied: "My soul is thine, thy wish,
Whate'er it be, is granted."
Said Shírín:—
"All treasures laid up by me in this land
Thou shalt assign me as mine own before
This noble company and write thyself
Upon this roll that thou renouncest all,
Both small and great."
Shírwí made haste to do
Her bidding. Having gained her wish she quitted
The Rosary of Revellers, the chiefs
And noble Persians, went home, freed her slaves,
And made them happy with that wealth of hers
Whereof she gave a part to mendicants,
And to her family a larger share.
She gave too somewhat to the Fanes of Fire,
The feasts of New Year's Day and Mihr and Sada,
To ruined homes and caravansarais
Then turned to lions' lairs. All this she gave
As offerings from Khusrau Parwíz, the world-lord,
And joyed his soul thereby. She sought the garden
And taking off her veil sat unadorned
Upon the ground and summoning her folk
Assigned with courtesy a place to each,
Then cried thus loudly: "Hear, ye unaggrieved!
For none will ever see my face again.
Fear ye the Judge of those that seek for justice,
The Lighter of the sun and moon and stars,
And speak but truth; deceit is not for sages.
Since first I came before Khusrau Parwíz,

First made mine entry to his golden bower,
And was chief wife and Glory of the Sháh,
Hath any fault at all appeared in me ?
There is no need to speak to save my face :
What booteth that to woman in her need ? "
All rose to make reply : " Famed dame of dames, (2040
So eloquent and wise and bright of soul !
By God ! none ever saw thee, ever heard
Thy voice behind the curtains. Verily
Thy like hath sat not on the goodly throne
Since Sháh Húshang."
Then all the servitors,
Slaves emulous and vigilant of heart,
Exclaimed : " Exalted lady praised in Chín,
In Rúm and in Taráz ! who would presume
To speak aught ill of thee ? Could evil-doing
Befit that face of thine ? "
Thus said Shírín : —
" This reprobate, whom heaven above will curse,
Slew his own sire to compass crown and throne,
And may he never more see fortune's face !
Hath he himself shut death out by a wall
Who lightly reeked thus of a father's blood ?
He sent a message to me that bedimmed
Mine own shrewd soul. I answered : ' While I live
My heart shall serve my Maker.' I declared
My purpose fully, fearful of my foe :
He may defame me publicly when dead.
Ye are free agents and my slaves no longer."
They wept much at her words and furthermore
Consumed with anguish for Khusrau Parwíz.
Informants went before the Sháh and told
What they had heard about that guiltless dame.
He asked : " Hath that good lady further wishes ? "
She sent to say : " I have one wish, no more :
I fain would ope the late Sháh's charnel-house ;

I have a great desire to look on him."
Shírwí replied: "So do, 'tis natural."
The keeper oped the door. That pious lady
Began her wailing, went and laid her face
Upon the visage of Khusrau Parwíz,
Spake of the past and took the mortal bane:[1]
She sent the dust up from her own sweet life.
She sat beside the Sháh with visage veiled,
Clad in a single camphor-scented robe;
She set her back against the wall and died;
She died and won the plaudits of the world.
Shírwí fell sick when he had heard the news,
For such a spectacle affrighted him.
He bade construct another sepulchre,
And make her diadem of musk and camphor.
C. 2050 He shut the old Sháh's charnel. Soon they gave
Shírwí the bane; the world had had its fill
Of Sháhs! Thus luckless both in birth and death
He left the throne of kingship to his son.
One reigneth seven months and in the eighth
Doth don the camphor crown! Of earth's good things
To have possession of the throne is best,
Of evils life cut short is evilest.

[1] *Cf.* p. 36.

XLV

ARDSHÍR, SON OF SHÍRWÍ

HE REIGNED SIX MONTHS

ARGUMENT

Ardshír's accession is well received by the people. He makes Pírúz, son of Khusrau, the captain of the host. Guráz, on the pretext of avenging Khusrau Parwíz, but really with the intention of seizing the kingship for himself, schemes to bring about the death of the Sháh who is murdered at a banquet by Pírúz.

NOTE

Ardshír (Artaxerxes III., September, A.D. 628—April, A.D. 630) was, according to Tabarí, only seven years old at his accession. By some accounts he was only one year old at the time.[1] He was of course a mere puppet in the hands of the nobles. The "True Cross," if the date of its elevation at Jerusalem—Sept. 14th, A.D. 629—be correct, must have been restored during his reign.[2]

§ 1. The Arabic Tabarí says that the realm was administered by Mih-Ázar-Gushnasp (Mihr 'Hasis in the Persian version), the High Steward, who had charge of the Sháh's person. This may account for his being made out to be a regicide in the Sháhnáma. He really seems to have been a well-intentioned man who did his best in very difficult circumstances. At all events, according to the Persian Tabarí, Shahrbaráz, after taking possession of Ctesiphon, slew him and other nobles on the pretext of avenging the death of Khusrau Parwíz.

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[1] NT, p. 386. ZT, ii., 347. [2] NT, p. 392 *note*.

§ 2. It appears that Shahrbaráz (Guráz) was not consulted when Ardshír was raised to the throne, and he made this an excuse for taking violent measures. The occasion was a favourable one for an ambitious general in command of an army. Moreover, he had an understanding, confirmed by matrimonial alliances, with Heraclius, who no doubt promised to recognise him if he became Sháh. He accordingly marched upon Ctesiphon with 6,000 or, according to another account, 60,000 troops. The High Steward made an attempt at resistance, but Shahrbaráz with the connivance of the captain of the guard and other chiefs was successful and the usual scenes of outrage and massacre ensued.[1]

§ 1

How Ardshír, Son of Shírwí, ascended the Throne and harangued the Chiefs

Now as the next confronting me I voice
The reign of Sháh Ardshír, I have no choice.
When Sháh Ardshír sat on the throne both young
And old flocked to him from Írán, for many
Were chiefs grown old, to hear what he would say.[2]
The young Ardshír then loosed his tongue and thus
He spake: "Ye well-tried warriors! may one,
Whoe'er he be, that sitteth on the seat
Of sovereignty possess an open mind,
And worship God. We will ensue the course
Of former Sháhs, ensue too Grace and Faith.
May we remember God who giveth good,
May all our acts be just! I will advance
The pious and make tyrants bleed. I trust
The army to Pírúz, son of Khusrau,
Who loveth equity and loyal lieges.

[1] For the above see *Id.*, p. 386 and *notes*. ZT, ii., 347. RSM, p. 541
[2] Couplet omitted.

They for their part with such a paladin
Still will be happy and serene of soul."
Full many were contented with his speech ;
A peaceful ruler was the wish of each.

§ 2

How Guráz was displeased at Ardshír being Sháh and how he caused Ardshír to be slain by Pírúz, Son of Khusrau

Then tidings reached Guráz, who had involved
Khusrau Parwíz in sorrow and distress,
And he dispatched from Rúm a man to say :—
" The crown of vile Shírwí is in the dust.
Hell take his soul and be his charnel-house C. 2051
O'erturned ! Who ever knew a lofty cypress
Wrecked in the garden by the grass, and one
Like to Khusrau Parwíz, whose peer as king
Time's eye and heart perceive not, who bestowed
My greatness on me, and I have not turned
From his behest ? Now fate dethroneth him,
And fortune's face is utterly averse ;
The circling heaven is his foe and maketh
His portion to be hidden in the earth ;
The sun and moon amerce him of his sway,
And take the crown and throne from such a king,
Bestow the sovereignty upon Shírwí,
And give up all Írán to wretchedness !
When he passed and Ardshír assumed the crown
Both young and old rejoiced in him, but I,
If I have any portion in Írán,
Will suffer not our country's air to breathe

Upon him. Have I not received the news
Of Sháh Khusrau Parwíz wrecked by the words
Of one of evil mark? I will not have
A king like this one though the age be Sháhless,
For there is much contention in his head,
And he adviseth with another host.
Now will I come in force with chosen chiefs
Of Rúm and of Írán, and we shall see
What sort of Head that is to whom such schemes
Appeal. I will uproot him so that never
Shall he name kingship more."

He sent a runner
To seek the ancients of the Íránian host,
And strove in other fashion to advance
His ill designs by writing to Pírúz,
Son of Khusrau, thus: "The Sásánians' fortune
Is louring and we need a world-aspirant
To gird himself for action. Haply thou
Art ware of what to do and how to take
The needful steps, wilt seek for many helpers,
Both young and old, wilt clear away Ardshír,
And afterwards attain thy whole desire,
Be safe and well contented; but if thou
Reveal this plot, and feed the sword of war
With blood, I will lead forth such hosts from Rúm
That I shall make the world dark in thine eyes.
Heed well my words, and mayst thou think no scorn
Of mine intent; thou must not fall through folly.
Oh! pass not from the throne of majesty
To underneath the dust. Repentance then
Will not avail thee when in wreak my sword
Is reaping heads."

Pírúz, son of Khusrau,
When he had read that letter and perceived
The whole intendment of that self-willed man,
C. 2052 Much pondered on the matter and consulted

The ancient magnates, saying: "This affair
Hath come upon me unawares and like
A revelation!"
This was their reply:—
"Famed and redoubted chieftain! if our Sháh
Shall perish we shall rightly perish too
For such a crime. Let not Guráz' words move thee
To perpetrate such ill, but take occasion
For doing good. Write him a fitting answer,
And wake him from his dream. Say: 'Thwart not thou
God's purposes; give not the Dív a way
To thine own heart. Reflect upon the case
Of Sháh Khusrau Parwíz and all the wrong
That led to his undoing, for what time
Thou didst depose him the Sásánian fortune
Went at one blow, and when Shírwí ascended
The royal throne and girt his kingly loins
Folk hoped such days as when Khusrau Parwíz
Was Sháh whose wits were keen in all regards,
And if the world became what it became,
And gat no profit from the state of things,
It was because the world dealt foolishly,
And by one stroke lost its advantages.
Now that Ardshír, succeeding to Kubád,
Is seated as the Sháh upon the throne,
The world rejoicing in his majesty,
And earth and time exulting in his Grace,
Why should the world, now tranquil, be convulsed
By pain and war? Knock not at evils' door;
Those that slay blameless kings will prosper not.
In this strife circling heaven must not raise
Írán in dust. I fear that God will end
The Íránians' term for ills more heinous still.'"
Pírúz, on this wise counselled, wrote Guráz—
That villain of vile race (may none like him

Be ever chief!) —a profitable letter,
And thou hadst said that one had got his heart
Between the shears when he had read those words.
In fierce wrath with Pírúz, son of Khusrau,
He gathered all his baggage and commanded
The host to march forth plainwards. At the news
Pírúz dispatched a cameleer to go
In all haste to Tukhár to summon him,
Informing him at large of the affair,
Of what Guráz was doing and the strife
About the imperial throne. Then from Tukhár
This answer reached Pírúz, son of Khusrau :—
C. 2053 "Risk not the blood of the Íránian chiefs,
O noble man! but hear what saith Guráz.
Since thou hast written on such wise perchance
He may not come to fight with thee."

Now when
Pírúz, son of Khusrau, had seen that letter
His heart had no repose from evil thoughts,
But gloomed with thinking how to harm the Sháh,
Whose wont it was to summon him, for he
Was an observant man and eloquent,
And served as minister and treasurer.
He came one dark night for an audience,
And found the wine bright and the welcome warm.
Ardshír was seated in his palace-hall
In company with many young and old,
And when Pírúz, son of Khusrau, came raised,
Thou wouldst have said, his head to heaven, called
For harp, and all the hall was filled with music.
Pírúz, son of Khusrau, when midnight came,
Had drunk one man[1] of wine while the companions
Of Sháh Ardshír were all bemused; no minstrel
Was left that kept his wits. The miscreant
Dismissed the company: he and the Sháh

[1] See Vol. i., p. 290 *note*.

Alone remained. That man of outrage rose,
Laid hand upon the Sháh's lips unawares,
And held it there until Ardshír was dead.
The palace filled with scimitars and arrows.
All there—ambitious youths and warriors—
Were fautors of Pírúz, son of Khusrau.
Upon this manner ceased Ardshír to be
When he had had six months of sovereignty.

XLVI

GURÁZ (ALSO CALLED FARÁYÍN)

HE REIGNED FIFTY DAYS

ARGUMENT

Guráz, hearing of Ardshír's death, marches on Taisafún and urged on by his younger, though dissuaded by his elder son, usurps the throne. His rule described. A plot is formed against him and he is slain while returning from the chase. The throne remains vacant for a while.

NOTE

Cf. note to previous reign. Guráz (Shahr-Barz, April 27th—June 9th, A.D. 630) reigned for forty days.[1] He was one of the three chief generals employed by Khusrau Parwíz in his long war against the Eastern Roman Empire. His real name, according to Tabarí, was Farruhán. This in Pahlaví would be Farrukhán, which by a misreading has become Faráyín in the Sháhnáma. Shahrbaráz (Shahrguráz, or Shahrwaráz) is, says Tabarí, a title. Firdausí uses the shortened form Guráz, which means "boar," because it is more convenient metrically. The title may have been appropriate enough. In the Sháhnáma the general is split up into two personalities—Guráz or Faráyín, the usurper, and Shahránguráz, the avenger of the breach made by the upstart in the sacred line of Sásánian succession.[2] In Tabarí the leader of the revolt is a native of Istákhr named Pusfarrukh.[3] Shahránguráz in the Sháhnáma is also of the same city.

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[1] NT, p. 390 and *note*. [2] *Id.* pp. 292 and *note*. 388 and *note*. [3] *Id.*

§ 1

How Guráz (also called Faráyín) received News of the Slaying of Ardshír, hastened to Írán, took Possession of the Throne, and was killed by Shahrán-guráz

Pírúz, son of Khusrau, dispatched a post,
And letter too, in secret to Guráz,
Whose sombre soul, what time the messenger
Arrived, grew like the sun, and from those parts
He led forth such an army that the way
Was barred to fly and emmet. Like the wind
He sped to Taisafún, his soldiers' hands
All had been bathed in blood. When he arrived
The chiefs went out to welcome him, but none
Among the troops dared breathe for they were few. C. 2054
Guráz, on entering the city, stayed not
For minister and counsellor but chose
A void place, and the magnates privily
Conferred with him. Pírúz, son of Khusrau,
Set loose his tongue and said: "Famed paladin!
Whom hast thou chosen to be king of kings,
And illustrate the crown of majesty?"
The warrior Guráz made answer thus:—
"I have not any secrets from Írán.
To-morrow look ye out for some new Sháh
To sit like some new moon upon the throne."
Since knowledge is the glory of a man
Walk not, if thou canst help it, foolishly.
He that hath wisdom speaketh goodly words,
And as it groweth he deserteth ill.

It is the best of man's accomplishments,
The world's endeavour and the way of God.
Of things that grace one there is no need
To speak at large for he will foolishly
Disgrace himself howe'er he may exalt
The case in point. When wisdom hath deserted
The head, and shame the eye, fame and disgrace,
And cold and hot, are one—no terror this
To any coward whether quick or dead.
Make, if thou canst, all good thy business
Because the world abideth not with any.
Let all thy usance be humanity,
Munificence and uprightness thy Faith.

When Faráyín assumed the royal crown
He uttered what was in his mind and said :—
"Let me assume the kingship for a while,
And sit upon the throne of gold in joy.
Far better scatter wealth and be exalted
Than purchase sixty years of servitude.
Thus will I sit a while in sovereignty,
Arrayed in satin[1] and in painted silk,
And after me my son shall take my throne,
Assume this royal crown, be king as was
His sire, and be exalted and renowned.
Whoe'er shall minister to our delight
Shall be a happy man among mankind.
In feast-time we will drink with joyful hearts,
In war-time we will hunt our enemies."

His elder son said privily to him :—
"Who of us, father! ever wore the crown?
Feel not secure, take means to compass wealth;
Thou wast the world's protector; keep to that.
If any member of the royal race
Shalt come thou wilt not long be here; thy heart
Will keep of kingship only grief and pain;

[1] Or "beaver-skins."

Thou wilt be wretched, destitute, and wan."
Then said the younger son: "Thou hast become C. 2055
Crowned in the world and hast both troops and treasures
Befitting royalty, but treasureless
Wilt have to labour still. What ancestor
Of Farídún, who had Abtín to sire,
E'er wore the crown? Hold fast the world by courage
And treasure. Nobody is born a king."[1]
The younger's words pleased Faráyín the best,
Who bade his elder son: "Be not so raw."
He laid out in the royal offices
The muster-roll and called all troops to court.
He gave drachms night and day and many robes
Of honour ill-deserved. Within two weeks
Of all the treasury of Sháh Ardshír
Remained not what would buy an arrow's plume!
Whene'er Guráz would go forth to the pleasance
The lights were torches made of ambergris,
Four score before and four score after him:
Behind them came his friends and partisans.
Of gold and silver were the goblets all,
The golden gem-encrusted.[2] 'Twas his use
To feast all night. The nobles' hearts were full
Of vengeance on him. 'Twas his wont to roam
A-nights the gardens and the riding-ground.
Save but to sleep and wake, to eat and plunder,
That slight, weak-witted one knew naught. He went
Drunk ever to repose and with a sash
From Chín about his head. The troops were all
Vexed to the heart at him while all the province
Was full of turmoil and distress. He lost
All trace of generosity and grew
Unjust, unfortunate, and good for naught.
The world was wrecked by his iniquity,

[1] But *cf.* Vol. vi., p. 320. [2] The above couplets transposed.

And at his handling people smote their heads.
He shed the blood of innocents until
The troops grew wroth with him. He used to shut
His eyes for gold and would have sold the world
To win dínárs. Folk cursed him. All desired
His death and meeting privily discussed
His deeds. Hurmuzd Shahránguráz, a horseman
Redoubted of the city of Istakhr—
The glory of the chieftains—thus addressed
One night the Íránians secretly: "Ye chiefs!
The time of Faráyín is proving grievous;
He holdeth all the chiefs in light esteem.
Why have your brains and hearts become thus straitened?
Through him all eyes are tearful, livers charged
With blood. Is no physician to be found?
He is not royal or Sásánian;
Why gird the loins before him? Of a truth
C. 2056 Your hearts have flown out of your breasts or else
Your pluck hath disappeared!"
The folk replied:—
"Since there was no one left fit for the throne
None is inspired by jealousy to take
This base-born's heart away; but we adopt
Thy counsel. Tell us from thy stores of lore
How to release Írán from this insane
And hot-brained Sháh ill both in word and deed.
May he be never blessed!"
Shahránguráz
Replied: "The Íránians have suffered long.
If ye will harm me not but play the Persian
E'en now by holy God's aid will I bring him
Down from his throne to dust."
He gat this answer:—
"May no harm come to thee! All we the host
To-day are thy supporters and thy stronghold

If ill herefrom befall thee."
Hearing this
That royal warrior sought how to set
Hands on the worthless Sháh. Now he one day
Took order and departed from the city
To hunt, and of the Íránians a troop
Of lords and lieges fared, escorting him.
He urged his courser on and rode about
As 'twere Ázargashasp, the cavaliers
Encircling him and beating up the game.
Now at what time they turned back city-wards
Shahránguráz looked at the hapless Sháh
With boldness, chose an arrow from his quiver,
One that was straight and had a point of steel,
And urged his black steed while the host looked on.
He stretched the bow and drew it out at whiles
To chest or head, then notched, as if in sport,
An arrow on the string and drew the bow
Till it concealed the point, and loosed his thumb.
Forthwith the shaft struck on the monarch's back,
Who dropped his whip. The arrow was all blood
Up to the feathers and the iron head
Protruded from his navel. All the troops
Unsheathed and all that night while dust-clouds rose
They plied their swords and knew not whom they fought,
But took and gave back blows and cursed or blessed
That deed. Now when the yellow Veil appeared,
So that the world seemed like a leopard's back,
There was a multitude of slain and maimed,
And cavaliers and leaders were astound.
That great host was dispersed like timid sheep C. 2057
When they perceive a wolf. Long they remained
Without a king: none cared to claim the crown.
For long they sought and sought in vain to trace
Some royal scion of the noble race.

XLVII

PÚRÁNDUKHT

SHE REIGNED SIX MONTHS

NOTE

Púrándukht (Puranducht, summer A.D. 630—autumn A.D. 631), reigned, according to Tabarí, for one year and four months. Her name, it appears, should be spelt with a B, not with a P. She is said to have restored the "True Cross," but it seems more probable that this was done in the reign of Ardshír. She made the leader of the successful conspiracy against Shahrbaráz her prime minister.[1] She was the first historical female Sháh and it was in allusion to her reign and that of her sister Ázarmdukht that the distich is quoted in Mír Khánd :—

> "No dignity remains in a household
> In which the hens are crowing like cocks."[2]

§ 1

How Púrándukht ascended the Throne and slew Pírúz, Son of Khusrau, and how her own Life ended

'Tis but crude policy when women rule,
But yet there was a lady—Púrándukht—
Surviving of the lineage of Sásán,

[1] For the above see NT, p. 390 *seq.* and *notes*, ZT, ii., 349.
[2] RM, Pt. II., vol. iii., p. 101.

And well read in the royal volume : her
They seated on the throne of sovereignty,
The Great strewed jewels over her, and then
She spake upon this wise : " I will not have
The people scattered,[1] and I will enrich
The poor with treasure that they may not bide
In their distress. God grant that in the world
There may be none aggrieved because his pain
Is my calamity. I will expel
Foes from the realm and walk in royal ways."
She made search for Pírúz, son of Khusrau,
Who was delated by an alien,
Whereat she chose some warriors from the host
Who brought Pírúz before her. She exclaimed :—
" Foul-purposed miscreant ![2] thou shalt receive,
As infamous, the guerdon for thy deeds."
She bade bring from the stalls a colt unbroken,
And bound, firm as a rock, Pírúz thereto
Without a saddle and with yoke on neck.
The vengeful lady had that untamed steed
Brought to the riding-ground and thither sent,
With lassos coiled up in their saddle-straps,
A band of warriors to urge the colt
To utmost speed, to strive from time to time
To throw Pírúz and ever roll itself
Upon the ground. That colt won much applause
Until with skin in shreds and dripping blood
Pírúz gave up the ghost right wretchedly. C. 2058
Why having done wrong seekest thou for justice ?
Nay, ill for ill ; that is the course of right.
Púrándukht ruled the world with gentleness ;
No wind from heaven blew upon the dust,
But when six months had passed beneath her sway
The circle of her life bent suddenly ;
For one week she was ailing, then expired,

[1] Through misgovernment. [2] One couplet omitted

And took away with her a fair renown.
Such is the process of the turning sky,
So potent while so impotent are we!
If thine be opulence or poverty,
If life affordeth gain or loss to thee,
If thou shalt win what thou desirest so,
Or disappointed be in wretchedness,
And whether thou be one of wealth or woe,
Both woe and wealth will pass away no less.
Reign as a Sháh a thousand years, five score,
For sixty years or thirty, ten or four,
It cometh to one thing, when all is done,
If thou hadst many years or barely one.
Oh! may thine actions thine own comrades be,
For they in every place will succour thee.
Let go thy clutch upon this Wayside Inn
Because a goodlier place is thine to win.
If thine endeavour be to learning given
Thou wilt by knowledge roam revolving heaven.

XLVIII

ÁZARMDUKHT

SHE REIGNED FOUR MONTHS

NOTE

Before Ázarmdukht (Azermidocht, end of A.D. 631—beginning of A.D. 632) came to the throne there seems to have been a short interval during which a distant scion of the royal House, who took the name of Pírúz, ruled for less than a month. The chief noble of the time, who was governor of Khurásán, wished to make Ázarmdukht his wife on which she had him privately executed. This noble's son was the Rustam that fought and fell at Kádisíya some years later. On hearing of his father's fate Rustam, who was in temporary authority in Khurásán, marched with a great army against Ázarmdukht, overthrew her and put her to death after she had reigned six months. Her name probably means "modest girl."[1]

§ 1

How Ázarmdukht ascended the Throne and how she died

There was another dame hight Ázarmdukht,
Who had fruition of the crown of greatness.
She came, sat down upon the royal throne,
And made herself the mistress of the world.
Her first words were: "O sages, veterans,
And masters of affairs! be just in all,

[1] For the above see NT, p. 393 and notes, ZT, ii, 350 *seq.*

And follow precedent, for ye hereafter
Must make the bricks your pillow. I will foster
The loyal liege, assist him with dinárs,
And if he erreth be longsuffering;
But him that is disloyal and deserteth
The way of wisdom and of precedent
Will I suspend in shame upon the gibbet,
Be he an Arab, Rúman cavalier,
Or Persian thane."

She filled the throne four months,
But with the fifth disaster came thereto,
C. 2059 For she too died, the throne had not a Sháh,
But was the plaything of the ill-disposed.
With the revolving sky 'tis everything
To be all vengeful with its fosterling.

XLIX

FARRUKHZÁD

HE REIGNED ONE MONTH

NOTE

Between, and even earlier than, the death of Ázarmdukht and the accession of Yazdagird III., the order of the dynastic succession becomes very confused. The names of the Sháhs vary in the different lists. The reason is that it was a period of great internal unrest and various aspirants to the throne held contemporaneously some short-lived authority in different provinces of the empire. One of these princes, Farrukhzád (Farrukhzád-Khusrau) has received the honour of being included in the list of the Sháhs as recorded in the Sháhnáma. Two accounts of the length of his reign are given in Tabarí. According to one, it lasted for six months, according to the other, for a year. Both agree that he did not die a natural death, and one of them states that his death was instigated by the adherents of Yazdagird.[1]

§ 1

How Farrukhzád ascended the Throne and how he was slain by a Slave

Then from Jahram they summoned Farrukhzád,
And seated him upon the throne of kingship.
There with a pious soul he praised the Maker,

[1] NT, p. 397 and note. Cf. RSM, p. 544.

And said: "Son of the kings of kings am I,
And would have naught but quiet in the world.
The mischief-maker shall not be exalted
While I am Sháh, but him that from his heart
Ensueth right, and is not mischievous,
Will I hold dear as my pure soul, and seek not
To harm the harmless. Him that beareth toil
On our behalf we will reward with treasure.
We will hold dear all friends and raise the fame
Of chieftains everywhere, but all my subjects,
Both friends and enemies, are safe with me."
The troops all blessed him: "Ne'er may earth and time
Lack thee." Yet when his throne was one month old
The head of all his fortune came to dust.
He had a slave, a cypress-tree in stature,
Fair, lusty, and well-liking. That knave's name
Was Siyah Chashm.[1] May heaven ne'er bring his like!
The Sháh too had a handmaid whom he loved.
She chanced on Siyah Chashm all unawares
One day, who sent to say: "If thou wilt meet me
At such a place thou shalt have endless gifts,
And I will deck thy crown with jewelry."
The handmaid heard, made no reply, but went
And told the thing to Farrukhzád who raged,
And could not eat or sleep in his concern.
He put the feet of Siyah Chashm in fetters,
And cast him into prison. When the knave
Had been confined awhile the Sháh released him,
C. 2060 For many pled for him. The slave returned
To serve the Sháh and cut his lifetime short,
For just as such a bad malignant slave
Would do he sought revenge upon the Sháh,
And seizing on a time when Farrukhzád

[1] Black-eyed.

Reposed himself put poison in the wine.
The Sháh drank, lived one week, and all that heard
About his fate lamented him. The kingship
Was in extremities and foes appeared
On every side. The throne of king of kings,
Through these ill doings of the Íránians,
Was overturned.

Of such a fashion are
Time's revolutions! Let it be thy care
To gather for thyself therefrom thy share.
Eat what thou hast and trust the morrow not,
For it may hold for thee a different lot:
To give to others it may take from thee.
Thou callest this a world and verily
It doth whirl! So enjoy thine own, let go
The surplusage that thou hast toiled for so
To other folk but never to thy foe,
Else whensoe'er thy day is overpast
Thy hoards will be as is the desert-blast,
Thy treasures all become thine enemy's;
So give away to set thy mind at ease.

L

YAZDAGIRD

HE REIGNED TWENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Yazdagird becomes Sháh. The country is invaded by the Arabs. He sends Rustam, the captain of the host, to oppose them. Rustam takes a despondent view of the situation, and after some attempt at negotiations is defeated by the Arabs at Kádisíya and slain. The war continues, and Yazdagird withdraws to Khurásán to get help from Máhwí of Súr, the governor. Máhwí plots with Bízhan, a Turkish prince, against Yazdagird, who is betrayed in battle and takes refuge in a mill, where he is slain by the miller at the bidding of Máhwí. Máhwí assumes the crown, makes war on Bízhan, is taken prisoner, and put to death. The poem ends with a brief passage, in which Firdausí gives some account of the completion of his undertaking, of help afforded him and of discouragements undergone, and concludes with a well founded assurance of his own future fame.

NOTE

Yazdagird (Isdegird III., A.D. 632-652 or 653) has given his name to a chronological era which still obtains among the Parsís. It dates from June 16th, A.D. 632. He was the son of Sháhryár, son of Khusrau Parwíz, and was an infant at the time when that Sháh and his sons were put to death after the accession of Shírwí (Kubád;[1]) On that occasion he was taken for safety to Istakhr. Tabarí says that he was

[1] See p. 34, 35.

murdered at the age of twenty-eight after a reign of twenty years. He was therefore only eight years old when a party among the nobles set him up as a puppet king at Istakhr (Persepolis), the old seat of empire, Ctesiphon at that time being in the hands of a rival claimant of the throne. In the contention that followed Yazdagird was successful, and in the course of A.D. 633 he became recognised as sole Sháh, the administration remaining in the hands of the chiefs.[1] He had succeeded to a heritage of woe. His empire was ill-prepared for the troubles that were in store for it. Exhausted by long wars, torn by domestic dissentions, and lately devastated by plague, it had to confront a new and vigorous organization inspired by religious enthusiasm and impelled thereby to extend its borders on every side. Had Yazdagird been a born leader of men and come to the throne in the prime of life, he might for the time at least have been successful, but in the circumstances, and taking into consideration what we can gather as to his own character, we can now see how hopeless from the outset his prospects were. Students of Persian, however, have probably reason to feel grateful to his reign, for even though we put aside as unsatisfactory what tradition tells us on the subject, a reasonable presumption remains that with the return of settled government to a distracted country there was a revival of interest in the story of the Íránian race and its heroes, and that compilations were then made from which we still though indirectly benefit.[2]

§§ 2-11. The following is intended to supplement Firdausí's inadequate account of the Arab conquest of the Sásánian empire. He appears to assign it to the last years of Yazdagird's then nominal sovereignty. From time immemorial the Íránians and Semites had been at enmity.[3] In Íránian legend this feeling had found expression in the story of the wicked Sháh Zahhák, who, though originally an Aryan myth,[4] came to be regarded in succeeding ages as an earthly king with his seat at Babylon. When, later still, the Íránians again felt the weight of Semitic oppression, he was turned into an Arab.[5] Although during Sásánian times the semi-independent kingdom of Híra served to some extent as a buffer-state between the Persian empire and the wilder Arab

[1] NT, p. 307 *seq.* and *notes*. [2] *Cf.* Vol. i., p. 67. [3] *Id.* p. 10.
[4] *Id.* p. 7. [5] *Id.* pp. 54, 135, 141.

tribes there was always the liability of raids and the danger was much increased when Khusrau Parwíz was so unwise as to put an end to the long-standing dynasty of the princes of Híra and appointed a governor of his own in their stead.[1] In his reign too had occurred the disastrous battle of Dhú Kár, in which the smallness of the forces engaged were out of all proportion to the importance of the result. The Arabs celebrated their victory with songs of triumph.[2] With that inspiring memory and revelation of Persian weakness, with the prospect of rich spoil to be won, and a nation of infidels to be converted, it is not surprising that hostilities should break out between the young and vigorous and the old and enfeebled empire. Muhammad himself, tradition tells us, addressed a threatening letter to Khusrau Parwíz, who tore it up, and the Prophet, on hearing of this, said: "He has rent his own realm."[3] Muhammad died in June, A.D. 632—the month of the child Yazdagird's accession. Abú Bakr, the first Khalífa, being apprised by an Arab chieftain, who had embraced Islam, of the state of the Persian empire, sent his great general, Khálid, to begin hostilities. Khálid was very successful in numerous engagements, and temporarily the whole tract bordering the western bank of the Euphrates from the Roman frontier almost to the Persian Gulf came into the hands of the Arabs. Khálid made Híra his headquarters, and was preparing to attack Ctesiphon and invade Írán when he was recalled by Abú Bakr to take command of the forces destined for the Syrian campaign. "This is 'Umar's doing," said Khálid. "He does not want to see me conquer 'Irák."[4] The departure of Khálid was the Persians' opportunity. Encouraged by Rustam, who under Yazdagird had become commander-in-chief, the inhabitants of the conquered region rose against the Arabs but unsuccessfully. At this juncture Abú Bakr died and was succeeded by 'Umar, who began his reign by giving Abú 'Ubaida the chief command in Syria in the place of Khálid. Then, it is said, he appealed publicly to the Faithful to volunteer for the invasion of Persia and for two days in vain, the supersession of Khálid having caused great indignation. It may, however, have been thought that the acquisition of so much fertile territory and the consequent proximity to the Persian

[1] Vol. viii., p. 190. [2] NT, p. 342. [3] ZT, ii., 325.
[4] Id. iii., 348.

capital, were a sufficient achievement for the time being. Nevertheless, on the third day, when 'Umar made his appeal, Abú 'Ubaida (not Khálid's successor) offered himself and Sa'ad, son of Wakkás, followed suit. A thousand others imitated their example. 'Umar gave Abú 'Ubaida the chief command as he had been the first to volunteer. The Persians in the meantime had withdrawn to Ctesiphon, whence Rustam dispatched a force, which had with it the flag of Káwa,[1] to watch the enemy. Abú 'Ubaida, who was very inferior in numbers, threw a bridge across the Euphrates, attacked the Persians, was defeated and slain. This battle is known as "The Battle of the Bridge," and took place in November, A.D. 634. An attack, however, by the Persians on Híra failed, and the Arabs raided the Persian settlement of Baghdád (not of course the well-known city of that name[2]) where twice a year a fair was held. 'Umar appointed Sa'ad, son of Wakkás, to succeed Abú 'Ubaida, and both sides made efforts to reinforce their respective armies. The Persian adherents west of the Euphrates again rose. Rustam crossed the river with a great host, and advanced to Kádisíya where the Arabs had concentrated. The battle that ensued is said to have lasted four days with varying fortune till a dust-storm turned the scale in favour of the Arabs. The slaughter was very great and so was the spoil. 'Umar forbade the Arabs to make any further advance for the present, but as the situation of their camp proved to be very unhealthy he directed Sa'ad to choose a more suitable site, whereupon Sa'ad founded Kúfa. Thenceforth the whole of the region west of the Euphrates was lost to the Persians. To secure the lower course of the Euphrates and Tigris 'Umar also founded Basra, west of the Shatt-al-Arab. The battle of Kádisíya seems to have been fought A.D. 636-7, but the chronology of the period is somewhat uncertain. Then came a considerable pause in the Arab advance. The Arabs seem to have spent the interval well in securing what they had gained while the Persians on the other hand appear to have been paralysed by their misfortunes. At all events, when the invasion was resumed and Sa'ad, crossing the Euphrates, marched on Ctesiphon, no resistance was offered and Yazdagird, who had lingered there too late to secure the removal of most of his treasures, fled with his court to Hulwán.[3] His example of flight seems

[1] Vol. i., p. 154 *seq.* [2] See Vol. vi., p. 254. [3] See Vol. vii., p. 187.

to have been followed by a majority of the inhabitants. The Arabs came in for an immense booty according to Oriental accounts. If, however, we take into consideration the domestic troubles of the years preceding Yazdagird's accession, and what must have been the financial needs of the short-lived Sháhs of that period, we are justified in suspecting that the amount of precious metals and of the more portable forms of wealth generally was not so great as has been affirmed. Sa'ad, when he had established himself in the Persian capital, asked permission of 'Umar to pursue Yazdagird who had gathered a considerable army under the command of a Mihrán[1] at Jalúlá in the neighbourhood of Hulwán. 'Umar refused to allow Sa'ad to go in person and instructed him to send instead Háshim who was either his brother or his nephew. Háshim was much inferior in point of numbers, and it was six months before he brought the Persians to a decisive engagement. He then won a complete victory, and followed up his success at Jalúlá by the capture of Hulwán. Yazdagird fled to Rai and 'Umar, content for the moment with what had been achieved, forbade any further advance. The next stage of the Arab conquest was made outside the sphere of Sa'ad's authority, who sent, however, by 'Umar's command troops to assist. In the north Mesopotamia, and in the south Khúzistán, were invaded and annexed. A raid was made also across the Persian Gulf from Bahrain into Párs, but without lasting results, as the Arab forces got into difficulties and had to be rescued by an expedition sent for the purpose from Basra. About A.D. 640 in consequence, it is said, of complaints made by the people of Kúfa, 'Umar recalled Sa'ad and Yazdagird seized the opportunity to make a supreme effort to recover his lost possessions. A large army, summoned from the yet unconquered provinces of the empire, was concentrated at Naháwand, some fifty miles south of Hamadán, and placed under a Persian general named Pírúzán. On this 'Umar ordered Nu'mán, who was in command in Khúzistán, to gather all available forces from the regions already annexed and march against the enemy. Nu'mán, who was greatly inferior in point of numbers, found the Persians strongly encamped at Naháwand and tried in vain to bring on a general engagement. In the end he managed to effect his purpose by means of a stratagem. He broke up

[1] See *id.* p. 185.

his camp and made a hasty retreat. Pírúzán went in pursuit, on which Nu'mán turned upon him and won what the Arabs call "The Victory of Victories" (A.D. 641-2). Pírúzán was taken prisoner and slain, and Nu'mán himself fell in the fight. This was the last effort of the Persians at a national resistance. Henceforth their opposition was merely provincial or local, and wholly ineffective. One after another the remaining provinces of the Sásánian empire were overrun by the Arabs and permanently annexed, while Yazdagird, who had fled from Rai after the disaster of Nahávand, remained a fugitive till his death some ten years later.

§ 2. In Tabarí Rustam's father is called Farrukh-Hurmuzd, the governor of Khurásán, who was slain, it is said, by Ázarmdukht and avenged by his son.[1] Khurásán probably formed part of the satrapy of Nímrúz, one of the four into which Núshírwán divided his empire.[2] Tradition makes the governors of that satrapy, and their sons play a very important part during the last few years of the Sásánian dynasty.[3] The position of commander-in-chief held by Rustam at the battle of Kádisíya, probably indicates that he had been instrumental in bringing about the elevation of Yazdagird to the throne.[4]

Rustam's brother was named Farrukhzád.

§ 3. Mughíra, son of Shu'ba, was one of the companions of Muhammad, and played a prominent role in the affairs of the time. He went on a similar embassy to the Persians before the battle of Nahávand.[5] He was governor for a time at Basra,[6] Mecca,[7] and Kúfa, where he died in A.D. 670.[8]

§ 4. Sa'ad took no personal part in the battle of Kádisíya. He was suffering from sores at the time and had to content himself with merely directing operations.[9] Consequently he did not slay Rustam in single combat as Firdausí states. When the dust-storm came on the fourth day of the battle, Rustam was seated under an awning erected on the bank of the canal of Kádisíya and surrounded by the camels that carried his treasure. The awning was blown into the water, and Rustam took shelter among them. In the confusion caused by the storm, the Arabs broke the Persian centre. One of them, named Hilál, striking in the darkness at random among the camels, happened to hit the one under which

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[1] p. 59. [2] See Vol. vii., p. 214. [3] pp. 5, 6, 59, 87, 95 *seq.*
[4] NT, p. 397 *note*. NIN, p. 13. [5] ZT, iii., 474. [6] *Id.* 404.
[7] *Id.* iv., 2. [8] *Id.* 16. [9] *Id.* iii., 398.

Rustam was seated, and cut the cord that secured its load of treasure which fell on Rustam's head. Though injured, he made an attempt to swim across the canal, but was caught by Hilál and slain.[1]

§§ 9-11. There is a general agreement in Persian tradition that Yazdigird did not die a natural death. The scene of it is mostly laid at Marv, and the most popular version associates it with a mill. Firdausí's story evidently has been worked up as the appeals addressed to Máhwí show. The villain's guilt too is more emphasized, and he is made more directly responsible for the tragedy. Elsewhere the miller murders the Sháh for mere greed. Marv appears to be a likely place for Yazdagird to have chosen to reside in, as he could easily escape thence across the Oxus in case of need. In some accounts he does cross and negotiates to little purpose with the Turks, but is brought back across the river for the final scene. What the truth of the matter was seems to be quite uncertain.

§ 14. According to the account in the Persian Tabarí, Máhwí, after the death of Yazdagird, remained at Marv till he was compelled to leave owing to the approach of the Arabs, when he fled across the Oxus and took refuge with the Turks.[2] Their Khán is the Bízhan of the Sháhnáma.

§ 1

How Yazdagird ascended the Throne and addressed the Chiefs

When Farrrukhzád departed Yazdagird
Became the Sháh upon the day of Ard
In month Sapandármad. What said the man
Brave, eloquent but weary of life's span ?
" Would that my mother had not brought me forth,
High heaven not turned o'er me !
The days of greatness and the days of want

[1] *Id.* 396. [2] ZT, iii., 505.

For all soon cease to be.
Time, as thou lookest, passeth; none can take
Arms to contend with it,
So furnish forth the board and drain the cup,
And sad talk intermit.
What though thou ride high heaven yet bricks will prove
Thy pillow at the last;
If thou be king what of the end? First throne,
But what when life hath past?
Let not thy heart be troubled, trust not much
High heaven as thy support;
It acteth as it willeth; elephant
And lion are its sport.
'Twill outlast thee, its tale is long; be not
With pride of life o'erflown;
Thou canst not better Farídún or be C. 2061
Parwíz[1] with crown and throne.[2]
From those exalt seven planets do thou well
Consider what to Yazdagird befell."
When he sat happy on the throne of kingship,
And placed upon his head the crown of might,
He said: "By process of the turning sky
I am the true-born son of Núshírwán.
Mine is the sway from sire to sire and mine,
Are Virgo, Sol, and Pisces. I will seek
For greatness, wisdom, hardihood, contention,
And manliness, for life and fortune stay
With none, nor treasure, kingship, crown, and throne.
Fame will abide for aye but not desire;
Put off desire then and exalt thy fame.
It is by fame that man shall live for ever
While his dead body lieth in the dust.
How good are Faith and justice in a Sháh!
The times are full of blessings on his fame.

[1] Khusrau Parwíz. [2] Couplet omitted.

I purpose while I live to pluck up ill,
Both root and branch."
The chiefs applauded him,
And hailed him as the monarch of the earth,
And thus it was, till sixteen years had sped,
That sun and moon revolved above his head.

§ 2

How Sa'ad, Son of Wakkás, invaded Írán, how Yazdagird sent Rustam to oppose him, and how Rustam wrote a Letter to his Brother

It was so that 'Umar, the famous Arab,
Commander of the Faithful,[1] he whose sword
Turned day to night, the man approved by God,
Who hath no equal, sent the chosen Sa'ad,
Son of Wakkás, with troops against the Sháh.
When Arab fortune worsted Persian,
And the Sásánians' fortune had grown dark,
The world had had full measure of its Sháhs;
Gold was not seen, the mite was manifest,
Good turned to evil, evil turned to good,
The path lay Hellward, not to Paradise,
The wheel of circling heaven was changed and cut
All kindness for the Persians clean away.
The slave must do the almighty Maker's will,
And bear what He inflicteth. Save with Him
There is no life or joy.
When Yazdagird
Learned what had chanced he gathered troops on all sides,
C. 2062 And bade Hurmuzd's son lead them forth. His name

[1] He assumed this title.

Was Rustam. He was wary, wise, a warrior
And potentate, a reader of the stars,
Exceeding shrewd and all attent to hear
The archimages' words. He marched away
With all the noble, those that were alert
And brave, and after thirty months they sought
To fight at Kádisíya. Being learned
In heaven's lore as an astrologer,
And one both just and good, he said: "No time
Is this to fight, the river of the Sháhs
Will flow not in this bed," and so he took
His astrolabe, observed the stars and smote
His head because it was a day of bale,
Then wrote in grief and told his brother all,
First offering praise to God who had ordained
His good and evil fortune, and proceeded:—
"Well may the revolutions of the sky
Fill the observer with disquietude!
I am the guiltiest person of the time,
And therefore have been caught by Áhriman,
Because the kingship passeth from this House;
No season this of conquest and the Grace!
From the fourth heaven Sol is looking down
To hasten to the fight of mighty men.
Both Mars and Venus bode mishap to us,
And none can 'scape high heaven. Mercury
And Saturn are opposed, the former too
Hath entered Gemini. Such is the case,
A great event is toward, and my heart
Is weary of its life. I can discern
All that will be but fain would hold my peace.
When I agnized this secret of the sky—
That it assigneth us but grievous travail—
I wept right sorely for the Íránians,
And burned for the Sásánians. Woe is me
For head and crown, for state and throne, and woe

For majesty, for fortune, and for Grace
Because hereafter will defeat betide them
From the Arabians, the stars not turn
Save to our hurt, and for four hundred years
None of our royal race will rule the world!
An envoy from our foemen came to me,
And divers parleyings followed. 'We,' they said,
'Will give up to the Sháh the tract between
The river-bank and Kádisíya; ye
Shall grant us access to some trading centre
That we may sell and buy; we will not ask
For more hereafter; we will pay large dues,
And will not seek the chieftains' diadems,
C. 2063 But will obey withal the king of kings,
And render hostages at his demand.'
Such is the talk. No action hath ensued,
But still the stars are adverse. Long will be
The strife. Fierce Lions will be slain by hundreds.
The chieftains that are with me in the war—
Galbwí of Tabaristán and Armaní,
Who do the deeds of Áhriman in fight,
Mahwí, he of Súrán, and other chiefs,
Who wield the heavy mace and battle-ax—
Heed not our foes proposals but observe:—
'Who are these haughty folk and what do they
Both in Írán and in Mázandarán?
For road and territory, weal and woe,
We must employ the mace and scimitar;
We will exert ourselves, quit us like men,
And make the world both dark and strait to them.'
None of them knoweth circling heaven's design,
And how its aspect hath been changed to us.
On reading this take measures with the chiefs,
Make preparations and lead forth the host,
Collect the treasures, handmaids, and state-robes,
Then hasten Ázar Ábádagán—

The dwelling of the Mighty and the Free.
Whatever herds of horses thou mayst have
Send to the treasurer of Ázargashasp.
If soldiers seek thee from Zábulistán,
Or from Írán, imploring thy protection,
Receive and treat with kindness their excuses
In view of what the turning sky is doing--
The cause of joy and terror to us all,
At whiles exalting and at whiles abasing.
Let mother know my words for of a truth
She will not look upon my face again.
Greet her from us and counsel her at large
Not to be troubled here below. If any
Shall bring bad news of me be not too downcast,
For know that in this Wayside Hostelry
He that amasseth treasure by his toil
Will find his toil more than such worldly treasure,
And that another will enjoy the fruit.
What need was there for so much toil and greed?
Desire is lessened not by having more.
At all times worship God and purge thy heart
Of all affection for this Wayside Inn
Because our fortune is in straits, the king
Will see me not again. Do thou and all
Our House, both old and young, unceasingly
Praise God and pray the Maker, for with this
My host I am in stress, in travail, grief,
And bitter fortune, and shall not escape C 2064
At last. May this sweet country of Írán
Be in prosperity! Whenas the world
Is straitened to the king hold treasure, life,
And person of small worth, for of that race
So famed and honoured there is no one left
Save that exalted one. Watch over him
By day and night till I have fought the Arabs.
Be not remiss in toil for he is now

All that we have to look to in this world,
And the Sásánians' memorial,
For no one will behold that House again.
Woe for the head and crown, for seal and right
Since royal throne will go adown the blast!
Fare well, be not concerned, and ever be
Before the world-lord, and if ill betide him
First give thine own head to the scimitar
Ungrudgingly. When pulpit fronteth throne,
And when Abú Bakr and 'Umar shall be
As household words, our long toils will be lost,
And long will be the fall before the rise.
Thou wilt not see throne, diadem, or state:
The stars award the Arabs everything.[1]
There will not be throne, crown, or golden boot,
Or gem, or coronet or flaunting flag.
One man will toil, another will enjoy;
None will give heed to justice or to bounty.[2]
Then warriors will be men that fight afoot
While horsemen will be mocked and flouted at;
The warlike husbandman will be despised,
High birth and majesty will bear no fruit;
Then men will rob each other, none will know
A blessing from a curse, and secret dealing
Prevail o'er open, while the hearts of men
Will turn to flint, sire will be foe to son,
And son will scheme 'gainst sire; a worthless slave
Will be the king, high birth and majesty
Will count for nothing; no one will be loyal.
There will be tyranny of soul and tongue.
A mongrel race—Iránian, Turkman, Arab—
Will come to be and talk in gibberish.[3]
C. 2065 They will collect all treasures 'neath their skirts,
Toil and resign the product to their foes.

[1] Two couplets omitted. [2] Three couplets omitted.
[3] See Vol. i., p. 34.

Grief, travail, bitterness will thus prevail
As joy did in Bahrám Gúr's days; feasts, song,
Race and renown will cease; men will set traps,
Will seek their profit in another's loss,
And make their pretext Faith; no difference
Will be 'twixt Spring and Winter;[1] there will be
No wine at feasts; they will not recognise
Degree and place but live on barley-bread,
And dress in wool. When much time hath passed thus
None will regard the noble Persian stock.
They will be shedding blood for lucre's sake,
An evil age will be inaugurate.
My heart is full, my face is wan, my mouth
Is parched, my lips are filled with sighs to think
That after I—the paladin—have gone
Sásánian fortune shall become thus dark;
So faithless hath revolving heaven grown,
Ta'en umbrage, and withdrawn from us its love!
If with my lance I strike a brazen mountain
I pierce it, being brazen-bodied too,
But now my shafts with steel-transfixing heads
Are impotent with men that wear no mail!
My sword, which felled the necks of elephants
And lions at a blow, can not cut through
An Arab skin! My knowledge bringeth loss
On loss upon me. Would that I possessed not
This wisdom since it causeth me to know
Of this ill day! The chiefs that are with me
From Kádisíya are both hardy men
And hostile to the Arabs. They expect
That this brake will be filled, that earth will run
Like the Jíhún, with our foes' blood. None knoweth
The secret of the skies and that this strife

[1] Muhammadan years being lunar the months are associated with no particular season.

Can not be quickly ended; but when fortune
Departeth from a race what profit cometh
Of travail and of fight? Be prosperous,
My brother! May the Sháh's heart joy in thee
Because this Kádisíya is my charnel,
My breastplate is my shroud, my helmet blood:
Such is the secret of the lofty sky.
Bind not thine own heart to my griefs but keep
Thine eyes upon the Sháh, and sacrifice
Thyself for him in fight, because the day
Of Áhriman is coming on apace
When circling heaven will show us enmity."
When he had sealed the letter he said thus:—
"My blessing be upon the messenger
That shall convey this letter to my brother,
And tell him not what I have said, but other!"

§ 3

How Rustam wrote to Sa'ad, Son of Wakkás, and how he replied

C. 2066 He sent a messenger in swiftness like
The flash and thunder-clap to Sa'ad. They wrote,
In apprehension yet not in despair,
A letter on white silk and thus endorsed:—
"This from the paladin of paladins—
The warlike Rustam, son of Hurmuzdsháh[1]—
To Sa'ad, son of Wakkás, the prudent, wise,
And circumspect, who hath come forth to fight."
It thus began: "We still must fear the World-lord,
The Holy, who sustaineth turning heaven,

[1] *Cf.* Mardánsháh as a proper name and p. 59.

Whose rule is justice and beneficence.
May blessings from Him rest upon the king,
The lustre of the signet, crown, and throne,
The lord of sword, of diadem and lasso,
Whose Grace restraineth Áhriman in bonds.
A hateful matter hath occurred to us
In these uncalled for labours and this strife.
Reply to me and say who is your king,
Who thou art, what thy rule and custom are,
And whose assistance is it that ye seek
With unmailed soldiery and unmailed chief?
Fed up with bread thou art still ravenous;
Thou hast no elephants, no throne, no baggage.
Enough for thee to live within Írán,
For crown and signet are another man's,
Who hath Grace, elephants, and crown and throne—
A famous Sháh of lengthy lineage.
No throned king hath such stature or the moon
In heaven such aspect. When enthroned he sitteth
With smiles that make his silvern teeth appear;
His gifts would purchase Arabs in the gross,
And not impoverish his treasury.
His dogs, his hawks, and cheetahs are twelve thousand,
And they are decked with golden bells and varvels.
The whole waste of the wielders of the spear
Could find not in a year from end to end
Enough to feed his cheetahs and his hounds
When he is hunting on the plain. The Arabs,
From drinking camels' milk and eating lizards,
Have reached a pitch whereat the Persian throne
Is coveted! Shame, shame on circling heaven!
Ye have no veneration in your eyes,
Or, in your wisdom, love or reverence.
With such a visage and such tastes and ways
Is thy heart set upon the crown and throne?
If thou art seeking power within thy means,

And art not merely speaking words in jest,
C. 2067 Dispatch to us some man of goodly speech,
Send some brave veteran and man of lore,
That he may tell me thine intent and who
Doth lead thee to attempt the royal throne.
Then will I send a horseman to the Sháh
To ask of him whatever thou wilt ask,
But seek not with so great a king to fight,
For shame at last will come upon thy face.
His grandsire was the world-lord Núshírwán,
Whose justice made the agéd young again.
His fathers have been Sháhs, and he is king;
The age remembereth none like to him.
Fill not the world with curses on thyself,
Misprize not thine own precedents. Regard
This letter of advice and bar not thou
Thine eyes and ears to wisdom." When the letter
Was sealed he gave it to high-born Pírúz,
Son of Shápúr. To Sa'ad, son of Wakkás,
This paladin and magnates from Írán,
Of ardent soul, went whelmed in iron, silver,
And gold, with golden shields and golden girdles.
On hearing, Sa'ad, that noble man, set forth,
Swift as the flying dust, to meet Pírúz
With troops, forthwith dismounted and inquired
About the army and its paladin,
About the Sháh, his minister and host,
The watchful leader and his provinces.
He spread his cloak beneath Pírúz and said:—
"We hold the sword and spear to be our mates:
Brave warriors make no mention of brocade,
Of gold and silver or of food and slumber.
Ye have no part in manhood but are like
To women with your colours, scents, and forms.
Your prowess is in donning broidery,
Adorning roofs and decorating doors."

Pírúz then gave the letter and told Sa'ad
The words of Rustam. Sa'ad heard, read, and wondered.
He wrote an answer back in Arabic,
Announcing good and ill. He wrote there first
The name of God and of His messenger,
Muhammad, who directeth to the truth.
He spake of Jins and men, of what the Prophet,
The Háshimite,[1] had said, the Unity
Of God, of the Kurán, of promise, warning,
Of menace and of novel usages,
Of liquid pitch, of fire, and icy cold,
Of Paradise, its streams of milk and wine,
Of camphor and of musk, of bubbling springs,
Of wine and honey and the trees of heaven.[2]
Then: "If the Sháh accepteth the true Faith
He will obtain both worlds with joy and kingship,
And have withal the earrings and the crown,
Perpetual beauty and prosperity.
His intercessor there will be Muhammad, C. 2068
His form like pure rose-water. In as much
As Paradise will be thy recompense
We must not plant thorns in the garth of bale.
The personality of Yazdagird,
This spacious world, such gardens, riding-grounds,
And halls and palaces with all the thrones
And crowns, the festivals and revelries,
Are less worth than one hair of an Hourí.
In this our Wayside Hostelry thine eyes
Are dazed by crown and treasure, and thou trustest
Too much in ivory throne, in wealth, and signet,
In fortune and in crown. Why be concerned
About a world when one draught of cold water
Out-prizeth it? Whoever cometh forth

[1] Háshim was the great-grandfather of Muhammad.
[2] This is taken from the Kurán. *Cf.* Vol. i., p. 99.

To fight with me will see a narrow grave,
And Hell, naught else; but Paradise is his
If he believeth. Mark how he should fare.
He still will choose the one and shun the other
As every wise man knoweth."
Then he set
The Arab seal thereon and praised Muhammad.
The messenger of Sa'ad, son of Wakkás,
Went with all speed to Rustam. Now what time
Shu'ba Mughíra went forth from the chiefs
To journey to the paladin, a noble,
One of the Iránians, came in from the way
Before the captain of the host, and said:—
"A messenger hath come—a weak, old man—
Without a horse or weapons and ill-clad,
With thin sword slung about his neck and shirt
All plainly tattered."
Rustam thus apprised
Prepared a tent-enclosure of brocade.
They laid a carpet of gold thread of Chín;
The soldiery turned out like ants and locusts.
They set a golden ante-throne whereon
The captain of the host assumed his seat
With eight score warriors attending him—
Horsemen and lions on the day of battle—
With crowns, with violet robes, and golden boots,
With torques and earrings, while the tent-enclosure
Was royally adorned. Shu'ba Mughíra,
On coming to the tent-enclosure, walked not
Upon the cloth but humbly on the ground,
And used his scimitar as walking-stick.
He sat upon the dust without a look
At any—captain of the host or chief.
Then Rustam said to him: "May thy soul joy,
And by its knowledge make thy body strong."
Shu'ba Mughíra said: "If thou, good sir!

Acceptest the true Faith, peace unto thee."
Now Rustam, hearing this, was vexed and frowned.
He took and gave the letter to a reader. C. 2069
That learned man told him what was writ, and Rustam
Made answer: "Tell him: 'Thou art neither king
Nor an aspirant to the diadem,
But thou hast seen my fortune in eclipse,[1]
And so thy heart ambitioneth my throne.
The case is one of moment to the wise,
But thou hast not considered it. If Sa'ad
Had the Sásánian throne I well might share
His feasts and fights, but since the faithless stars
Bode ill, what shall I say? This is the day
Of bale. If for my guide I take Muhammad,
And this new Faith for old, all will go wrong
Beneath this crook-backed sky, and all go hard
With us.' But as for thee, depart in peace;
The day of battle is no time for words.
Tell Sa'ad: 'To die with honour is a thing
Far better for me than crude parleying."

§ 4

How Rustam fought with Sa'ad, Son of Wakkás, and was slain

Shu'ba Mughíra went his way, and Rustam
Bade to array the host and sound the trumpet.
From all sides troops assembled, clouds of dust
Arose, and din that deafed the sharpest ears.
"The steely lance-heads mid the murky reek
Are," thou hadst said, "stars mid night's azure gloom,"

[1] Reading with P.

While spears ne'er ceased to smite on glittering helms.
The strife endured three days, till water failed
The Íránians, and their warriors' hands and steeds
Became unfit for combat. Rustam's lips
Grew as the dust with drought, his tongue was split,
And men and horses battened on moist clay,
So grievous was the stress!
Shouts rose like thunder
From Rustam and from Sa'ad as they advanced,
Each from his post. Each left his army's centre,
And drew off from the field. Departing thus
They came beneath a steep-up eminence,
And there those chieftains twain assailed each other
Revengefully upon that scene of strife
Till Rustam, roaring like a thunder-clap,
Smote with his sword Sa'ad's charger on the head,
Smote the swift charger which came headlong down,
C. 2070 And brave Sa'ad was unhorsed. Then Rustam reared
Aloft a trenchant blade to show to him
The Day of Doom, and was in mind to strike
His head off, but by reason of the dust
Raised by the troops they could not see each other.
Then Rustam lighted from his steed and saddle
Of leopard-skin and fastened to his belt
His charger's reins but, while dust blinded him,
Sa'ad hurried up and smote him with the sword
Upon his helm whence blood ran down his face,
And while his eyes were blinded by the gore
The aspiring Arab gained the upper hand,
Again smote Rustam on the head and neck,
And flung his warrior-body on the dust.
None in the two hosts were aware thereof,
Or whither those two paladins had gone,
But searched until they found the scene of strife.
The Íránians, when they spied their paladin
Slashed by the scimitar from head to foot,

Fled. Many a chieftain perished in the press,
And many failed for thirst upon the saddle.
The world had had full measure of the Sháhs.
The host fared to the monarch of Írán,
And hastened on the way both day and night.
When Rustam had been slain in fight, and when
The chiefs' heads were all turned, the Muslim host
Sped like a savage lion in pursuit.[1]
At that time Yazdagird was at Baghdád;
To him the troops came flocking and announced
That Rustam was no more, and that the sea
Was dry with grief, that many men had fallen,
And that the rest had fled the battlefield.
The hosts, both Persian and Arabian,
Reached Karkh, and Farrukhzád, son of Hurmuzd,
Wroth and with tearful eyes came from the Arwand,
Arrived at Karkh, fell on the enemy,
And not an Arab warrior survived.
The Persians marched out from Baghdád intent
To meet the foe, and bloody was the event.

§ 5

How Yazdagird consulted with the Íránians and went to Khurásán

When Farrukhzád had gone back to the Sháh,
All over dust and in his fighting-gear,
He lighted from his charger, did obeisance,

[1] The French version of the rest of this section is as follows:—"Yezdegird était à Bagdad lorsque ses troupes affluèrent autour de lui. Farrukhzad, fils d'Hormuzd, furieux et répandant des larmes, traversa le Tigre, entra dans Kerkh et livra un assaut terrible qui ne lassa vivant aucun des guerriers armés de lances. Les troupes sortirent aussitôt de Bagdad et allèrent chercher le combat dans la plaine; mais lorsque la poussière de la lutte se fut dissipée, les Iraniens étaient en fuite."

Blood in his eyes and anguish in his heart,
And said to Yazdagird: "Why weep so much?
Is it to wash the throne of kings with tears?
C. 2071 Thou only of the royal race art left
To wear the crown and sit upon the throne.
One, with a hundred thousand enemies,
How canst thou battle when exposed to all?
Betake thee to the forest of Nárwan;
The folk will gather to thee there and thence,
Like valiant Farídún, do thou renew
The fight like fire."
The king of kings gave ear.
New thoughts occurred. Upon the morrow's morn
He sat upon his throne, assumed the crown,
Held an assembly with his men of lore,
The magnates and shrewd-hearted archimages,
And said: "What seemeth good to you herein?
What precedents recall ye from the past?
Saith Farrukhzád to me: 'Depart and take
Thy followers to the forest of Nárwan:
The people of Ámul, are servitors,
The people of Sarí all slaves, to thee,
And, when thy troops are many, come again
With puissance to battle with the Brave.'
Do ye approve?"
They all of them exclaimed:—
"That is the course."
The king of kings rejoined:—
"It is not well. I purpose otherwise.
Shall I desert the chieftains of Írán,
And this great host, our country, throne, and crown
To save myself? That were not majesty,
Or manliness or policy. To fight
The foe is better for me than disgrace.
The leopard spake a saw in this regard:—
'Whene'er the time of stress shall come on thee

Turn not in folly from thine enemy.'
For just as subjects should obey their king
In good and ill so he must not desert them
In their distress and go off to his treasures."
The great men blessed him, saying: "Crown and signet
Exist for ends like these. Think what thy will
And wishes are, and what assurances
Thou wouldst of us."
The Sháh thus answered them :—
"Anxiety is ruin to the heart.
Our best course is to go to Khurásán
Where we shall feel secure from strife with foes,
For there we are possessed of many troops,
And valiant paladins. The Turkish chiefs
And Khán of Chín will come and do us homage
While I will make the union stronger still
By marriage with the daughter of Faghfúr.
A great host will arrive to succour us,
The magnates of Túrán and mighty men.
There is the warden of the marches too,
Máhwí, with horsemen, elephants, and wealth
Of all kinds. He is our chief governor, C. 2072
The highest of the guardians of our coasts.
I raised him when he was a vagabond,
A minstrel and a braggart, giving him,
Though worthless, name and worth, men, government,
Lands, elephants. Base though he be and vile
Still his advancement hath been at my court.
Now I have heard an archmage quote this saw :—
'Of one whom thou hast wrongly harmed beware :
Of one made rich by thee thy hopes are fair.'
I never injured him in aught, and he
Will 'venge me on my foe."
But Farrukhzád
Smote his two hands together and exclaimed :—

" O Sháh who fearest God! put little trust
In those of evil bent. In this regard
There is a modern saw which runneth thus :—
' Howe'er on birth thou practise witchery,
And strivest such an one from rust to free,
Since the All-giver framed him thus to be
To loose God's bonds thou wilt not find a key.' "
" O mighty, raging Lion ! " said the Sháh,
" To make this trial will work me no hurt."
He stayed that night and, when the morning broke,
Those noble men set forth and left Baghdád
For Khurásán, and took their travail lightly.
The chieftains of Írán all sorrowful
Accompanied their Sháh, that noble man,
And called down blessings on him, saying : " May time,
And earth, ne'er lack thee."
From the host rose wails
For grief and at the going of the king,
And all the Íránian thanes—the warriors' stay—
Drew near to him with outcries and in tears,
And said to him : " O Sháh ! we are thy slaves
With souls and bodies filled with love for thee.
We all will go with thee to learn how fortune
Will sport with our king's life, for if we lose
Our Sháh how can our hearts find joy in home,
And country ? We will quit our settlements,
Our children, and our wealth to share thy toils.
We care not for our lives without thy throne :
May fortune ne'er abandon thee."[1]
C. 2073 With eyes
All tears the king of kings said to those nobles :—
" Be ever more intent in praising God.
It may be I shall look on you again,
And that our sorrows and distress will cease.

[1] Three couplets omitted.

Ye all are my true helpers and the heirlooms
Left by my sires. I would not have you harmed:
Share not mine ills then. We will mark the intent
Of circling heaven, its progress, and to whom
It showeth love. Resign yourself thereto:
None can evade its secret purposes."
Then said he to the merchantmen of Chín:—
"Make no long tarrying here, else will the Arabs
Convert your quest of gain to loss."
They parted
With pain and trouble, sorrow, care, and wailing.
So Farrukhzád, son of Hurmuzd, led forth
The troops and called the veterans of Írán,
And then the Sháh set out with wail and woe.
The leader led the van. Stage after stage
He marched to Rai and tarried there for wine,
And minstrelsy, thence went he to Gurgán,
Like wind, and stayed one se'nnight sad or glad.
Departing thence toward Bust he set his face
With wrinkled cheeks and body in ill case.

§ 6

How Yazdagird wrote to Máhwí of Súr

The world-lord, resolute to go to Marv,
Wrote to Máhwí of Súr, the governor,
In rage and pain, in tears and hope deferred,
And calling an experienced scribe poured forth
His heart, and it was full. He first praised God,
The all-wise Lord, the Fosterer, the Master
Of circling Mars and Sol, of elephant
And ant, at will creating out of naught,
And needing no instructor, then proceeded:—

"What hath befallen us! And gone are all
This kingship's hue and perfume. Rustam's death
Upon the battlefield and by the hand
Of one whose name is Sa'ad, son of Wakkás,
A landless, low-born, witless, aimless man,
Hath straitened all the world to us through sorrow.
Now that Sa'ad's army is at Taisafún,
With woods and foot-hills fronting them, array
C. 2074 Thy host to fight with his and summon all
Thy troops to that same end.[1] Lo! I will follow
Behind my letter swiftly as the wind,
And give thee what I purpose in my mind."[2]

§ 7

How Yazdagird wrote to the Marchlords of Tús

He wrote moreover to the folk of Tús,
With full heart and with face like sandarac,
First offering his praises to the Judge
"From whom are fortune, strength, and excellence,
Grace, triumph, throne, and diadem of kingship.
From foot of ant to soaring eagle's plume,
From elephant on land to crocodile
In water, all are faithful, do His will,
And draw no breath unless by His command.
This from the world's Sháh, mighty Yazdagird,
Son[3] of a famous king and valorous,
Victorious leader of the Íránian host,
Who guardeth his domain, desireth more,
And cometh of a great, God-fearing race
That thank their stars that they possess the crown,

[1] Three couplets omitted. [2] Two couplets omitted.
[3] Reading with P.

Have peopled earth and made crown, throne, and signet
Resplendent, to his marchlords with their thrones
And treasures, Grace, high-bearing, crowns and host
At Shamírán, Rúína,[1] and Mount Ráda,
Kalát and elsewhere. May the Fosterer
Watch over us and keep you from the scath
Of evil hap. In sooth the chiefs have heard,
For it hath been an ensign in the world,
That in regard to warfare, valour, birth,
Our hearts are full of kindness, love, and justice.
High birth especially constraineth us—
The Sháhs—to let our toils exceed our treasures
On your behalf. What time Bahrám Chúbína,
That malcontent, grew noted and rejected
Our rule and diadem ye all abandoned
Your marches, spacious cities, pleasances,
Your parks and palaces, and in that case,
In terror of disaster, made your homes
On dale and lofty height. If God almighty C. 2075
Shall grant me strength and fortune favour us
I will repay your good deeds lavishly,
And pray to Him who watcheth o'er the world.
In sooth ye must have heard of what the stars
Have brought upon our head by these vile Snakes
With looks like Áhriman, who lack all knowledge,
Shame, fame, and treasure, fortune and descent,
And fain would let the world go to the winds.
It is the compass of the lofty sky
That tribulation shall befall this realm
By these vile miscreants, these Raven-heads,[2]
Devoid of sense and knowledge, fame and shame.
These greedy men, who covet diadems,

[1] "Rouïndiz." Mohl.

[2] The Persians translated "'Arab" by "Zágh" (raven) and applied the expression to those hated enemies.

Have fixed their eyes upon this royal state,
And Núshírwán once dreamed that this our throne
Would lose its brilliant lustre. He beheld
A hundred thousand Arabs—raging camels
With bits[1] snapped—seeking how to cross the Arwand,
And bring destruction on our fields and fells,
Saw that both Fire and Fane of Fire would perish,
The light of New Year end and Sada feast,
That in Írán and Babylon dark smoke
Would rise from tilth and crop to Saturn's sphere,
While on the world-king's hall the battlements
Would tumble to the ground.[2] The dream is now
Fulfilled and heaven's favour fain to quit us.
Those that we value most will be misprized,
The base will be set up on high by fortune,
Ill scattered through the world, mishap apert
And good concealed. In all the provinces
Some tyrant, some obscene calamity,
And signs of dark night's coming will appear,
Our glorious fortune be cut off from us.
Now as our counsellors and paladins—
Men of pure rede—advise we purpose going
To Khurásán and to its warlike marchlords.
Because now of the governor of Tús
Have I led here the elephants and drums,
And we shall see how fortune will make bonds
Of our frail knots. I am girt up for battle
That I may meet the Arabs face to face,
While Farrukhzád—my very veins and skin,
And my firm friend—is now at Altúníya,
Intent on fight, and host confronteth host,
While Kashmigán, that warrior's son, hath reached
Our court and spoken well and loyally.

[1] Properly the piece of wood passed through a perforation made in the nostrils of a camel to guide it by.

[2] See Vol. viii., p. 66.

I heard what he could tell about these marches, C. 2076
Their heights and depths, their caves, retreats, the hold
Upon Mount Gumbadán and Jarmana,
The fort of Lázhawardí for our stores,
Spots such as Ál, Makhzúm, and waste of Gil:
He kindly opened all his heart to me.
My host for battle is too numerous
To tarry long within these narrow holds.
We have held council; all the paladins
Attended; we debated and resolved
To take with us crown, throne, and seal and signet,
All garments of Kashmír and Rúm and Chin,
Such goods as we can gather from Kibchák
And from Kírwán, all that we have in hand
Of clothes and carpets, articles of gold,
With gems uncut and all that most we prize,
And provand and equipment for the future.
Of oxen forty thousand will drag loads
Of unthrashed corn and after these will come
Twelve thousand asses drawing loads of dates
For us. A trusty archimage will bring
Pistachios, millet, and pomegranate-juice.
Attending on the outcome they will send
Thereafter many asses' loads of salt,
And add a thousand camels' loads of millet,
Fat from the tails of sheep and butter-skins.
A thousand Bactrian camels will bring dates,
Another thousand sugar, as their loads.
Twelve thousand also will bring drums of honey.
All these will come at one time to the holds.
Besides all these my servants will bring in
Some forty thousand salted carcases,
And of black naphtha in the next two months
Three hundred camel-loads. An archimage

With escort will arrive from[1] Shamírán,
And from Mount Ráda while, in sight of all
The elders and the wise, the mountain-chiefs,
Sent by the marchlords, will convey whate'er
Is needed to the gates and give the list
To our own treasurer, and if the Great
Among the folk will but restrain themselves
They will in sooth receive no injury
Among the valleys and the lofty hills
From Arab or from Turkman. Help from you
In these our strenuous times will aid us much.
Our minister, that wise and holy man,
Will now give orders to our treasurer
To send five robes of Persian make to all
C. 2077 That toil for us and, when those toils are over,
A splendid turban of gold broidery.
In these our present troubles each shall have
Two score drachms from our treasures, afterwards,
For service rendered, for each drachm three-score,
Each worth more than ten dángs,[2] and he will read
This legend: 'In the name of holy God,
The Object of our reverence, hopes, and fears,'
Upon one side. The other side will bear
Our face and crown, the legend: 'Through our love
The earth becometh fruitful.' These have been
Prepared for New Year's Day, the nobles' eyes
Fulfilled with wealth. God's blessing on the man
Whose faults are few and who forgetteth not
Our diadem."

The Sháh when he had sealed
The letter sent it to the army-chiefs.
With this king's missive in his hand there came
A horseman of high fortune and high aim.

[1] Reading with P.
[2] The dáng properly was a quarter of a drachm.

§ 8

How Yazdagird went to Tús and how Máhwí of Súr met him

Thence they conveyed the drums and came to Tús
From Nisháp̀úr. Máhwí of Súr had news :—
" The Sháh is on the road to Dahistán,"
And went to meet him with a mighty power,
All spearmen and in coats of mail, and when
The Glory of the royal state appeared,
The flag of majesty and such a host,
Alighted from his steed forthwith and paid
His duty to the king of kings, walked softly
Upon the burning dust and from his eyes
Shed tears of reverence. He kissed the ground,
Prolonging his obeisance. All his troops
Acclaimed the Sháh and touched earth with their heads,
While Farrukhzád enranked his powers when he
Beheld the visage of Máhwí of Súr
By whom his heart was joyed and whom he counselled
At large : " This Sháh of royal race do I
Commit to thee to serve him, suffering not
The blast to blow on him, and none save thee
To earn his thanks. I must depart to Rai,
Uncertain whether I shall see again
The royal crown for 'gainst these Arab spearmen
Full many such as I have died in battle.
There was not one within the world like Rustam,
The horseman, never hath the ear of sage
Heard tell of such, yet by a Raven-head[1] C. 2078

See p. 91, *note*.

Was he cut off, so adverse was our day !
God grant to him a place among the Just.
And give the swarthy Ravens to our spears !
Máhwí replied : " O paladin ! the Sháh
Is eye and soul to me. I undertake
In thy place to defend thy king, thy Heaven."
So Farrukhzád, son of Hurmuzd, departed
To Rai as bidden by the Sháh. The sky
Revolved awhile with matters in this stay,
And all love passed from that malignant's brain,
And none dared go to battle with the Arabs
Because the azure sky was helping them ;
The visage of the monarch of Írán
Grew wrinkled ; the foe's deeds made strait his heart.
Máhwí saw that the Sháh was at a stay,
And driven on by fortune helplessly,
Ambitioned speedily the throne and changed
In policy, in manners, and dispose,
Then for a season he began to affect
Ill health and barely showed the Sháh respect.

§ 9

How Máhwí of Súr incited Bízhan to war with Yazdagird and how Yazdagird fled and hid himself in a Mill

There was a paladin, a Turk by race,
A man of influence and named Bízhan ;
He dwelt within the coasts of Samarkand
Where he had many kin. Ill-starred Mahwí,
Becoming self-assertive, wrote to him :—
" Thou prosperous scion of the paladins !

A strife hath risen that will bring thee profit :
The Sháh is of all places here at Marv
And with no troops ! His head and crown and state,
Wealth, throne, and host, are thine if thou wilt come.
Recall the vengeance owing to thy sires,
And give this unjust race its just reward."
Bízhan, considering the letter, saw
That insolent Máhwí would win the world,
Then spake thus to his minister : " Thou chief
Of upright men ! what sayest thou to this ?
If I lead forth a host to aid Máhwí
'Twill be my ruin here."[1]
The minister
Replied : " O lion-hearted warrior !
'Twere shame to help Máhwí and then withdraw. C. 2079
Command Barsám to set forth with a host
To aid upon this scene of strife. The sage
Will term thee daft to go and fight in person
At the insistence of this man of Súr."
Bízhan replied : " 'Tis well, I will not go
Myself."
He therefore bade Barsám to lead
Ten thousand valiant cavaliers and swordsmen
To Marv with all the implements of war
If haply he might take the Sháh. That host
Went like a flying pheasant from Bukhárá
To Marv within one week. One night at cock-crow
The sound of tymbals went up from the plain.
How could the king of kings suspect Mahwí
Of Súr to be his enemy ? Shouts rose.
A cavalier reached Yazdagird at dawn
To say : " Máhwí saith thus : ' A host of Turks
Hath come. What is the bidding of the Sháh ?
The Khán and the Faghfúr of Chín command :
Earth is not able to support their host ! ' "

[1] Two couplets omitted.

The Sháh wroth donned his mail. The armies ranged.[1]
He formed his troops to right and left, and all
Advanced to battle. Spear in hand he held
The centre, and the whole world was bedimmed
With flying dust. He saw how lustily
The Turks engaged, unsheathed his sword, and came,
As 'twere an elephant before his troops.
Earth Nile-wise flowed. Like thundering cloud he charged,
But not a warrior supported him;
All turned their backs upon that man of name,
And left him mid the horsemen of the foe.
The world's king, when Máhwí withdrew, perceived
The practice hid till then—the intent and plan
To capture him—yet played the man in fight,
Displaying valour, strength, and warriorship,
Slew many at the centre, but at length
Fled in despair, with falchion of Kábul
In hand, pursued by many Turks. He sped
Like lightning mid night's gloom and spied a mill
On the canal of Zark[2]. Alighting there
The world's king lay in hiding from his foes
Within the mill. The horsemen searched for him;
All Zark was hue and cry. The Sháh abandoned
C. 2080 His gold-trapped steed, his mace, and scimitar
With golden sheath. The Turks with loud shouts sought him,
Excited by that steed and equipage.
The Sháh within the mill-house lurked in hay.
With this false Hostel thus it ever is:
The ascent is lofty and profound the abyss.
With Yazdagird, while fortune slumbered not,
A throne enskied[3] by heaven was his lot,
And now it was a mill! Excess of sweet

[1] Couplet omitted. [2] See LEC, p. 400. [3] Reading with T.

Bred bane for him and, if thou art discreet,
Affect not this world for its end is ill.
Whiles a tame serpent to the touch it still
At whiles will bite, and hot that bite will be.
Why then affect this cozening hostelry
While like a drum the signal to be gone
Thou hearest, bidding: "Bind the baggage on,
And for sole throne the grave's floor look upon?"
With mouth untasting and with tearful eyes
The Sháh abode until the sun arose,
And then the miller oped the mill-house door.
He bore a truss of grass upon his back.
A low-born-man was he, by name Khusrau,
Poor, foolish, unrespected, purposeless.
He lived upon the profits of his mill,
Which gave him full employment. He beheld
A warrior, like a lofty cypress, sitting
In dolour on the ground with kingly crown
Upon his head and with brocade of Rúm
Bright on his breast; his eyes a stag's, his chest
And neck a lion's; of beholding him
The eye ne'er tired. He was unique in form;
Wore golden boots; his sleeves were fringed with pearls
And gold. Khusrau looked, stood astound, and called
On God, then said: "O man of sunlike mien!
Say in what sort thou camest to this mill?
Why didst thou take it for thy resting-place
Full as it is of wheat and dust and hay?
Who art thou with such form, such Grace and looks?
Sure, heaven never saw the like of thee!"
The Sháh replied: "I am Íránian-born,
In flight before the army of Túrán."
The miller said, abashed: "I have no comrade
Save penury, but still, if barley-bread,

With some poor cresses from the river-bank,
Will serve thee I will bring them; naught have I
Besides: a man so straitened well may wail."
Through stress of fight the Sháh had rested not,
Or eaten, for three days and so replied:—
"Bring what thou hast, that and the sacred twigs
Will serve my turn."
C. 2081 The poor and lowly miller
Brought him the cresses and the barley-bread,
Made haste to fetch the sacred twigs and, reaching
The toll-house[1] on the way, crossed to the chief
Of Zark to make request for them. Máhwí
Had sent men on all sides to find the Sháh,
And so the chieftain asked the miller: "Friend!
For whom need'st thou the sacred twigs?"
Khusrau
Replied: "There is a warrior at the mill,
And seated on the hay, a cypress slim
In height, a sun in looks, a man of Grace,
With eyebrows arched and melancholy eyes:
His mouth is full of sighs, his soul is sad.
I set stale fare before him—barley-bread,
Such as I eat myself—but he is fain
To take the sacred twigs while muttering grace.[2]
Thou well mayst muse at him."
The chief rejoined:—
"Go and inform Máhwí of Súr hereof,
For that foul miscreant must not reveal
His proper bent when he shall hear of this."[3]
Forthwith he charged a trusty man to take

[1] The toll-house was at the ford or ferry. The same word might also mean a place of worship and accordingly Mohl or rather his successor (see p. 37 *note*) translates:—"Il se rendit au lieu où était l'oratoire et fit prévenir aussitôt le chef de Zark qu'on lui demandait le Barsom."

[2] See Vol. i., p. 80 *s.v. Báj*.

[3] *I.e.* if subsequently he should learn that we knew and did not tell him.

The miller to Máhwí who asked of him,
Then anxious for himself; "For whom didst thou
Require the sacred twigs? Tell me the truth."
The miller all a-tremble made reply:—
"I had been out to fetch a load and flung
The mill-door open roughly, when know this:
The sun was in mine eyes, but his are like
Those of a startled fawn; his locks are dark
As the third watch of night; his breath suggesteth
Musk, and his face embellisheth his crown.
One that hath never seen the Grace of God
Should take the mill-house key. His diadem
Is full of uncut jewels, and his breast
Bright with brocade of Rúm. The mill hath grown
As 'twere a sun through him, and yet his food
Is barley-bread, his seat upon the hay!
'Spring,' thou wouldst say, 'in Paradise is he:
No thane e'er set so tall a cypress-tree.'"

§ 10

How Máhwí of Súr sent the Miller to kill Yazdagird, and how the Archimages counselled Máhwí to forbear

Now when Máhwí had taken thought he knew:—
"'Tis none but Yazdagird!" and bade the miller:—
"Haste and cut off his head forthwith or I
Will cut thine own off presently and leave C. 2082
None of thy stock alive."
The chiefs, the nobles,
And mighty men heard this and all the assembly
Were filled with wrath at him; their tongues were charged

With words, their eyes with tears. An archimage,
By name Rádwí, whose mind wore wisdom's bridle,
Said to Máhwí: "O thou malignant one!
Why hath the Dív confused thine eyes? This know:
The royal and prophetic offices
Are two gems set within one finger-ring.
To break one is to trample life and wisdom
Beneath thy feet. Reflect upon thy words,
And then forbear. Be not the Maker's foe.
First will disaster come on thee herefrom,
Then thou wilt leave a seed-plot for thy child,
With fruit of colocynth and leafage blood.
Ere long thou wilt behold thy head abased;
Thy villainy will be exposed; thy sons
Will reap what thou hast sown. This deed of thine
Will wreck the Faith of God, and crown and throne
Will curse thee."
Then a devotee devout,
Who never put his hand forth to injustice,
By name Hurmuzd, son of Kharrád, a man
Who rested in the Faith, said to Máhwí:—
"O thou oppressor! quit not thus the way
Of holy God. I see thy heart and sense
Bedimmed. We see thy breast a tomb. Though strong
Thou hast no brain; thy mind is weak; thou seekest
The smoke and not the fire. I see that thou
Wouldst have the malediction of the world,
And, when thou quit'st it, travail, smart, and anguish.
Now will thy lifetime prove a wretched one,
And fire thy dwelling-place when thou departest."
He sat. Shahrán rose and addressed Máhwí:—
"Why this audacity? Thou hast opposed
The king of kings and cottoned with the Khán
And the Faghfúr. Full many of this race
Have proved of no account yet men ne'er hasted

To slay them. Shed not, as thou art a slave,
The blood of Sháhs because thou wilt be cursed
Till Doomsday."
This he said, and sat down weeping
In anguish with heart full and eyes all gall.
Then Mihr-i-Núsh stood forth in deep distress,
With lamentation, and addressed Máhwí:—
"O evil man of evil race, who art
Not well advised or just! a crocodile
Respecteth royal blood, a leopard finding
A slain king doth not rend him. O thou worse
In love and instinct than the beasts of prey!
Thou covetest the Sháh's crown! When Jamshíd
Was slaughtered by Zahhák did that affect C. 2083
Heaven's will? Nay, when Zahhák had won the earth
Abtín appeared, the glorious Farídún
Was born, the fashion of the world was changed,
And thou hast heard what tyrannous Zahhák
Brought on himself as sequel of his crimes,
For though he lived above a thousand years
Still in the end the avenger came to him.
Then, secondly, when Túr, the exalted one,
Afflicted by his longing for Írán,
Slew in his folly virtuous Íraj,
On whom the very dust looked pityingly,
Dispatched him[1] to the hero Farídún,
And gave the world to sorrow, Minúchihr,
One of the race, appeared and undid all
Those bonds. When, thirdly, princely Siyáwush
Went forth to war, albeit reluctantly,
Afrásiyáb, inspired by Garsíwaz,
Washed shame and honour from his mind and wits,
And slew the youthful and right royal prince,
So that the world became his enemy.
Sprung from that prince the world-lord Kai Khusrau

[1] His head, according to the story. See Vol. i., p. 202.

Came and filled all the world with hubbub, clave
Asunder with his scimitar his grandsire,[1]
And frayed all those that else had sought revenge.
The fourth count is the feud against Arjásp,
The slayer of Luhrásp. Asfandiyár
Went forth to fight with him and took swift wreak.
Fifth, is the vengeance ta'en for Sháh Hurmuzd.
Khusrau Parwíz, whenas he felt confirmed
In heart and power, dealt in the way we know
Both with Bandwí and Gustaham. The sky,
Which then revolved, revolveth still.[2] Forgetting
What they had done for him, when his sire's blood
And love and family appealed to him,
He in his day of strength abated theirs.[3]
One may not scorn the occasion of revenge,
For such a time will quickly come to thee,
And thou wilt suffer for thine evil thoughts,
Thy son will reap what thou hast sown, and fate
Will not rest long from vengeance; so refrain
From all this treasure-hoard, this heritage
Of crown and precious things. Thou art revolting
Because the Dív enjoineth, and abjuring
The way of God. The Dív, as thou wilt learn,
Is tempting thee with things not for thine honour.
Burn not thy soul and body in Hell-fire;
Dim not this world-illuming crown but gather
Thy scattered troops; recant what thou hast said;
Go ask the Sháh to pardon thee and when
Thou seest him renew thy fealty.
C. 2084 From there prepare to battle with the foe;
Be instant both in counsel and excuse,
For not to hearken to the words of sages
Will mark thee out as evil in both worlds.
Men bring to naught things done a day too late.

[1] Afrásiyáb, whose daughter Farangís married Siyáwush.
[2] *I.e.* history repeats itself. [3] Vol. viii., pp. 354, 358.

Wilt thou treat Yazdagird, the king of kings,
Worse than malignant Turks, for in the fray
He is a lion, on the throne a Sháh
As bright as sun and moon, a memory
Of the Sásánians ? None is girdle-girt
Like him. From sire to sire his ancestors
Were mighty men and compassers of wisdom
From Núshírwán, the Sháh, back to Ardshír,
While, seventh backward from Ardshír, Sásán,
The world-lord, had the crown,[1] for God entrusted
To him the Kaian crown, and all the kings
Were of that glorious race. Now many a man
Hath been thy better, but they ne'er conceived
Designs like these. As for Bahrám Chúbína,
Three hundred thousand skilful cavaliers
On barded steeds fled at one shaft of his,[2]
And left the field of fight to him ; but when
His heart grew weary of the race of Sháhs
The head of his resplendent fortune fell.
So Faráyín, who sought the throne of kings
Unworthily and bathed his hands in blood,
Was in like manner miserably slain :
This age endureth not such mockeries.
Fear Him, the Lord, the Maker of the world,
For He created throne and crown and signet.
Defame not thine own person wantonly
Because ere long such things will rise against thee.
Know that whoever speaketh not the truth
To thee is thy soul's foe. Now thou art sick
While I am as the leech, a leech that waileth,

[1] *De jure* not *de facto*. The first Sásán, here referred to, was the son of Dárá and after his father's overthrow by Sikandar took refuge in obscurity. Several generations later a descendant of his of the same name became the father of Ardshír Pápakán—the founder of the Sásánian Dynasty. The Sásánians, naturally sought to connect themselves with the old line of the Persian monarchy, with the Achaemenids in history and with the Kaiánians in legend. *Cf.* Vol. vi., p. 199.

[2] See Vol. viii., p. 126.

And sheddeth drops of blood. Thou art thyself
Less than the slave of slaves. Be not ambitious
In thy heart's thoughts. Leave strife to holy God,
And seek in honour's way the throne of greatness."
The shepherd-born[1] had set his heart upon
The throne: the archimages' rede was hard.
So hath it ever been; 'tis no new thing:
The flouts of fortune are past reckoning,
Exalting to the sky above this one,
And making that vile, wretched, and undone,
Not leagued with that, on war with this not bent,
But void of wit, shame, Faith, and precedent.
The archmages all, till the world gloomed and moon
Succeeded sun, warned that vindictive man,
Who was not one hair better for their talk,
And said when night came: "Ye must leave me now
C. 2085 O sages! I will ponder this to-night,
And take all kinds of wisdom to my breast.
We will call twenty wise men from the host
That we may need not to deplore this ill."
The prudent archimages went their ways,
The men of war arrived. Máhwí held session
With his confederates[2] and said: "What think ye
Herein? If Yazdagird remain alive
Troops will collect to him from every side;
My secret purposes have been exposed,
And all, both great and small, have heard thereof!
My life will end through his hostility,
And neither folk nor field and fell be left."
A wise man said: "Thou shouldest not have acted
At first so. If the monarch of Írán
Be ill-disposed toward thee then past doubt
Ill will befall thee from him, yet 'tis ill
To shed his blood for then God will avenge him.
To left and right are cares and pains of all kinds:

[1] *I.e.* Máhwí. *Cf.* p. 87. [2] Reading with P.

Consider how thou need'st must act herein."
Máhwí's son said to him: "Well counselled sire!
Since thou hast made the Sháh thine enemy
Be rid of him; troops from Máchin and Chín
Will come to him and earth grow strait for us.
Hold this no trifle. Since thou hast prevailed
Tempt not the maws of lions. Thou and all
Thy host will be uprooted from the world
If standard-wise the Sháh's skirt be unfurl'd."

§ 11

How Yazdagird was slain by Khusrau, the Miller

Thereat the shameless, infamous Máhwí
Turned fiercely to the miller, saying: "Up!
Take cavaliers and shed my foeman's blood."
The miller, hearing, knew not what to do,
But when at night the moon assumed her throne
Departed mill-ward to the Sháh and when
He left the court-gate of Máhwí his eyes
Were charged with tear-drops and his heart was full.
Forthwith Máhwí dispatched some cavaliers
To follow swift as smoke, instructing them:—
"See that ye sully not the crown and earrings,
The signet and the royal robes with blood,
And strip the Sháh when lifeless."
With his eyes
All tearful and cheeks yellow as the sun
The miller went, exclaiming: "Judge almighty,
Who art above the processes of time!
Wring presently his heart and soul for this C. 2086
Abhorred behest!"
With heart all shame and qualm,

With wetted cheeks and tongue all charged with dust,
He reached the Sháh and drawing nigh with caution,
As one would speak a secret in the ear,
Stabbed with a dirk his middle. At the blow
The Sháh cried: "Ah!" Then tumbled head and crown,
And barley-bread before him, to the dust!
He that abideth when he might depart
From this world hath no wisdom in his heart,
And wisdom is not in the turning sky,
Whose love is as its stress and enmity.
'Tis well to look not on the world and so
From these its doings love and wrath not know.
The planets weary of their fosterlings,
And guiltless folk like Yazdagird are slain;
None else hath perished thus of all the kings,
Nor of his host a plier of the rein.
The horsemen of accursed Máhwí, on seeing
That royal Tree thus laid to rest afar
From palace and his scenes of ease, drew near,
Gazed, one and all, upon his face, removed
His cincture, violet robe, and coronet,
His torque and golden boots, and left him there
In miserable case upon the ground—
The monarch of Írán flung on the dust,
Blood-boltered, with gashed side![1] Those emissaries,
When they arose, all framed their tongues to curse:—
"Oh! may Máhwí himself fare, prostrate thus,
All gory on earth's face."
They told Máhwí:—
"The exalted Sháh hath passed away from throne,
From battle and delights," and he commanded
To take, when it was night, the monarch's corpse,
And fling it in the stream. The miller took
The body of the Sháh forth from the mill,

[1] Reading the couplet that follows here two couplets lower.

And flung it (mark the horror !) in the water,[1]
And there it floated with a bobbing head ![2]
When it was day and people went abroad
Two men of worship visited the spot.
One of these men austere and sober reached
The river-bank and, when he saw the corpse
All naked in the water, hurried back
In consternation to the monastery,
And told the other monks what he had seen :—
" The Sháh, the master of the world, is drowned,
And naked in the water-way of Zark ! "
Then many of those holy men—the chief
And others of all ranks—set forth. A cry
Of anguish rose from them : " O noble man, C. 2087
And royal crown-possessor ! none e'er saw
The wearer of it in such plight as this,
Or ever heard before the time of Christ
A case like this king's through his wicked slave,
This misbegotten dog, this reprobate,
Who fawned upon his master till ill came ;
Máhwí's just portion is to be accursed.
Woe for the head and crown, the height and mien !
Woe for the breast and arms, the hands and mace !
Woe for the last descendant of Ardshír !
Woe for that cavalier so young and goodly !
Strong wast thou ; thou hadst wisdom in thy soul,
And thou hast gone to bear the news hereof
To Núshírwán that, though thy face was moonlike,
And though thou wast a king and soughtest crowns,
Yet in the mill they pierced thy liverstead,
And flung thy naked body in the stream ! "[3]
Four of the monks went stripped into the water,
Seized the bare body of the youthful king,

[1] Thus, if we interpret the passage by strict Zoroastrian principles, polluting one of the elements and adding sacrilege to regicide, but *cf.* Vol. iv., p. 129.
[2] Couplet omitted. [3] Three couplets omitted.

That grandson of the world-lord Núshírwán,
And drew it to the bank while young and old
Lamented greatly. They prepared for him
Within the garth a charnel-house and raised
Its summit to the clouds. They sealed his wound
With gum, with pitch, with camphor, and with musk,
And then arrayed him in brocade of gold,
With fine Egyptian linen underneath,
And dark-blue Russian cloth o'er all. They decked
His place of rest with wine and gum and camphor,
With musk and with rose-water.
When the form
Was hidden of that noble Cypress-tree
What said that honoured thane of Marv? "In secret
A guerdon waiteth him that after travail
Departeth with good conscience from the world."
Another said: "Though man may laugh, yet know
That he is of the sufferers, for he
Will find the falseness of the turning sky,
Which will reveal to him both rise and fall."
Another said: "Call not him one of wit
That serveth his own form with princes' blood,
And seeketh wealth, despite of infamy,
With soul unfearful of an evil end."
Another said: "Since the Sháh's lips are closed
I see not crown or royal seat or signet,
Or courtiers or a realm or diadem,
Or throne or helmet, and if these possess
No moment in themselves why this expense
Of toil and time?"
C. 2088 "Thy good report, I see," Another said, "will win thee worthy praise.
Thou in the garth of Paradise didst set
A cypress: now thy soul beholdeth it."
Another said: "God took thy soul and gave
Thy body to the care of the devout.

Hereby thy soul is profited, hereby
Will harm betide the foe. The Sháh hath now
His work in Paradise; his foeman's soul
Is on the road to Hell."

Another said:—

"Wise, knowledge-loving Sháh sprung from Ardshír!
Thou reapest now the crop that thou didst sow:
The lamp of sovereignty is still alight."

Another said: "Though thou'rt asleep, young king!
Thy spirit is awake. Thy lips are mute,
And with full many a groan thy spirit passed
And left thy body free. Thy work is done:
Thy soul is busy now. Thy foeman's head
Is on the stake. Although thy tongue is tied
Thy spirit speaketh, and thy soul is purged
Although thy form is pierced, while if thy hand
Have dropped the reins thy spirit still will wield
The spear in battle."

Said another one:—

"O famous warrior! thou hast departed
With thine own works as guide. Thy royal seat
Is now in Paradise; this earth of bale
Is now another's share."

"The man that slew
One such as thee," another said, "will look
Upon harsh days anon."

The prelate said:—

"Thy slaves are we and laud thy holy soul.
Be this, thy charnel, as a garth all tulips,
This bier thine upland and thy plain of joy."

They spake, took up the bier and carried it
From waste to mausoleum. Thither came
The hapless Sháh, crown, throne, and casque at end.
O man of many years, whose words still run!
Turn from the path of greed, break off thy strain.
What shall we say hereof? Was justice done,

Or vengeance by the seven planets ta'en,
On Yazdagird ? The sage, if unresolved
Upon the point, could make me no reply,
Or if he spake 'twould be in words involved
That keep the answer still a mystery.
If thou hast means, good man ! indulge thy heart ;
Trust not to what the morrow promiseth,
Because the world and thou perforce must part,
And time accounteth for thine every breath;
Thou shouldest sow not any save good seed
In what remaineth of thy mortal strife ;
Control the door of appetite and greed ;
He that provided will provide through life,
And life itself will but produce for thee
Fair fame and happiness, good friend ! Then still
C. 2089 With all thy might eschew iniquity,
For from a wise man should proceed no ill.
Bring wine ; our day is nearly o'er and hence
We must away, for what hath been will be.
Had I incomings balancing expense
Then time would be a brother unto me.
The hail this year like death on me hath come,
Though death itself were better than the hail,
And heaven's lofty, far-extending dome
Hath caused my fuel, wheat, and sheep to fail.

§ 12

How Máhwí of Súr was informed of the Obsequies[1] of Yazdagird and ascended the Throne

One came and told Máhwí of Súr : " The world-lord
Is hidden in the dust. The prelates, priests,

[1] " Slaying " in the text.

And monks of Rúm—all those of life austere,
Both young and old, throughout that march and land—
Went wailing, took his body from the stream,
And made for him within the garth a charnel—
A great one, higher than the mountain-slopes."[1]
Máhwí, that luckless wretch, exclaimed: "Írán
Had ne'er before affinity with Rúm."
He sent and slew the builders of that charnel,
With those that mourned, and gave that march to spoil,
Such was his will and worth! Thereafter he
Made search throughout the world and found not one
Of that great stock. He had a crown and signet,
The Sháh's erewhile, and to that shepherd-born
The throne appealed. He called his intimates,
Announced the purpose that he had at heart,
And told his minister: "Experienced man!
The day of strife and battle is upon us.
I have no treasure, fame or lineage,
And may but give my head up to the winds.
The name that is upon my signet-ring
Is Yazdagird: my scimitar hath failed
To make men yield to me. Throughout Írán
Men are his slaves although his kin is scattered.
The sages do not hail me as the Sháh,
The soldiers do not recognise my seal.
My machinations tended otherwise.
Oh! wherefore did I shed the world-king's blood?
All night am I sore-troubled in my thoughts:
The World-lord knoweth how it is with me."
The counsellor replied: "The thing is done,
And common talk. Act for thine own behoof,
For thou hast burst thy belt. The Sháh is dust C. 2090
Within the charnel; dust hath healed his soul.

[1] Reading with P.

Call round thee all the world-experienced men,
And set thy tongue to words of pleasantness.
Say thus: 'The Sháh gave me the crown and signet
As emblems of authority, perceiving
The coming of an army from the Turks,
Called me at dead of night, and said: "When bruit
Of war ariseth who can say which side
The dust will be, so take this crown and ring,
For they may help thee on the day of battle.
I have one daughter only left to me:
In truth she is in hiding from the Arabs.
Hereafter yield not to the foe my throne,
And by these tokens walk thou in my steps."
I have then from the Sháh as legacy
This crown and in accord to his behest
Am sitting on the throne.' By this device
Give thou thine acts a gloss for who will know
The truth from falsehood?"
"Good!" exclaimed Máhwí,
"Thou art a minister—a peerless one!"
He summoned all the captains of the host,
And spake at large to them to that effect.
They knew: "It is not true, and well it were
To cut his head off for his shamelessness."
A paladin observed: "'Tis thy concern
If what thou sayest be the truth or not."
He heard and sat him down upon the throne,
By his deceit gat hold of Khurásán,
Distributed the earth among his chiefs,
And said: "I am the world's king with the signet.'
He called his kin and said the same at large;
He took the whole earth as it were a gift;
The stars were in amaze at him. He chose
The vicious as accorded to his nature,
Debased the sages and made everywhere
Chiefs of the bad. The head of right was humbled,

And knavery on all sides manifest.
He gave his elder son Balkh and Harát,
And sent troops to each quarter. As his host
And treasures grew the heart of that ingrate
Was gratified. He gave his troops rewards
And put them in good case; he filled the heads
Of his own kith and kin with vapourings.
Then with his troops and valiant warriors,
Preceded by the scouts and Garsiyún—
A veteran chief—they marched upon Bukhárá,
Intent on war, for "Chách and Samarkand
Are ours," Máhwí said, "and they must be made
The captives of this crown and seal, for so
Did Yazdagird, king of the world, command— C. 2091
Chief of the planets seven. With the sword
Will I take vengeance on Bízhan by whom
The fortune of earth's king was turned to gloom."

§ 13

How Bízhan, hearing of the Slaying of Yazdagird and of Máhwí of Súr's Accession to the Throne, led forth the Host to fight with him

In time news reached Bízhan: "Máhwí hath seized
The throne of might and everywhere imposeth
His seal and signet; earth accepteth him,
And now with warlike troops his face is turned
Toward the Jíhún for battle."
"Who bestowed
The signet on him?" asked Bízhan, and one
Acquainted him with all: "When thou didst reach
The desert of Farab, and fortune's lips
Were closed to good and ill, there parted hence

To him a force of haughty cavaliers
In quest of fame, for he had said: 'If thou
Wilt send me troops I will dispatch to thee
By privy pact the crown of king of kings
With golden throne and signet. In the world
The sovereignty is fitly thine.' Thy troops
Went hence in haste and found the Sháh at Marv.
They compassed him about. The Íránians fled.
When that wise king was left alone he feared
That ill might come upon him from the host.
There was a certain mill upon the ford,
And thither went the Sháh, a sun in Grace.
Máhwí of Súr heard of him, sent and slew him,
And through the royal signet gained the world
When he had slain his master. Now the more part
Of praise and blame in this affair is thine,
Thine were the valiant horsemen and the strife."
Barsám said thus: "O king! what time[1] I took
A mounted force from Chách[2] Máhwí had said
To thee: 'The golden throne of Yazdagird,
His armlets set with gems, his crown withal
And treasure, will I send to Balkh. The throne
And crown within the world must needs be thine.'
I fought three days at Marv. When on the fourth
The world's light shone I battled furiously,
For I was pressed. Tyrannical Máhwí
Displayed his back. The Íránian king of kings,
Abandoned, like a furious lion charged
C. 2092 My troops and slaughtered many of my chiefs,
But, when he had no comrades left, he too
Displayed his back; but how that master-slayer,
That faithless slave, put him to death I know not.
Thus with no toil Máhwí obtained and used
His master's treasures. Then the miscreant,
Becoming dazed by so much wealth, appeared,

[1] Reading with P. [2] Couplet omitted.

Thou mightest say, as if he ne'er had seen me!
Although my troops remained two months at Marv
He gave us no kind look but put to death,
And privily, his lord, so great a king,
The lustre of the world, a cavalier
That 'raiseth o'er the orbit of the moon
His head amidst the host' thou wouldst have said.
No Turk encountered and escaped his mace:
He broke our nobles' hearts. I have not seen
Such breastplate, hand, and mace. Máhwí thus furnished
Seized on the realm in this unholy wise.
Now that the foe in arms invadeth thee
Thou and thine army must be up and doing.
Let not weeds blossom in the royal garden
Or it will be forgotten."

Hearing this,
Bízhan raged much at having helped to dim
The fortune of the Sháh, then bade assemble
His host of Turks, his horsemen of the day
Of battle, sped forth from Káchár Báshí,
And lost no time upon the road. Whenas
He drew anear Bukhárá all the waste
Was covered with his troops to whom he said:—
"Haste not and let Máhwí be first to lead
His host across the water[1] to contend
With me. Perchance on him I may avenge
The Sháh."

He asked thereafter: "Did the king
Leave no availful child? Had he no brother?
In the default of sons had he no daughter,
Whom we might carry with us and assist,
And take full satisfaction of Máhwí?"

Barsám replied: "My lord! this race's day
Is passed; the Arabs hold those provinces;

[1] The Oxus.

No Sháh is left or worshipper of Fire."
Bízhan, on hearing this, resumed his march,
Astound at this world's doings. Scouts announced :—
" A host hath come and campeth at Baigand.
They crossed in boats, their dust obscured the sun."
Bízhan, the chief, led on his troops to war,
And when Máhwí of Súr beheld them thou
C. 2093 Hadst said : " His soul took flight." He was in dudgeon
At all those breastplates, helmets, shields of Chín,
At all those maces, spears, and battle-axes
Of Chách. The air grew dark and earth was lost
To sight therein as he arrayed his host.

§ 14

How Máhwí of Súr was taken and slain by Order of Bízhan

Bízhan, when he had drawn up his array,
Prepared an ambush for the Íránians ;
Máhwí knew of it and with loud exclaims
Departed from among his troops. Bízhan
Looked forth, beheld the flag, and knew : " Máhwí
Is minded to take flight," and bade Barsám :—
" Lead from the central host what troops thou hast,
And draw toward one side ; we must not let
Máhwí decline the battle and haste thus
Jíhún-wards. Speed and keep him well in sight,
For we must deal with him in other wise."
Barsám of Chín observed the flag and drew
His troops apart until with frowning face,
And malisons upon his lips, he reached
The desert of Farab, there found Máhwí,

And, with his weight upon the stirrups, charged ;
Then, closing face to face, he plied his sword,
Displaying valour, seized his foeman's belt,
Unseated him and dashed him to the ground,
Alighted, bound his hands, and then remounting
Drove him along in front. With that came up
Barsám's own comrades, and the bruit of him
Filled all the plain. They said : " O chief ! Máhwí
Should be beheaded on the way."
He answered :—
" Not so ; Bízhan as yet is not informed
About the capture."
Presently Bízhan
Gat news : " That ill-conditioned slave is taken,"
Heard and grew glad of heart. He hugged himself,
And thus released from care roared lion-like.
Then many valiant Turks came and discussed
The fashion of the slaying of Máhwí.
All that they recognised as of his court
They put to death—a countless multitude.
They looted all the baggage and dragged off
Máhwí stripped bare of all. The guilty wretch
Lost all his wits when he beheld Bízhan,
Was as a soulless body with affright, C. 2094
And strewed upon his head the unstable sand.
Bízhan said : " O thou miscreant ! may none have
A slave like thee ! Why didst thou put to death
That righteous Sháh, the lord of victory
And throne, and by ancestral right both Sháh
And king, the memory of Núshírwán ? "
Máhwí made answer thus : " The evil-doer
Can look for naught but slaying and reproach.
Now smite my neck for wrong done and fling down
My head in presence of this company."
The other gave reply : " I will so act
That I shall banish vengeance from my heart,"

Struck off Máhwí's hand with the scimitar,
And said: "This hand hath not a peer in crime."
The hand thus lopped, he said: "Cut off his feet
That he may not escape," and further bade:—
Cut off his nose and ears, let him be placed
Upon a horse out on the burning sand
Until he sleepeth in his shame."
They bound him
From head to foot with cords, the clarions sounded,
A herald went the circuit of the host,
And, as he passed the entry of the tents,
Made proclamation: "Slaves that slay your masters!
Indulge no foolish thoughts, and may all those
Without compunction for a monarch's life
Be as Máhwí and never see the throne."
There was a prince, by name Guráz, at once
The glory and the pleasure of Máhwí.
He was the governor of Marv what time
Máhwí died wretchedly. As eldest son
He was his father's lustre, who had made
A crown of gold for him. When fortune loured
Upon Máhwí the horsemen rode to Marv
From all sides. Tumult spread. The war-cry rose,
And strife and turmoil filled the land. Guráz
Was slain mid those dark doings, and the day
Of all his race was done. He had three sons
Among his troops, three favourite sons possessed
Of crown and throne. A lofty pyre was kindled,
And he and his three sons were burned thereon.
None of the seed remained or if some did
Men harried them. The chieftains cursed that race,
All vengeful for the slaughter of the Sháh:—
"May it be cursed and may there never fail
A man to curse it as it hath deserved."
Bízhan, the Turk, too was an evil-doer.
His own time came, his wisdom was estranged,

And I have heard that he grew mad at last,
And was so till he slew himself. Well done, C 2095
Thou still revolving, crook-backed sky! Since then
Hath been the epoch of 'Umar, made known
The Faith, and to a pulpit changed the throne.

§ 15

Account of the Completion of the Sháhnáma

When five and sixty years had passed me by
I viewed my task with more anxiety,
And as my yearning to achieve it grew
My fortune's star receded from my view.
Persians well read and men of high degree
Wrote all my work out and would take no fee.
I over-looked from far, and thou hadst said
That they had rather handselled me instead!
Naught but their praises had I for my part,
And while they praised I had a broken heart.
The mouths of their old money-bags were tied,
Whereat mine ardent heart was mortified.
Of famous nobles of this town 'Alí,
The Dílamite,[1] most shared the work with me,
For he, a man of ardent temper made,
Through kindliness of soul forwent no aid.
Husain, son of Kutíb, a Persian lord,
Asked me for naught without its due reward,
But furnished gold and silver, clothes and meat,
And found me ways and means, and wings and feet.
As for taxation, naught thereof know I;
All at mine ease in mine own quilt I lie.

[1] In Vol. i., p. 35, the names are given according to the reading of BCM.

What time my years attained to ten times seven
And one my poetry surmounted heaven.
For five and thirty years I bore much pain
Here in this Wayside Inn in quest of gain,
But all the five and thirty years thus past
Naught helped; they gave my travail to the blast,
And my hopes too have gone for evermore
Now that mine age all but hath reached fourscore.
I end the story of Sháh Yazdagird,
And in Sapandármad, the day of Ard,
And year four hundred of Muhammad's Flight,
The last words of this royal book I write.
For ever flourishing be Sháh Mahmúd,
His head still green, his heart with joy imbued.
I have so lauded him that publicly
And privily my words will never die.
Of praises from the Great I had much store;
The praises that I give to him are more.
May he, the man of wisdom, live for aye,
His doings turn to his content alway.
This tale of sixty thousand couplets I
Have left to him by way of memory.
C. 2096 My life from days of youth to eld hath sped
In talk and hearkening what others said.
When this, my famous tale, was done at last
O'er all the realm my reputation past.
All men of prudence, rede, and Faith will give
Applause to me when I have ceased to live,
Yet live I shall; the seed of words have I
Flung broad-cast and henceforth I shall not die.

The Sháhnáma of Firdausí is ended.

"Yon prater hath grown old," they flung at me,
"In love toward the Prophet and 'Alí."
That love, if I shall speak of it, implies
Five score Mahmúds for me to patronise.
The slave-girl's brat is but a worthless thing
Although its father came to be a king.
Had e'er the Sháh a turn for goodness shown
He would have seated me upon the throne.
Because his kindred is of mean estate
He cannot bear to hear about the great.

SATIRE ON SULTÁN MAHMÚD.

Ho! Sháh Mahmúd who hast as victor trod
The climes! if man thou fearest not fear God,
For there were many Sháhs ere thou hadst birth
Who all were crownéd monarchs of the earth
And all of them pre-eminent o'er thee
In treasure, host, throne, crown, and dignity.
They did no act that was not good and right,
Went not about to swindle and to spite,
Dealt with their subjects justly and were naught
If not God's worshippers. They only sought
From time an honoured name and thus to gain
An honoured end; but all good folk disdain
Sháhs that are bound in filthy lucre's chain.
What though the kingship of the world is thine,
Dost ask what boot these whirling words of mine?
Thou hast not seen my heart in its fierce mood,
Thou reck'st not of my sword a-drip with blood
But term'st me faithless, heretic! I am
A lion, and thou callest me a ram!
"Yon ribald hath grown old," men flung at me,
"In love toward the Prophet and 'Alí."
But is there, tell me this, one viler yet
Than he whose heart against 'Alí is set?
These two I serve till Resurrection-morn
E'en if the Sháh should have my body torn
Asunder. I will love these two kings though
The Sháh's sword be above, my head below.
I serve the Prophet's slaves, the dust revere
Upon His mandatary's[1] foot. No fear
Have I for all thy threats:—"Thou shalt be brayed
By elephants and have thy body made
A river Nile," for mine enlightened mind
Place for the love of these two souls shall find

[1] 'Alí.

Within my heart. What said the inspired Lord
Of bidding and forbidding—Heaven's own word?
"I am the City of the Doctrine, he
That is the gateway to it is 'Alí."
I witness that His heart is in that word
As though, as thou may'st say, His voice I heard.
If thou hast mind and wit and rede to hand
By Prophet and 'Alí take up thy stand.
If ill result to thee mine is the breach;
Thus is it, and I practise what I preach.
Thus have I done from birth, thus will I die;
The dust upon the Lion's[1] foot am I.
What others say can make no difference
To me; I never speak but in this sense,
And if the Sháh adopt another strain
His wisdom weigheth not one barley-grain.
When God shall set the Prophet and 'Alí
On royal thrones I, if my poetry
Came from my love to them, shall in the skies
Have five-score like Mahmúd to patronise.
While earth remaineth it will have its lords,
And all that wear the crown shall hear these words:—
"Firdausí—I of Tús—your friend, disclaim
Mahmúd as patron. I wrote in the name
Of the Prophet and 'Alí; for their sake I
Have pierced so many gems of fantasy."
So long as there was no Firdausí here
The fortune of this world of ours was sere,
Yet on this tale of mine thou wouldst not look
Misled by one who vilified my book,
But may all those that vilified my strain
Expect revolving heaven's help in vain.
These stories of the sovereigns of old
Had I in mine own charming language told,
And when my years had almost reached fourscore
My hopes were scattered to the wind. I bore
Here in this Wayside Inn the toil so long
Because I hoped for treasure through my song
Of sixty thousand noble couplets spent
On warlike topics, and their argument
The lasso, scimitar, artillery,
The battle-axe, the falchion brandished high,

[1] 'Alí.

The casque, the mail, the charger's armature,
The wilderness, the ocean, stream and shore,
Wolf, dragon, elephant, and crocodile,
Pard, lion, and 'Afrít, the cunning wile
Of Ghúl, the sorcery of dívs whose cries
Reached heaven, the heroes famed for enterprise
Upon the day of battle (these I sing),
The heroes combating and glorying,
Men too of no mean rank or name obscure
But such as Salm Afrásiyáb and Túr,
Sháh Farídún and Kai Kubád and fell
Zahhák the tyrant and the infidel,
Garshásp and Sám whom Narímán the bold
Begot—world-paladins of mighty mould—
Húshang and Tahmúras the Dív that bound,
With Minúchihr, Jamshíd that Sháh renowned,
Káús and Kai Khusrau with crown upon
His head, and Rustam, and that famous one
Of brazen form,[1] Gúdarz and his delight—
His eighty sons, those Lions of the fight
And horsemen of the plain—great Sháh Luhrásp,
Zarír the captain of the host, Gushtásp,
Jámásp who shone among the host on high
More brightly than the sun doth in the sky,
Dárá son of Dáráb, Bahman, the great
Sikandar—chief of all that ruled the state—
Withal too Sháh Ardshír, Shápúr his son,
Bahrám and Núshírwán the virtuous one.
Such is the famous and exalted throng
That I have made the subject of my song,
All dead for ages but my poetry
Hath caused their names to live again, for I
Have raised these dead, as Jesus did, and made
Their names live, one and all, and I have laid
A servitude upon myself for thee,
O king! to keep thy name in memory.
The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry.
This story shall be read by every one
Possessed of wisdom while the ages run;

[1] Asfandiyár.

But that was not thy promised recompense,
Nor did I hope reward in such a sense.
A slanderer (my curse upon his head !)
Extracted evil out of what I said
For good, destroyed my credit with the king
And made my glowing coal a frigid thing.
If thou hadst been a judge of honest ways,
And hadst bestowed a thought upon my lays,
Thou wouldst have said that I have paid my dues—
The talent that was given me to use—
In full. My words have made the world to grow
Like Paradise. Before me none could sow
The seed of words. Unnumbered folk no doubt
Flung them in countless multitudes about,
But, though they were so many, up to now
No one hath ever mentioned them, I trow.
For thirty years exceeding toil I bore
And made the Persians live in Persian lore.
Unless the worldlord had close-fisted grown
I should have had a seat upon the throne ;
He would have placed me there, but common sense
Hath never been the monarch's excellence.
Had he himself been royal by descent
He would have heeded royal precedent,
For, had his sire been Sháh, he would ere now
Have set a crown of gold upon my brow,
Or had his mother been a lady I
Had stood in gold and silver coin knee-high ;
But since his kindred are of mean estate
He cannot bear to hear about the great.
The bounty of this Sháh of high degree
Hath altered nine times nine to four times three ![1]
The travail of this Book of Kings I bore
For thirty years that from his treasury's store
The Sháh might recompense me, set me free
From worldly needs and give me high degree
Among my peers. He oped his treasury's door
And gave a sherbet-seller's[2] fee, not more,

[1] Mohl, who has a slightly different text, translates "rien et moins que rien," which he admits to be pure conjecture. To us it seems a reference to the amount expected and the amount received by the poet.

[2] In the original a "fakka"-seller. "Fakka" seems to have been barley-water flavoured with raisins, or else some sort of beer. Cf. the Greek φοῦσκα (Latin *posca*, sour wine).

On whom I spent it in the public way—
A fit recipient of such royal pay!
C. 66 A king devoid of honour, sense of right,
And faith as this is, is not worth a mite.
The slave-girl's brat is but a worthless thing
Although it may be fathered by a king.
To raise the vile that good from them may flow
Is but to lose our thread's end when we sew
Or put a viper in our pouch to grow.
If thou shalt plant a tree of nauseous fruit
In Paradise itself and drench the root,
When moisture is required, from Heaven's own rill
Of purest honey, the old nature still
Will show itself at last; thou wilt procure
Fruit no less nauseous than the fruit before.
If by perfumers' stalls thy steps are bent
Thy clothing will catch somewhat of the scent,
And if thou visitest a charcoal Jack
Thou wilt get naught from him that is not black.
That miscreants should do ill is no strange case;
Hope nothing then from one whose birth is base,
For none can furbish off the gloom of night,
And washing will not make an Ethiop white.
To look for good from an ill stock to rise
Is but to throw the dust in one's own eyes.
The worldlord, if an honoured name he bore,
Would have esteemed right dear this branch of lore
And listened to such various tales as these
Of ancient ways and royal usages,
Would not have met my wishes with disdain
Or let the labour of my life be vain.
I have a purpose in these lofty rhymes—
The Sháh perchance will be advised betimes,
Will recognise what words are, will pay heed
To this his hoary old adviser's rede,
Do to no other poets wrong henceforth
But hold his reputation something worth,
For men will quote till Re-urrection-morn
The injured poet's recompense of scorn.
A suppliant at the Court of God most high
I shall throw dust upon my head and cry:—
"Lord, cause Thy faithful servant's heart to dwell
In light, and burn this miscreant's soul in Hell."

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

VOLUME I.

Page xii, line 21, *for* ' Evil ' *read* ' evil.'
Page xiii, line 15, *for* ' Born ' *read* ' born.'
Page 4, line 4, *delete* ' still.'
Page 5, line 22, *after* ' camel ' *add* ' of which the red-haired variety was most esteemed.'
Page 6, line 21, *for* ' Scythian ' *read* ' Elamitic.'
Page 7, line 19, *for* ' was ' *read* ' became,' line 25 and elsewhere, *for* ' Tritá ' *and* ' Traitána ' *read* ' Trita ' *and* ' Traitana,'
Page 9, line 16 and elsewhere, *for* ' Ázarbiján ' *read* ' Ázarbáiján.'
Page 10, bottom The date of the fall of Nineveh has lately been assigned to the year B.C. 612. See ' The Fall of Nineveh,' p. 9 *seq.* By C. J. Gadd.
reference number 2, *after* R *insert* P.
Page 11, line 29 and elsewhere, *for* ' Hira and Anbar ' *read* ' Híra and Ambár.'
Page 13, reference number 2, *for* ' NESH ' *read* ' NSEH.'
Page 14, line 25, *for* ' Sámánides ' *read* ' Sámánids.'
Page 17, *delete* lines 7-10.
reference number 1, *add* ' See too A. V. Williams Jackson,' ' From Constantinople to the Home of Omar Khayyam,' Ch. v.'
Page 19, line 19, *for* ' Sacaestan ' *read* ' Sacaestán.'
reference number 3, *delete* ' iii.'
Page 21, line 7 and elsewhere, *for* ' Nuh ' *read* ' Núh.'
line 12, *for* ' appealed ' *read* ' turned.'
Page 29, line 12 from bottom, *cf* LEC, pp. 206, 207 and *note*.
Page 31, *delete* lines 13-16, *and read* ' that Fazl, son of Ahmad, is referred to on both occasions.'
Page 33, line 23, *delete* full stop, *insert* comma, *and for* ' Such is not ' *read* ' not be in.'
Page 34, five lines from bottom, *delete* ' While I sat looking on ' *and read* ' While I o'erlooked from far.'
Page 37, line 22, *for* ' Arúdí *read* ' 'Arúdí.'
Page 38, seven lines from bottom, *for* ' Bazh ' *read* ' Bázh.'
six lines from bottom, *after* ' city ' *add reference number* 1.
at bottom *add note* ' 1 The quarter in which Bázh was situated was known as Tabarán.'
Page 39, bottom, reference number 1, *delete* ' §1 and 7 ' *and read* ' The too spiritual conception of the Deity in §1 and the references to 'Alí in §7.'

Page 41, last line, *for* ' axe ' *read* ' ax.'
Page 43, note 2, *for* ' fakká ' *read* ' fakká,' *and for* ' Cf.' read ' *Cf.*'
Page 45, line 24, *after* ' indigo ' *add reference number* 2.
line five from bottom, after ' Cemetery ' *add reference number* 3.
at bottom *add* ' [2] *Cf. Encl. Brit.* (11th ed.), Vol. 11, p. 917, col. 2.
[3] Professor A. V. Williams Jackson's suggestion that, as burial in the Muhammadan cemetery was refused, the corpse of Firdausí was reconveyed within the walls and buried in ground belonging to him, seems far from improbable. From Constantinople to the Tomb of Omar Khayyám, p. 291.
Page 50, line 7, for ' Ahriman ' *read* ' Áhriman.'
Page 51, line 23, *add reference number* 1.
bottom, *add* ' [1] Thus Pírán (see p. 55) may represent Perun, the Slavonic god of thunder.'
Page 61, line 3, *delete* ' which ' *and to end of sentence, and insert* ' *i.e.* of Ázargashasp.'
Page 62, bottom, after reference number 7 *insert* DZA, i, 209.
Page 67, line 18, end, *add* ' bin.'
Page 68, line 9, end *add* ' or identical with.'
bottom, reference number 1, *add* NIN, 15.
Page 69, bottom, *for* ' 108 ' *read* ' 107.'
Page 71, line 19, *after* ' Oxus ' *insert* ' Caspian.'
line 20, *after* ' Dardanelles ' *insert* ' Mediterranean.'
bottom, reference number 6, *after* ' 80 ' *add* ' notes.'
Page 73, line 8 from bottom, *for* ' land ' *read* ' earth.'
,, 7 ,, *after* ' Sháhs ' *add reference number* 1.
,, 5 ,, *after* ' canal ' *add reference number* 2.
bottom, *add* ' [1] Kai Kubád. *See* Vol. ii, p. 22. [2] *Id.* 192.'
Page 74, line 8, *after* ' tree ' *add reference number* 1.
bottom, add ' [1] *Cercis Siliquastum.*'
Page 77, line 11, *for* ' the first half ' *read* ' three-fifths.'
line 8 from bottom, after ' repetitions ' *add reference number* 1.
bottom, *add* ' [1] These of course do not include the great duplications of tradition in the poem.'
Page 82, line 11, *for* ' regarded ' *read* ' looked upon.'
line 25, *after* ' farr ' *add reference number* 2.
bottom, *add* ' [2] pp. 369, 370.'
Page 83, line 18, *before* ' múbidán ' *insert*—
line 25, *after* ' subject ' *add reference number* 2.
bottom, *add* ' [2] The expression is used, however, of Bahrám Gúr (Vol. vii, p. 78) and of Núshírwán (viii, p. 14). It is also applied to non-Íránians, to Suhráb, who was opposing the Íránians (ii 145), Pírán (ii, 261, 275, 324, iii, 106), Pílsam (ii, 352), Tazháv, an Iránian deserter (iii, 28), Bazánúsh (vi, 297), and there are other instances.'
Page 84, line 3, *for* ' camp enclosure ' *read* ' camp-enclosure.'

Page 85, line 20, *for* ' end ' *read* ' beginning.'

Page 87, bottom, *add* ' Rogers, The Shah-namah of Fardusi. Translated from the original Persian. 1909. (A version partly in verse and partly in epitomized prose.)

Page 88, lines 11 and 27, *for* ' Ardibihisht ' read ' Ardíbihisht.'
line 12 and bottom, *for* ' Sharívar ' *read* ' Shahrívar.'
lines 12 and 26, *for* ' Farvardín ' *read* ' Farwardín.'
line 17 and page 89, line 3, *for* ' Ádar ' *read* ' Ázar.'

Page 89, line 4, *for* ' Dín ' *read* ' Dai.'

Page 90, line 9, *for* ' 3 generations ' *read* ' 4 generations[1] ' *and add at bottom*,' [1] *See* Vol. v. p. 203.'
for ' Barmaiún. Kataiún.' *read* ' Purmáya. Kaiánush.'
15 *add as son to Minúchihr* ' Zarasp.'
17, *add as son to Tús* ' Zarásp.'

Page 92, line 5 *add as descendant from Túr* ' Máh Áfríd, d.'
line 10, *add as descendant of Wísa* ' Kurúkhán.'
line 11, *for* ' Pírán ' *read* ' Pírán=Gulshahr.'
line 15, *to descendants of Afrásiyáb add* ' Manízha, d.=Bízhan '
and delete ' Rúín.'
line 17, *for* ' Kurakhán ' *read* ' Kurákhán.'

Page 93, lines 20 and 22, *transpose* ' EP ' *and* ' EIII.'

Page 94, *delete lines* 4-5.
bottom, *add* ' ZT. Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-Yezid Tabari. Traduite sur la version Persane d'Abou-'Ali Mo'hammed Bel'ami par M. Hermann Zotenberg.'

Page 100, line 4, *for* ' Shaddad son of Ad ' *read* ' Shaddád son of 'Ad.'

Page 100, line 7, *for* ' Shaddad ' *read* ' Shaddád.'

Page 100, line 10, *for* ' Nasiru'd ' *read* ' Násiru'd.'

Page 104, after line 4 *insert*—
' Thus is it now: what the world's end will be
None knoweth openly or privily.'

Page 106, line 12, for ' *The* ' read ' *In*,'

Page 108, line 15, *for* ' with ' *read* ' to.'

Page 112, line 2, for ' *The* ' read ' *In*.'
8 from bottom, *for* ' light ' *read* ' blaze.'

Page 113, line 7 and elsewhere, *for* ' Ind ' *read* ' Hind.'
line 19, end, *add* full stop.

Page 117, line 2, *Delete* ' FOR.'

Page 118, line 4, *for* ' mountain of the holy ' *read* ' Mountain of the Holy.'

Page 120, line 1, for ' *Slain* ' read ' *slain* ' and delete ' *the Hand of*.'

Page 121, line 5, for ' *Fight* ' read ' *fight*.'

Page 126, line 5, *add* ' This is the first of many doublets in the poem.'
line 16, *for* ' gold ' *read* ' good.'

Page 129, line 6 from bottom, *for* ' o ' *read* ' of.'

Page 130, line 11, *after* ' gallery ' *insert* . . .
line 23, *for* ' have ' *read* ' find,' *and add to reference* 4 ' WPT. i. 142.'
Page 131, line 15, *for* ' They ' *read* ' they.'
Page 132, line 11, *add* full stop *at end.*
Page 135, line 3, *for* ' departed from ' *read* ' abandoned.'
line 11 from bottom, end, *delete* comma *and insert* full stop.
Page 138, line 8 from bottom, *delete* ' thou my ' *and read* ' any.'
Page 141, line 4 from bottom, *for* ' light ' *read* ' Grace.'
Page 142, line 5 from bottom, *for* ' downstricken ' *read* ' downstricken.'
line 4 from bottom, *for* ' Áspikán ' *read* ' Áspikán.'
Page 143, line 7, *for* ' 1 ' *read* ' 2.'
15, *for* ' 2 ' *read* ' 3.'
20, for ' Baghdad ' *read* ' Baghdád.'
25, *after* ' Ispahán ' *add reference number* 4.
31, *for reference number* 3 *read* 5.
33, *for reference number* 4 *read* 6.
bottom, *after reference* 3 *insert* ' ' ZT, i, 117,' *and for reference numbers* 4 *and* 5 *read* 5 *and* 6.
Page 145, line 25, for ' *Evil* ' read ' *evil.*'
Page 147, line 7, *for* ' Kúrds ' *read* ' Kurds.'
Page 161, line 6, *for* ' Bait al ' *read* ' Baitu'l.'
Page 171, line 2, *for* ' HIS REIGN WAS ' *read* ' HE REIGNED.'
Page 173, line 31, *for* ' glory ' *read* ' Glory.'
Page 174, after line 21 *add* ' §24. We have here another doublet. *Cf.* p. 290.'
Page 175, line 13, *for* ' He,' *read* ' Be.'
Page 181, line 13, *delete* ' never ' *and insert it after* ' children.'
2 from bottom, end, *insert* comma.
Page 184, line 18, *for* ' except ' *read* ' unless.'
Page 189, line 4 from bottom, for ' *Envious* ' read ' *envious.*'
Page 199, line 7 from bottom, for ' *Slain* ' read ' *slain.*'
Page 201, note, line 4, *for* ' Námáh ' *read* ' Námah.'
Page 205, line 9, for ' *Born* ' read ' *born.*'
Page 207, line 13, *for* ' Chach ' *read* ' Chách.'
Page 208, line 12, *for* ' wagons did they fill ' *read* ' wains they filled.'
Page 209, line 19, *for* ' no lorger harboureth ' *read* ' hath ceased to harbour.'
line 20, *for* ' evident ' *read* ' plain.'
Page 211, *delete line* 2 *and read* ' With treasure and brocade, dínárs and gems.'
Page 212, line 21, *for* ' All ' *read* ' all.'
line 7 from bottom, *for* ' torquoise ' *read* ' turquoise.'
Page 219, line 5 from bottom, *for* ' a ' *read* ' the ' *and after* ' ball ' *add reference number* 1.
bottom, *insert* ' [1] *See* p. 79.'
Page 221, line 18, *for* ' Announce ' *read* ' announce.'
line 7, from bottom, *for* ' he ' *read* ' He,'

Page 224, line 11, *after* ' me ' *insert* ' stay.'
Page 224, line 12, *for* ' Stop to draw breath ' *read* ' To breathe.'
22, *for* ' moralising ' *read* ' moralling "
Page 226, line 4, *delete* ' of our '
Page 227, line 21, for ' *Slain* ' read ' *slain* ' and delete ' *the Hand of.*'
Page 228, line 9, *for* ' produce of it ' *read* ' fruit thereof.'
Page 230, line 9, *for* ' our avenging ' *read* ' vengeful.'
Page 236, *after line 7 insert* ' §18 *Cf.* previous reign, §24.'
line 8, beginning, *insert* ' §29 '
5 from bottom, beginning, *insert* ' §31.'
Page 237, bottom, note 1, *add* ' But *cf.* Vol. v. p 30.'
Page 250, side reference, *prefix* ' V.'
Page 252, line 15, *for* ' Danbar ' *read* ' Dambar.'
Page 256, line 4, *for* ' Dunbar ' *read* ' Dambar.'
Page 275, line 3 from bottom, for ' *Explain* ' read ' *explain.*'
Page 280, line 9, and elsewhere, *for* ' Almighty ' *read* ' almighty ' *when not absolute.*
Page 284, line 1, for ' *Aware* ' read ' *aware.*'
Page 292, line 20, for ' *War against* ' read ' *fight.*'
Page 293, end of note, *add* ' 309.'
Page 299, line 6 from bottom, for ' *Wroth* ' read ' *wroth.*'
Page 307, line 7 from bottom, *add reference number* 1 *after* ' lasso.'
Page 325, line 11, *for* ' Sám ' *read* ' Zál.'
Page 337, line 2, *delete* ' FOR.'
Page 338, line 6, *for* ' Yast ' *read* ' Yasht,' *and at bottom, note* 1, *after* 1 *insert* ' *Cf.* p. 59.'
From 342, line 3 from bottom, *for* ' Knowhow ' *read* ' Know how.'
Page 347, line 10, *for* ' lowered ' *read* ' loured.'
Page 351, side reference, *insert* 2.
4 lines from bottom, *insert* comma *after* ' throb.'
Page 352, line 4, *delete* semicolon.
Page 354, line 21, *for* ' Guzhdaham ' *read* ' Gazhdaham.'
Page 355, line 4 from bottom, *delete* comma *at end.*
Page 358, line 6 and elsewhere, *for* ' Hirmund ' *read* ' Hírmund.'
Page 366, line 12, *delete* ' not.'
Page 373, line 2, *for* ' HIS REIGN WAS ' *read* ' HE REIGNED.'
Page 378, line 7, *for* ' lance ' *read* ' spear.'
Page 380, line 6 from bottom, *after* ' harm ' *add reference number* 1, *and at bottom add* ' [1] *Cf.* BLHP, i, 452. Jackson, " From Constantinople to the Tomb of Omar Khayyam," p. 119.'
Page 381, line 4 from bottom, *for* ' plants ' *read* ' plans.'

VOLUME II.

Page v, line 13, end, *add*—
Page ix, line 25, *delete* ' Kai.'
Page 3, line, 12, *for* ' Kataiún ' *read* ' Katáyún.'

Page 3, line 15, to children of Gushtásp *add* Faishídward, Shírú, and thirty-seven others (un-named), *for* 'Bíshútan' *read* 'Bishútan *and for* 'Afrid' *read* 'Áfrid.
bottom, *after* (20) *insert* =d. of Kaid.

Page 5, line 20, *after* 'd'Or,' *add* full stop, *and for* 'texte' *read* 'Texte.'

Page 6, heading, *for* 'NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION' *read* 'ABBREVIATIONS.'

Page 18, line 4, *for* 'Kharzarwán' *read* 'Khazarwán.'

Page 19, line 18, *for* 'Turkestán' *read* 'Turkistán.'

Page 27, line 1, *delete* full stop *at end.*
line 4 from bottom. 'There is actually a tribe existing to this day among the Elburz Mountains, or the fastnesses of ancient Hyrcania, which still bears the name Div Sapeed.' S. G. W. Benjamin, Persia and the Persians, p. 302.

Page 29, note 1, *add* 'Vol. v, p. 116.'

Page 61, line 9, *for* 'bears' *read* 'bear.'

Page 69 line 20 *add* semicolon *at end.*

Page 81, line 3 from bottom, *after* 'crystal' *insert reference number* 9 *and at bottom add* '9 Ruins near Aivan-i-Kait (Kai?) some forty miles South-east of Tihrán are still traditionally ascribed to Kai Káús. *See* A. V. Williams Jackson. From Constantinople to the Home of Omar Khayyam, p. 123.'

Page 89, line 25, end, *insert* comma.
26 *after* 'Káús' *insert* comma.

Page 96, line 6 from bottom, *after* 'Zawára' *add reference number* 1 *and at bottom add* '1 This is the first mention of Rustam's brother.'

Page 97, line 5, *for* 'a Zam of' *read* 'Zam's stream with.'
bottom, *delete* 'The name of a river' and *read* '*i.e.* the Oxus.'

Page 103, line 12, *for* 'What ever' *read* 'Whatever.'

Page 118, bottom, *for* 'i, p. 236' *read* 'v, p. 30.'

Page 119, bottom, *after* 'V' *insert* full stop.

Page 121, line 21, *after* 'him' *insert reference number* 1, *and at bottom add* '1 C. adds rightly :—

They led him herdwards
That they might have their portion from that steed ;
As I have heard, he covered forty mares
And one became with foal.

Cf. p. 128 and NIN, p. 45 *note* 1.'

Page 157, line 7, *for* 'spoken' *read* 'unspoken.'

Page 196, line 16, *for* 'heart and eyes' *read* 'Heart and Eyes.'

Page 200, line 11, *for* 'she' *read* 'She.'

Page 221, line 13, *for* 'unled' *read* 'unsoiled.'

Page 224, end of last line, *insert reference number* 1 *and add at bottom* '1 See pp. 38 *seq.*, 88 *seq.*'

Page 225, line 12, *for* 'All-righteous' *read* 'all-righteous.'

Page 229, line 16, *for* 'Who' *read* 'who.' *and elsewhere.*

Page 247, line 5 and elsewhere, *for* ' Almighty ' *read* ' almighty ' *when not absolute.*
Page 252, line 4, *for* ' my ' *read* ' mine.'
Page 256, line 6 from bottom, *for* ' caparisoned ' *read* ' betrapped.'
Page 257, line 2 from bottom, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma *at end.*
Page 261, line 21 and elsewhere, *for* ' Holy ' *read* ' holy ' *when not absolute.*
Page 265, line 18, *delete* comma *at end.*
Page 281, line 22, *for* 'Irán ' *read* ' Túrán.'
Page 285, line 1, *for* ' dressed ' *read* ' drest.'
Page 306, line 14, end, *insert* semicolon.
Page 310, line 4 from bottom, *for* ' All-holy ' *read* ' all-holy.'
Page 312, line 4 from bottom, *after* ' league ' *insert* comma.
Page 313, line 5 from bottom, end, *insert* comma.
4 from bottom *after* ' hearing ' *insert* comma.
Page 321, line 1, end, *add reference number* 1.
12, end, *add reference number* 2.
bottom, *insert* ' [1] See p. 261. [2] See p. 293.'
Page 328, line 11, *for* ' Kalúr ' *read* ' Kalú.'
5 from bottom, for ' blunt ' read ' pointless.'
4 from bottom, *for* ' would go ' *read* ' hunted,' *and insert* full stop *at end.*
3 from bottom, *delete* ' To hunt,' *and for* ' at ' *read* ' At.'
Page 341, line 8 from bottom, *for* ' Kawá ' *read* ' Káwa.'
Page 374, line 6 from bottom, end, *insert reference number* 1.
bottom, *insert* ' [1] See p. 312.'
Page 377, line 22, *insert reference number* 1.
bottom, *insert* ' [1] See p. 273.'
Page 384, line 7 from bottom, *delete* comma *and insert* full stop *at end.*
Page 390, bottom, *delete* " *and insert* ' ".
Page 395, line 3, end, *insert reference number* 1.
bottom, *insert* ' See p. 363.'
Page 412, last line, *for* ' toward ' *read* ' tow'rd.'

VOLUME III.

Page 3, line 24, end, *add* ' Kisari Mohan Ganguli and published by.'
Page 14, line 30, end, *add reference number* 5 *and* ' The text also allows the view that Farúd dwelt on Mount Sapad. See Vol. v, p. 30.'
Page 15, Note 1, end, *add* ' There was no difficulty in finding an additional rhyme without using ' Pashan.' ' Gashan ' (much) rhymes with ' Pashan ' in Vol. viii, p. 397 and *note.*
Page 20, line 22, end, *add reference number* 1, *and at bottom* ' [1] *Cf.* Vol. i, p. 61.'
Page 36, line 8, *for* ' Tis ' *read* ' 'Tis.'
Page 45, line 23, *for* ' that ' *read* ' thou.'

Page 59, line 17 and elsewhere, *for* 'Almighty' *read* 'almighty' *when not absolute.*
Page 68, line 18, *for* 'stoneand' *read* 'stone and'
Page 83, note 2, end, *add* '(p. 10).'
Page 84, line 7 from bottom and elsewhere, *for* 'All-holy' *read* 'all-holy' *when not absolute.*
Page 102, line 22 *for* 'Omnipotent' *read* 'omnipotent.'
Page 110, line 2 and elsewhere, *for* 'Who' *read* 'who.'
6, *for* 'Whom' *read* 'whom.'
Page 130, line 11, *add* comma *at end.*
Page 134, line 6, end, *add* !
line 15, end, *add* ".
Page 141, line 2 from bottom and elsewhere, *for* 'Holy' *read* 'holy' *when not absolute.*
Page 148, note, *for* 'Pehlevan' *read* 'Pehlewan' *and after* 'donna' *delete* comma
Page 151, line 4 from bottom, *add* full stop *at end.*
Page 172, note, *for* 'Car' *read* 'car.'
Page 191, line 12, *for* 'Abul' *read* ''Abu'l.'
Page 194, line 8, *for* 'Khan' *read* 'Khán.'
Page 213, line 22, *for* 'Oleader' *read* 'O leader.'
Page 234, note, *for* 'Et' *read* 'et' *and* for '*comblan*' read '*comblant.*'
Page 237, line 7, prefix ".
Page 241, line 22, *delete* 'far.'
Page 251, note, *for* 'Sur' *read* 'sur.'
Page 275, line 10, end, *delete* !
Page 285, line 8 from bottom, *for* 'fraicheur' *read* 'fraîcheur.'
last line, *add reference number* 2.
Page 287, side reference, *for* 'V. 1063' *read* 'V. 1065' *and subsequent side references consecutively, i.e.,* 'V. 1066,' 'V. 1067,' *etc., up to page* 305.
Page 294, line 7, *for* 'buffalos' *read* 'buffaloes.'
Page 298, note, *for* 'La' *read* 'la.'
Page 304, line 11, *delete* semicolon *and insert* comma.
Page 305, line 25, *add side reference* 'V. 1086,' *and read subsequent side references consecutively, i.e.,* 'V. 1087.' 'V. 1088,' *etc., up to page* 356.
Page 318, note, *for* 'Il' *read* 'il.'
Page 328, line 12, end, *insert* semicolon.
Page 348, line 15, *add* comma *at end.*

VOLUME IV.

Page v, line 5, end, *delete* full stop *and insert* —
Page ix, line 10, *for* 'wrath' *read* 'Wrath.'
Page 8, line 10, end, *add* 'See Vol. vii, pp. 381, 422.'
Page 31, line 6, *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.
Page 40, line 9, end, *add reference number* 1, *and insert at bottom* '[1] *Cf.* Vol. i. p. 386 and *note.*'

Page 85, note, *prefix reference number* 1.

Page 139, note 2, *add* 'It is interesting to find the dog appearing in the Book of Tobit in which there are Iránian elements. *Cf.* Vol. iii, p. 271 and *Encl. Brit.* 11th Ed. *s v.* Tobit.'

Page 141, line 9, end, *delete*——

Page 143, line 6, from bottom, *insert* comma *at end.*

Page 144, line 8, *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.

Page 150, line 8, *for* 'buffalos' *read* 'buffaloes.'

§3. There appears to be a doublet here as Afrásiyáb is first said to be beyond Jaz and then at Baigand, *i.e.*, in the neighbourhood first of the Jaxartes and then of the Oxus, but the context favours the latter position.

Page 155, line 10, *delete and insert* 'He ranged the army's centre and its wings.'

Page 256, line 1, *delete and insert* 'All filled with minstrelsy and harp and wine.'

bottom, *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.

Page 259, line 7 from bottom, *delete* 'Barda', a cavern' *and insert* 'to Barda', one'

Page 262, note 2, *Add* 'The situation of Barda' would, however, make Lake Gokcha more appropriate. *Cf.* p. 259.'

Page 304, line 14, end, *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.

Page 324, line 12 from bottom, *for* 'shore' *read* 'river[1],' and at bottom *add note* '[1] The Euphrates.'

Page 325, line 8 *after* 'city' *add reference number* 1 and at bottom *add note* '[1] Shúráb. *Cf.* Vol. vii, p. 254.'

Page 339, line 1, *for* 'sea' *read* 'river.'

Page 340, line 3, *for* 'sea' *read* 'stream.'

Page 344, line 16, *for* 'sea' *read* 'stream.'

25, *for* 'sea' *read* 'river.'

28, *for* 'sea' *read* 'stream.'

31, *for* 'sea' *read* 'stream.'

Page 346, line 18, end, *add reference number* 1, and at bottom *add note* '[1] *Cf.* Vol. v, p. 233 *note.*'

VOLUME V.

Page 14, line 2 from bottom, end, *add reference number* 11, *and at bottom* '[11] Spitáma seems to mean 'White.' See JZ, p. 13.'

Page 30, line 19, *for* 'Girdkuh' *read* 'Girdkúh.'

line 24, *add* 'It has been stated by an oriental authority that Dizh Gumbadán ('the Domed Fort') and Girdkúh were identical. See LEC, p. 365.'

Page 71, line 13, *for* 'his' *read* 'a.'

Page 71, line 17, end, *add reference number* 1 *and at bottom* '[1] In Firdausí Núsh Ázar is the son of Asfandiyár, but in Dakíkí may of course be a brother and the one referred to above.'
Page 126, line 4, end, *add reference number* 1 *and at bottom* '[1] *Cf.* p. 233 *note*.'
Page 133, line 21, *for* 'wisdon' *read* 'wisdom.'
Page 160, line 23, end, *add quotation mark*.'
Page 161, last line, end, *insert* full stop.
Page 214, line 14, end, *add quotation mark*.'
Page 277, line 8, *insert* full stop.
6 from bottom, end, *insert* semicolon.
Page 288, note 1, *add* 'Cf. E.P. i, 256.'

VOLUME VI.

Page vi, line 3, *for* 'Married' *read* 'married.'
Page ix, line 14, *for* 'Rúmáns' *read* 'Rúmans.'
Page 3, line 8 from bottom, *delete* 'Rustam.'
7 from bottom, *for* 'Chubína' *read* 'Chúbína.'
4 from bottom, *for* 'Shirwí' *read* 'Shírwí'
Page 6, line 21, *for* 'Muller' *read* 'Müller.'
Page 15, line 10, *for* 'legend' *read* 'Legend.'
note 3, *add* 'Cf. Vol. vii, p. 79.'
Page 17, line 1, *for* 'Mukaffa' *read* 'Mukaffa'
Page 39, line 6 from bottom, end, *delete* ? *and insert* !
Page 64, line 8, *for* 'Ravi' *read* 'Rávi.'
Page 81, line 2, end, *insert* hyphen.
Page 89, line 5, for '*Married*' read '*married*.'
Page 98, line 14, end, *insert* comma.
Page 133, line 4, end, *insert* semicolon.
Page 135, line 12 from bottom, *read* 'He must not privily devise.'
10 from bottom, *for* 'wise' *read* 'sage.'
Page 136, line 4, end, *insert* !
Page 137, line 7, end, *insert* comma.
Page 150, bottom line, end, *insert* comma.
Page 154, line 13 from bottom, end, *insert* full stop.
Page 161, line 20, end, *insert* reference number 1.
bottom, *insert note* '[1] *Cf.* Vol. i, pp. 118, 132.'
Page 207, line 7, *after* 'above' *insert* '(p. 195).'
Page 209, line 10, end, *insert reference number* 2, *and at bottom add note* '[2] Mohl, rightly according to Nöldeke (NIN, p. 26 and *note*), reads 'Sámánians' for 'Ashkánians.' The former claimed descent from Bahrám Chúbína.'
Page 210, line 13 from bottom, end, *delete* comma.
Page 212, note, *add* 'Cf. p. 201.'
Page 231, line 4 from bottom, end, *insert* comma.
Page 250, line 9 from bottom, *for* 'Chubína' read 'Chúbína.'
Page 288, line 9, beginning, *delete* ".
Page 291, line 10 from bottom, *after* 'Oh' *insert* !
Page 292, line 1, end, *insert* comma.

Page 296, line 6 from bottom, for '*Rúmáns*' read '*Rúmans.*'
Page 298, line 13 from bottom, *for* 'Pars' *read* 'Párs.'
Page 304, bottom line, end, *insert* comma.
Page 312, line 3, *for* 'respect' *read* 'respecteth' *and for* 'thou art' 'thou'rt.'
Page 316, second note, *prefix* 2.
Page 323, note, line 5 from bottom, end, *insert* comma.
Page 327, line 7, *for* 'Ambar' *read* 'Ambár.'
line 8, *for* ''Abbasid' *read* ''Abbásid.'
Page 339, note, *for* 'Shammas' *read* 'Shammás.'
Page 372, line 2 from bottom, *for* 'the spring of' *read* 'a lake near.'
bottom line, after 'birth-place' *add, reference number* 8, *and at bottom add note* '[8] The lake in question being the source of two rivers the expression 'Spring' used by Firdausí in connexion with it is not wholly inappropriate.'
Page 376, line 7 from bottom, *for* 'great' *read* 'Great.'
Page 387, line 12 from bottom, *prefix* ".
Page 402, line 1, end, *insert* comma.

VOLUME VII.

Page vii, line 4, *for* 'SASÁNIAN' *read* 'SÁSÁNIAN.'
Page xi, line 13 from bottom, *for* 'Feasts' *read* 'Banquets.'
Page 85, line 16 from bottom, *insert* comma *at end.*
3 from bottom, *for* 'Kharzarwán' *read* 'Khazarwán.'
Page 95, line 18 end *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.
Page 106, line 15, *after* 'scabbards' *insert* comma.
Page 110, line 15, *for* 'an as' *read* 'as an.'
Page 118, line 11 from bottom, for '*Irán*' read '*Írán.*'
Page 155, line 9 from bottom, *delete* semicolon *and insert* comma.
Page 156, line 6, after 'Hormisdas' *delete* comma *and insert* 'III.
Page 184, note, line 14 from bottom, *after* 'bunch' *delete . and insert* ?
Page 185, bottom note, *prefix* 4.
Page 207, heading, *for* 'KUBAD' *read* 'KUBÁD.'
Page 209, line 2, *after* 'below' *insert reference number* 1, and at bottom *add* '[1] *Cf.* MHP, ii, 77, RH, Bk. iii, ch. 35 and *note.*'
line 3 from bottom, end, *delete* 1 *and insert* 2, and before note *delete* 1 *and insert* 2.
Page 217, line 4 from bottom. Sura appears to be identical with Thapsacus of which Tiphsah (1 Kings, iv. 24) meaning probably 'ford' seems to have been the Hebrew form. The army of Cyrus the Younger in his expedition against his brother Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon) crossed the river there on foot. Xenophon, Anabasis, I, iv, 17.

Page 227, line 5 from bottom, *after* ' crown ' *insert* comma.
Page 231, bottom line, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma.
Page 239 and 247, heading, *read* ' NÚSHÍRWÁN '
Page 251, line 13 from bottom, *for* ' Garshasp ' *read* ' Gashasp '
Page 263, line 6 from bottom, *delete* comma *and insert* semicolon.
Page 275, bottom line, end, *insert* comma.
Page 300 line 11, *insert* comma *after* ' For ' *and* ' know.'
Page 331, line 4, *delete* ' the ' *and insert* ' from.'
Page 348, line 20, *for* ' Sáhh ' *read* ' Sháh.'
Page 369, line 18, *for* ' frowning face ' *read* ' looks afrown.'
Page 395, line 10, *for* ' was ' *read* ' were.'
11, *for* ' were ' *read* ' was.'
Page 400, line 1, *for* ' crown ' *read* ' treasure.'
2, *for* ' treasure, for ' *read* ' crown because.'
Page 410, bottom line, *for* ' Almighty ' *read* ' almighty.'

VOLUME VIII

Page v, line 17, *for* ' answer ' *read* ' Answer.'
Page viii, line 13 from bottom, *add* ' to Caesar.'
Page xv, line 20, *for* ' PCHAP ' *read* ' HAP.'
Page 72, line 21, *for* ' Khán's *read* ' Khán's.'
Page 91, note, *for* ' Parwiz *read* ' Parwíz.'
Page 122, line 14, *delete* first hyphen.
Page 138, line 19, *delete id.*
Page 143, line 10, *insert* comma after ' *Letter* ' and ' *Parmúda.*'
Page 147, line 11, *for* ' great ' *read* ' Great.'
Page 153, line 18, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma.
Page 189, line 16, *for* ' Zab ' *read* ' Záb.'
Page 190, line 16, *for* ' Garabzin,' ' Galabzin ' *read* ' Garábzín ' ' Galábzín '
Page 191, line 12, according to Muir's ' The Life of Mohammad,' edited by T. H. Weir (1923), p. 431 *note*, the battle of Dhú Kár was fought A.D. 611.
Page 192, note, *for* ' PCHAP ' *read* ' HAP.'
Page 205, line 6 from bottom, *after* ' take ' *insert reference number* 1 *and at bottom add* ' 1 See Vol. 5, p. 156 *note.*'
Page 225, *justify* line 25.
Page 265, line 22, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma.
Page 270, line 5, *for* ' Luhrasp ' *read* ' Luhrásp.'
line 6, *for* ' Asfanfiyar ' *read* ' Asfandiyár.'
Page 272, line 1, *insert* comma *after* ' one.'
Page 279, line 4 from bottom, *for* ' and readers of the stars ' *read* ' with the astrologers.'
Page 285, line 5, *for* ' great ' *read* ' Great.'
Page 287, line 20, *for* ' achieved ' *read* ' accomplished.'
Page 313, line 21, end, *delete* full stop *and insert* comma.
Page 317, line 2 from bottom, *delete* comma.
Page 327, line 13, *for* ' brave ' *read* ' Brave.'
Page 328, bottom, *for* ' in haste ' *read* ' with speed.'
Page 343, bottom, *for* ' gory ' *read* ' glory.'

Page 348, line 6 from bottom, *for* 'in a letter to the king'
read 'to the monarch in a letter.'
Page 353, line 5, *for* 'If' *read* 'It'
Page 362, line 11 from bottom, *delete* hyphen.
Page 374, line 8, *for* 'Ot' *read* 'Of.'
Page 411, line 8, *for* 'the' *read* 'thy.'
Page 421, line 12 from bottom, *for* 'Galínús' *read* 'Galínúsh.'